Negotiating narratives:

exploring the complexities

of Somali boys' and girls' learner identities

around notions of "educational help"

at home and at school.

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I, Kathryn Kashyap confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Acknowledgements

Abstract

This study explores how a group of Somali boys and girls who migrated to the UK as refugees and who may require "educational help" negotiated their identities as "possible" learners at home and at school. Lived experiences of educational inequality at the intersection of refugee, gender and Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) are not often considered within research. However, in practice this is found to be a pressing area of concern, including in communication between schools and families.   The study takes an in-depth focus and draws on post structuralist, post-colonial, feminist understandings of identities to explore notions of subjectivity, marginalisation, agency and belonging. Using ethical, young-person-centred approaches, I conducted interviews with eighteen young people, six family members and three teachers who were nominated by the young people and I observed a range of lessons chosen by the young people. Narratives co-constructed through these methods are analysed as sites of identity performance and meaning making. The study argues that in order to explore refugee young people's negotiations of notions of SEND, the ways that these learner identities interwine with English as an Additional Language (EAL), underachievement and disadvantage need to be understood within racialised, classed and gendered discourses about what it means to be a learner. Reflecting on the difficulties of considering this wide range of social and learner categories, the analysis demonstrates that these are nevertheless important processes to understand. Family, religious and school notions of success and failure are shown to collide, conflict and converge, challenging prevailing assumptions about Somali families as resisting "educational help" and highlighting the need for appropriate engagement strategies from schools with families. An exploration of im/possible spaces at home and at school, rather than considering learners as im/possible, is presented as a fruitful way to understand the complexity of these young people's negotiations.

Impact Statement

My research brings contributions to scholarship on how learner identities intertwine, adding to our understandings of the intersectional nature of learner identity performances through an image of swirling. This demonstrates the ways that social and learner identities can be taken up momentarily or in more stable ways as near, further away and even out of reach, still or fluid and shifting but never separate. My approach of interrogating im/possible spaces for learners usefully shifts a focus away from the learner and onto the context, thus helping to interrogate racialised, gendered, classed assumptions about young people as certain types of (non) learner, particularly where professionals and families are unsure of their needs. This concept is presented as important for refugee young people and considerations of SEND, an aspect of the complexity of learner identities which is often not considered in research. It can also be drawn upon more widely, challenging fixed notions of learners as either one category or another and deploying a social model not just for those considered to have SEND. Through conducting this research with vulnerable young people about a highly stigmatised issue in a unique position as a researcher, project worker and teacher, I present important methodological insights into how young-person-centred methods can be employed, and how navigating challenging complexities around consent and dissent can produce fruitful data.

Outside academia, this thesis offers valuable insights and important recommendations for all practitioners involved in education, in schools, multi-academy trusts, in training schools, in local and national government, in local and national charities and non-governmental organisations. It contributes significant understandings about the learning needs of refugee young people around notions of SEND, an aspect which is hardly referenced in policy whilst identified by charities as a key area of concern. The study focuses on the ways in which gender and race, in particular, are implicated in misrecognition. It points to strategies that need to be used by schools to identify the need for "educational help", including training staff on the educational needs of refugee young people and how to recognise and respect the knowledge that families bring to concerns about SEND. The findings generate recommendations that medicalised discourses about SEND and notions of innate ability must be challenged in schools within critical reflexivity about how we perceive difference, and the language transformed that is used to explain not just SEND, but progress and achievement to families. Here the use of independent interpreters should be unquestioned, and schools should be held accountable for their practice in this area.

The study points to the need to thoroughly employ the multilingual, multiliterate strategies that are well researched but silenced within present government policy, and to ensure that

refugee learner identities are understood and recognised by all staff, however long a young person has been living in a new country. In policy, it argues that clear guidance about the intertwining nature of learner identities needs to be clearly stipulated, not just for EAL/SEND considerations, but across policies that focus on distinct learner categories.

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List of Acronyms

ADHD - Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder

BESD - Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties

DCSF – Department for Children, Schools and Families

DfE – Department for Education

DFES – Department for Education and Science

EAL- English as an Additional Language

EHCP- Education Health Care Plan

EMA - Ethnic Minority Achievement

ESOL- English for Speakers of Other Languages

EU- European Union

LGBT- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender

NGOs- Non-Governmental Organisations

Ofsted- Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills

PPG – Pupil Premium Grant

PTSD- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

SEMH – Social, Emotional and Mental Health

SEND- Special Educational Needs and Disability

SENDCos – Special Educational Needs and Disability Coordinators

SpLD – Speech and Language Difficulties

Prologue

My experiences as Head of Ethnic Minority Achievement (EMA) in a large, diverse, inner city comprehensive school are to a large extent the catalyst for this thesis. Within my role, I worked particularly closely with a group of newly arrived and more established refugee young people, many of whom were Somali, as they progressed through the school and took public examinations. I learnt as I went along the complexities and challenges around how to appropriately support these pupils' achievement. Most of them had not had much formal education before arriving in the UK, and nor had their parents. The pupils were often positioned within school discourses as unable, underachieving and/or disruptive, whilst teachers were unsure about how to teach them in mainstream classes. Some behaviours were interpreted as a threat to others, and assumptions were made about how they should behave, particularly for the girls regarding their religion. Negotiating the demands of the curriculum and problematic relationships with some peers and teachers, this group of pupils forged close, supportive relationships with each other and with teachers who they perceived as understanding their needs.

As the newly arrived pupils settled in, support staff in my department became concerned about some as having Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Of those who were assessed, they and/ or their families mostly resisted the support which was offered by the SEND department. With others, I realised on reflection that in my desire to protect them from deficit views and assumptions, I had in fact not always ascertained fully what support they needed. Although refugee young people have been found to be misidentified or not identified as needing SEND support (Rutter, 2006), when looking for guidance, I found that this issue received little attention in policy and in research. The lack of attention to these concerns had, I felt, serious consequences for the rights of the child to a purposeful education (UNICEF, 1990; DfES, 2003a).

At the point of starting my study, I moved to work for a local educational charity that supports refugee children, young people and their families in education. Having been established at that time for about ten years, it worked with around three hundred families a year, many of whom were Somali. It provided homework clubs, English for speaker of other languages (ESOL) classes, and advocacy for educational issues such as SEND, exclusions and school applications. I led the volunteer tutor scheme which supported young people with homework and study skills at home. In this role, I learnt about the ways in which notions of SEND were struggled over within families, at school and through home-school relationships. I saw first-hand how children and young people who needed SEND support were often overlooked, their families who wanted the provision for them marginalised by school systems and the

young people's views not considered. Other young people had support refused by their families or were removed from schools due to fear of stigma and disagreement about their needs. My studies informed this learning process in my work role, and in turn were informed by my experiences and reflections on my own, families' and professionals' approaches to these issues. The unique position that I took up, drawing on my role as a project worker and past experiences as a teacher was key in helping me conduct the research and negotiate significant challenges in the ethical demands of the study.

My research question set out to consider how a group of Somali young people who had recently migrated and who might be considered to require "educational help" negotiated their learner identities at home and at school. "Educational help" is a term used in the Code of Practice (DfE and DoH, 2015) to refer to the support provided to those who are designated as having SEND. I found this a useful phrase to use as it resisted much of the stigma with young people and families round terms such as special educational needs.

To answer my question, I wanted to approach the issue of identifying need and accessing support from the young people's perspectives in order to understand their lived experiences at this point of inequalities. I chose to conduct the research with Somali young people as I had most experience with this group regarding notions of SEND and had close relationships with Somali professionals who were key in guiding me, given the stigmatised nature of my research.

In Chapter 1, I give a brief overview of the history of education in Somalia and approaches to SEND within the schooling system, within Islamic traditions and within family practices. This is followed by an overview of the policy context in England, highlighting key debates about how provision for pupils with SEND relates to provision for migrant, EAL and refugee pupils. I reflect on how these historical, social and political contexts demonstrate the need for my research and set out my theoretical framework for the study.

Chapter 2 reviews what current research tells us about how Somali young people negotiate their learner identities within school around notions of SEND, this question then being considered in Chapter 3 in relation to their negotiations at home and in the community. Chapter 4 argues why a young-person-centred, narrative inquiry with a focus on performance was an appropriate methodological and ethical choice for this study. The chapter explores the complexities of gaining access to and consent from refugee young people to research with them a highly stigmatised area of educational inequality and discusses the ways in which a critical reflexivity was employed throughout the process.

Focusing on six of my main participants to start the analysis in Chapter 5, I convey in some depth the complex, intricate ways that they performed their learner identities, whilst

representing how the wider analysis reflected commonalities and differences in how categories of EAL, refugee, SEND and underachievement were taken up. Moving on to the family members' narratives in Chapter 6, I consider how gendered family support roles were negotiated at home within the post migratory context and explore how the young people were positioned within family understandings of notions of SEND and ability. Turning to negotiations at school, in Chapter 7 I focus first on how the SEND category was negotiated by the young people, both with peers and in the spaces between school and home. The final analysis in Chapter 8 focuses on my observations of lessons and interviews with teachers, considering how far notions of possibility were taken up by the young people within these narratives. Chapter 9 offers new insights into how to conceptualise the ways that young people negotiate multiple social and learner identities. It presents key findings about conducting young-person-centred research on sensitive, stigmatised issues. I set out how possibilities for learning and mutual understanding may be negotiated by Somali young people, their families and their schools around notions of "educational help", including suggestions for policy, practice and teacher training.

Chapter 1: Mapping Inequalities

In this chapter, I first give an overview of the history of education in Somalia, religious and family practices and approaches to SEND. This provides important insights into the educational experiences with which the young people who were my participants and their families arrived in the UK. I then discuss the policy context in England and the theories which inform support for pupils designated as having SEND, focusing on how migrant pupils have been positioned within these debates over the past few decades. Pointing to the absence of discussion in policy about how refugee pupils may be categorised as having SEND, I explore the ways in which approaches to migrancy and SEND have intertwined as well as diverged within political decisions and policy directions for education. I highlight key debates around the way particular groups of young people are conceived and acted upon through this context and draw out of this discussion the significance of my study. My theoretical framework is then presented. I outline how I use a post structuralist, post-colonial, feminist understanding of identity negotiations to explore this group of young people's lived experiences at the margins and argue for the importance of using intersectionalities as a tool for this study.

1.1 Experiences of education in Somalia

Somalia lies in what is known as the horn of Africa, bordering Ethiopia, Djibouti and Kenya and across the Gulf of Aden from Yemen. At the end of the nineteenth country, the colonial powers divided the area into five regions: Southern Somalia for Italy; Northern Somalia or Somaliland for Britain; North Western Somalia for Britain which is now part of Kenya; Western Somalia for Britain which is now part of Ethiopia; Djibouti for France which is now an independent country. In World War Two, Italy ejected the British from the Horn of Africa and had overall rule but was then defeated by the British in 1941.

Settlements are recorded in Somalia from 4000 BCE, with trading with Egypt documented around 2500 BCE, and by the thirteenth century the area was known as an Islamic centre. Islamic education has continued for more than 700 years in Somalia, throughout the imposition of colonial styles of education and the disruption of war. Traditionally, young people are sent to the madrassah first, before they are sent to mainstream school.   The Qur'anic system requires students to pass each chapter in order to progress to the next group. In a similar way, the Somali educational system requires pupils to pass a grade to move up a class, a practice common to many countries. Drawn from Muslim educational practices, academic subjects are studied in school, whilst subjects such as Art, Dance, Drama and Sport are not considered appropriate (Jones, 1998; Collet, 2007).

The population in Somalia is originally nomadic and has a strong oral tradition. In the mid nineteenth century, British and Italian colonial rule was established over the country, dividing it into North, ruled by Britain and South, ruled by Italy. Colonialist schooling was quite heavily resisted and was difficult to introduce in rural areas but was only offered up to grade 7, aiming to train nationals for low skilled jobs (Laitin and Samatar, 1987; Abdi, 1998). Between the Second World War and independence which was declared on July 1st, 1960, the British opened some more schools, including the first secondary schools, one for boys and one for girls. However, many more boys than girls were enrolled in school overall and the rural areas were still hardly touched (Schönmeier and Lienig, 1982). Not much progress was made with regard to government schools after independence, which brought Somaliland and Somalia together as the Republic of Somalia.

The republic was the first democracy in Africa as the president Adan Abdulle transferred the power to president Abdirashid Ali Sharma'arke in 1967. However, Sharma'arke was assassinated in 1969 and president Siad Barre, an army general, took power in a 'bloodless coup', declaring Somalia to be a socialist state. There was a mass push for literacy. The regime instituted a Somali written script in 1972, more secondary schools were built, and the Somali National University was opened (Job and Skills Programme for Africa, 1977). Boys were still prioritised for schooling, but middle-class families in urban areas in particular also enrolled their daughters (Moyi, 2012a).

However, armed struggles between groups drawn from different clans and the government continued. In the North the Somali National Movement had taken up arms to campaign for an independent Somaliland. In 1988 under a sustained attack by the government on this group, tens of thousands were killed and four hundred thousand fled the country. The war spread South and many more fled the violence. Schools were demolished, resources destroyed, teachers were killed or fled the country. As a consequence, print literacy rates fell substantially. At this point madrassahs continued, with private schools also contributing in a small and fragile way to possibilities for formal education, whilst Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) also struggled to establish provision (Abdi, 1998; Abdinoor, 2008). Although boys were often more likely to be sent to school where possible, some families prioritised financing girls' migration and education during the conflict as they were considered to be a more reliable investment (Moyi, 2012a, 2012b; Hannan, 2013).

In 1991 Barre was ousted. Somaliland declared its independence, which is as yet unrecognised by the international community and set up free primary education for its citizens. Interclan violence in Somalia continued. A peacekeeping effort led by the USA for the United Nations ended disastrously. Over one million Somalis were exiled or internally displaced, the fiercest fighting taking place in 2006 between Ethiopia and Islamists, with

African peace-keeping troops arriving in 2007. There were several unsuccessful attempts to form a government from 1991 onwards, with Islamist fighters and rival militias ensuring continued instability. Al Shabab, the largest Islamist group, aligned themselves with Al Qaeda and launched a major offensive against the South and Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia, in 2009. At this point piracy became a major threat to international shipping the Gulf of Aden. In Somalia, from 2011 to 2012 approximately 260,000 Somalis died in a severe famine. After some success against the insurgents, in 2012, the first formal parliament was sworn in in Mogadishu, however terrorist attacks continued (Harris, 2004; Rutter, 2004; Njoku, 2013; BBC, 2018).   The establishment of the parliament enabled free primary education also to be rolled out. The Somali National University opened, and there were drives to train teachers and set up a robust system, although attendance at school was still constrained by poverty, risk, gender and further famine (UNICEF, 2017).

Family practices regarding education in Somalia traditionally position the father as the parent expected to provide financially for the children's education. Mothers prepare children for school through prioritising food, clothes and ensuring punctual attendance. They have a strong decision-making role within the household and are in control of their own income. These gendered roles were fluid rather than fixed, inflected by clan and location. They were shifting within urban areas even before the war, and since the conflict started, women's roles in work have become more visible (Ahmed, 1999; Morah, 2000; Abdullahi, 2001; Abdi, 2003; Harding, Clarke and Chappell, 2007; Kleist, 2010). Within Muslim values of lifelong learning and achievement, it is both parents' responsibility to encourage their children to learn (Shah, 2014). The Somali word for encourage, "dhiiri" or "dhiiri gelin", which is often translated into the English "push" and used in English in Somali conversations, has many nuances. It can mean to give direction, to walk together with a caring hand behind someone's back, to motivate. Teachers were expected to manage the day-to-day learning for young people and all formal learning took place in the school. Teacher-parent meetings, most often with the father, were only conducted where there were significant problems (Morah, 2000). Drawing on religious discourses, the teacher was respected as the "second father" and not challenged, which over time has shifted with gendered changes to teaching roles to the "second mother" (Hassan *et al.*, 2009).

The Qur'an instructs that all must learn to the best of their ability, and that those who have disabilities must be cared for by the family. However, stigmatised notions of disability persist in Somalia. Those who do not make progress may be constructed within religious beliefs as incapable or able but lazy, which is a sin, whilst disability is seen as a test. There is also still some evidence of prevailing cultural attitudes to disability as evil or a punishment. These different beliefs about SEND are found in a number of countries (Afrooz, 1994; Helevaara

Robertson, 2007; Obiakor and Offor, 2011; Elshabrawy and Hassanein, 2015; Koshin, 2015).

Historically, there have not been many schools established in Somalia or Somaliland for children and young people with SEND. This may be due to a range of factors: Richardson and Powell (2011) suggest that where there was resistance to colonial and missionary education systems, which was often the case in Somalia, these types of school were less frequently established. Furthermore, the stigma around SEND and families' responses to their duty to care by keeping the child at home may have impacted on demand. However, in urban areas, where there is some provision, there are much higher rates of identification and school attendance. This is particularly the case for girls who are otherwise under-identified, and for those considered to have learning difficulties or disabilities which are more stigmatised than physical disabilities. This suggests that if provision is available, families will access it, although the impact of social class on these attendance rates in urban areas must also be noted. Keeping children at home has been found in reports conducted after the war to be not only due to lack of provision or stigma, but also to protect those with disabilities from the risk of sexual, physical and emotional abuse. In reports from Somaliland, children with disabilities have been found tied up in the house, a response which is against firmly held beliefs about how to care for children and has prompted serious concerns amongst professionals. Gendered stigma and lack of identification of particular needs especially around learning difficulties have also been reported, whilst poverty and war have also contributed to a rise in disabilities (Tomlinson and Abdi, 2003; CESVI, Handicap International and European Commission, 2012; Koshin, 2015; Disability Rights International, 2018). These studies indicate that post-colonial, economic, conflict experiences as well as religious and family discourses need to be considered in relation to understandings of SEND in Somalia and within families who migrate to western countries.

It is with these understandings and experiences of formal education that Somali young people and their families arrived in the UK. Many mothers as well as the children often had their formal education disrupted or not even started due to the conflict and their migratory journeys. Others, mainly the fathers and sons, had some formal education at the madrassah if not in mainstream schools. They often joined communities which had existed for many decades. Sailors from Somalia and Somaliland had first settled without their families in seaports such as Cardiff, London and Liverpool in the mid-nineteenth century. After the Second World War, many Somali men then migrated to industrial towns in the Midlands such as Sheffield to find employment. Refugees, mostly women and children, started reaching the UK in the 1980s, with the highest number of asylum applications recorded in 1999, and declining after 2001. However, the number of Somali refugees worldwide has continued to

rise, whilst their destination countries within the European Union (EU) have changed. The Somali diaspora in the UK is the fifth highest in the world, after Kenya, Ethiopia, Yemen and the USA (Connor and Krogstad, 2016). The community has faced significant racism, discrimination, marginalisation and poverty in the UK, with the need for employment and education often cited in community and NGO reports as a pressing concern as parents seek to provide better chances for their children (Kahin, 1997; Harris, 2004; Rutter, 2004). The next section details the educational context which awaited them. It focuses on how support for migrant children and young people who may be designated as having SEND has been structured and allocated within political debates and policy decisions in England over several decades and discusses the ways in which this group of young people have been positioned within this context.

1.2 Migrancy and SEND in the English education system

After the Second World War, many Black Caribbean families migrated to the UK, invited over by the government to help rebuild the country (Solomos, 1989). Discriminatory and racist practices around how their children were perceived as learners were first highlighted by Coard (1971) in his report into the overrepresentation of Black Caribbean (then called West Indian) children in "remedial" classes or "special" schools. Coard found that instead of teachers considering individual skills and abilities, these boys and girls were marked out as different because of their language and ethnicity and labelled as deficient, with many then being withdrawn from mainstream schools. Those who remained were, according to Coard, underachieving due to their loss of confidence and self-esteem, as well as low expectations from teachers. Tomlinson's (1981) germinal sociological study into the overrepresentation of Black Caribbean pupils as what was then termed "handicapped" further confirmed Coard's findings around misidentification of SEND. Drawing on a critical sociological approach, she exposed the disproportionality of Black pupils identified as SEND to be a social practice, rather than an anomaly. These concerns around inequalities in the education system then grew to include all migrant children (Cline, 1998).

In 1974, Mary Warnock was asked to lead a committee of enquiry for the Thatcher government into the "Education of Handicapped Children and Young People" (1978). The change in education law, which drew on findings in the report, shifted provision for pupils away from a medicalised model of intrinsic difficulties where those with disabilities were considered to be ineducable (Education Act, 1981; Richardson and Powell, 2011). The term "Special Educational Needs and Disability" (SEND) was introduced in an aim to counter the stigma associated with "handicapped". Warnock argued that about 20% of children would need SEND support at some point in their lives, however most of these should be catered for in the mainstream. Resources for the small percentage of pupils who required specific help

over and above what the school could normally offer were provided through a system of statements, and those with severe learning difficulties were still taught in special schools. Warnock also advocated for a significant expansion of special needs advisory and support services. The interactionist approach to SEND which was adopted at that point has remained in policy. It advocates for a consideration of the barriers to inclusion constructed by society and the environment, as well as assessing an individual's strengths and weaknesses (Thomas and Loxley, 2007; Frederickson and Cline, 2015). Significantly for migrant pupils, the law stated clearly that pupils with English as an Additional Language should not be misidentified as SEND solely due to the "language or form of language" they were taught in at school being different to that at home. At the same time, the new legislation confirmed these young people's rights to appropriate identification and support (Education Act, 1981, p. 3 (b)).

However, aims to redress inequalities fell short in practice. The use of the new terms SEND and Learning Difficulties soon signified deficit. Pupils with SEND were placed disproportionately in bottom sets, entered for lower tier examinations and a culture of low expectations remained (Troyna and Siraj-Blatchford, 1993). A move away from integration as a flawed idea towards inclusive practice, where participation is increased and exclusionary barriers for all are removed, was underlined by the Europe-wide Salamanca agreement (UNESCO, 1994; Barton, 1997). However, as Allan (2008) usefully discusses, what inclusion meant, how far and how successfully it could be implemented, including special education scholars' disagreements with its approach, continued to be debated. Furthermore, research continued to highlight the ways that pupils were designated as SEND through subjective teacher assessments, with school and individual class contexts and teacher characteristics as well as the young person's experiences of inequalities influencing these identifications (Thomas and Davis, 1997; Croll and Moses, 2003; Cremin and Thomas, 2005; Anders *et al.*, 2011; McCoy, Banks and Shevlin, 2012).

Gender was identified as a key area of inequalities, with more boys being designated as having SEND than girls (Audit Commission, 2002; DfE, 2010). Social class was implicated in identifications, with considerable debates around the relationship between poverty, low achievement and SEND, including for refugee pupils (Booth and Ainscow, 2002; Lindsay, Pather and Strand, 2006). An initial lack of data in the UK obscured concerns around disproportionalities in Black and other minoritised ethnic groups being designated as SEND. Once collected, this data pointed to prevailing inequalities (DCSF, 2005; Lindsay, Pather and Strand, 2006; Strand and Lindsay, 2009). EAL pupils were found to be mostly underrepresented in SEND categories, but overrepresented in Speech and Language Communication Difficulties (SpLD). Black pupils and Gypsy, Traveller and Roma

communities were proportionally overrepresented, even after controlling for poverty and gender, particularly for Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD) and moderate to severe learning difficulties. Black boys were twice as likely to be considered to be designated as having BESD than White British boys. There were particular concerns for Black Caribbean pupils' overrepresentation compared to Black pupils from other backgrounds. There was also a lack of data on which pupils were refugees and asylum seekers, since figures were not collected nationally, so that the number of these pupils designated as SEND were unknown. Also, global categories, for example Black African, masked specific patterns for particular groups such as Somali pupils. However, Lindsay, Pather and Strand (2006) pointed to refugee pupils' possible need for SEND support due to trauma, disrupted education and lack of health care.

The Labour government that came to power in 1997 focused on social inclusion, and within this the emphasis in educational policy turned to whole class approaches to learning for all pupils, whatever their background or particular learning needs (DfES, 2001, 2004a). A system of "Quality First Teaching"[1] was introduced from the mid-2000s (DfES, 2007). The aim of this approach is that pupils are taught as a whole class first, then those who are not making progress are allocated to small group intervention, and finally to individual targeted provision from specialists where needed. Progress through these stages of support is often tracked through SEND provision maps managed by Special Educational Needs and Disability Coordinators (SENDCos). However, there are significant concerns in research about its effectiveness with regard to pupils from Black and other minoritised ethnic groups including EAL who may have SEND, discussed in Chapter 2.

Alongside this focus, discourses of achievement around the standards agenda continued to put schools under pressure to perform and to "close the gap" in attainment for all pupils (Ball, 2008; DCSF, 2008a). This agenda, which has become increasingly stringent and academically focused over the course of this study, measures a school's public test and examination results and sets targets for improvement each year, with consequent Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills) inspections should a school fail to achieve the required results. Although some felt that this agenda opened up possibilites for pupils with SEND, others were concerned that schools used the SEND system to gain extra funding, but also to blame "low achievers" for their low attainment, with Warnock (2010a) herself raising these problems. Here, the label of SEND was used to suggest innate difficulties which meant that these pupils could not make progress, rather than considering how they were being taught.   As attainment for pupils with SEND was not

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[1] This system mirrors Response to Intervention, introduced in the USA to try to counter inequalities around misidentification of SEND (USA Department of Education, 2004; Fuchs and Fuchs, 2006).

monitored in the same way as for other pupils, by designating pupils as needing SEND support, scores for government league tables could be manipulated (Audit Commission, 2002; McLaughlin *et al.*, 2006; Allan and Slee, 2008; Frederickson and Cline, 2015). The danger for migrant and refugee pupils was that they could be listed as having SEND support without a thorough exploration of this in relation to their need to acquire English, in order to promote the school's ratings rather than to investigate their needs.

Warnock (2005) also argued controversially that she felt the "project" of inclusion was wrong, in that mainstream school places were being allocated to pupils with SEND who she felt should be educated in special schools. This was at a time when many special schools were being closed. Whilst those working from within a special needs approach which focuses on assessing for SEND and providing targeted support welcomed this intervention, others emphasised that inclusion as a concept was not the issue. They pointed instead to how it was operationalised and the impact of the standards agenda on these processes (Barton, 2005; Norwich, 2010; Warnock, 2010b). Some scholars pushed for a radical reaffirming of the social model of disability, which looks at barriers within society and contexts, countering medicalised discourses within special education approaches (Oliver, 1996; Allan, 2008, 2010; Slee, 2010; Valle and Connor, 2011). Others suggested that more relational approaches such as Sen's concept of capabilities could ensure a fair distribution of resources (Florian *et al.*, 2006; Reindal, 2009; Terzi, 2014). However, Norwich (2002, 2008, 2014), an advocate of the integrative model, argued that "dilemmas of difference"[2] around identification without stigma are not solved through these approaches. Furthermore, within those who initially supported the social model, there were disagreements around the need to revise this concept, how far impairment (natural variation) can be conceptualised as distinct from disability, and in what ways these are contingent upon each other (Shakespeare, 2006; Reindal, 2009; Oliver and Barnes, 2010).   From a race and social class perspective, Tomlinson (1982, 1985, 2013) argued that the category of SEND is used by those in power to maintain hierarchical social structures rather than to provide for educational needs.

Within these processes and debates, notions of SEND and how migrant young people might be supported in their learning are seen to be fraught with inequalities, contention and difficulty, not just around misidentification, but also around how SEND is conceptualised and implemented within wider understandings of what inclusion means. Before moving on to consider changes in policy from 2010 onwards when the coalition Conservative/ Liberal

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[2] This term is often referenced as first used by Minow (1985) in her article where she discusses how for both bilingual and pupils with SEND, there is a difficulty in allocating extra support without stigmatising them.

Democrat government came to power, it is important first to analyse the policy context around underachievement and EAL which existed alongside SEND.

1.3 Migrancy and underachievement

EAL having been firmly identified as a different category of learner distinct from SEND (Education Act, 1981), the achievement of these pupils continued to be funded through Section 11 funding which was started in 1966 to provide extra support for pupils arriving from the Commonwealth who had different language or "customs" (NALDIC, no date). EAL pupils were often taught in separate language provision centres, which were closed following a report by the Commission for Racial Equality (1986) and pupils supported in the mainstream instead. From 1997 the numbers of migrants arriving in the UK increased substantially, and net migration rose each year. This was due to a number of factors including: Eastern European countries joining the European Union (EU) in 2004; non-EU arrivals also increased after 1997 and peaked in 2004, including those who came to study; asylum applications peaked in the early 2000s (Office for National Statistics, 2015; Casciani, 2018; The Migration Observatory, 2019). Funding was changed to the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG) in 1999, available to support the achievement of any young person with EAL or of Black Caribbean heritage. Schools were monitored by local authorities on how targeted pupils were progressing (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, 2000; DfES, 2001; Ofsted, 2001; DfES, 2003b; DCSF, 2007a).

Alongside the increase in migration, concerns about migrant young people's underachievement, particularly of Black Caribbean pupils and the high rates of exclusion for these boys remained an issue for government policy. The Swann report (1985) made it clear that the problems were not about teaching pupils from minoritised ethnic communities, but about how all pupils were included in learning. It emphasised the importance of a multicultural approach designed to combat racism. However, inequalities persisted, highlighted in Gillborn and Youdell's (2000) findings of an "educational triage" operating within schools. This was a process by which those performing on the borderline of "pass" C grades were focused upon to increase the school's overall achievement. Those not performing at this border, including pupils with SEND but also those considered to be underachieving, were found to be ignored within racialised, gendered, classed discourses around notions of in/ability. Attention to these inequalities was heightened following the murder of Stephen Lawrence and the Macpherson (1999) report's findings regarding institutionalised racism (Gillborn and Mirza, 2000). Consequent amendments to the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 were referenced within government guidance to schools around the need for equity in educating all pupils, whatever their background. The Aiming High programme and the Black Pupils Achievement Programme were established by the

government to provide mentoring, role models and encompass diversity within the curriculum. There was a particular focus on Black boys, but also guidance around minoritised ethnic groups in general, including those with EAL and from refugee backgrounds (DfES, 2003b, 2004b, 2004c; Tikly *et al.*, 2006; Maylor, Smart and Kuyok, 2009). However, SEND was not a focus within these programmes.

Alongside this focus on underachievement, a range of NGO and government reports analysed and disseminated good practice with regard to the education of newly arrived refugee young people, highlighting barriers that these pupils faced and how schools might address them (Ofsted, 2003; Harris, 2004; Appa, 2005; Franks, 2006; Doyle and McCorriston, 2008; DfE, 2011; Walker, 2011). Separately, EAL/ SEND guides were developed by some local authorities to inform schools about how to formally assess for SEND once young people had been in the UK for two years. This was considered an acceptable length of time for pupils to settle in, whilst countering any initial negative assumptions by teachers. However, how to identify and support pupils designated as EAL and SEND was not addressed further in government policy, and was hardly mentioned in relation to refugee young people (Rosamond *et al.*, 2003; Cambridgeshire Race Equality and Diversity Service, 2013).

The prevailing multicultural approaches which often underpinned both EAL and Black achievement programmes were criticised by Cantle (2001) in his report into riots and disturbances across Northern England. This argued that ethnic communities, particularly White and Asian Muslim, were segregated. The report led to a statutory duty for schools to promote community cohesion (DCSF, 2007b). However, following the events of 9/11, the 7/7 bombings in London and the rise in terrorist threats, Islam came to be seen as a significant, gendered marker of threatening difference within the political context. There was an increase in Islamophobia, with boys seen as dangerous terrorists and girls essentialised as oppressed or a risk and as refusing to integrate (Shain, 2011). Educational policy turned at this point to consider the underachievement of Muslim pupils from particular minoritised ethnic communities, and Somali young people attracted specific attention at this level for the first time. Although this was potentially positive in terms of resources, the policy failed to address the complexities of Somali young people's lived experiences of education around disrupted education, forced migrancy and misidentification of SEND which had been highlighted by key researchers (Kahin, 1997; Rutter, 2004; DCSF, 2008b).

Notwithstanding the plethora of programmes designed to address the inequalities experienced by young people from Black and minoritised ethnic backgrounds, there continued to be concerns about the ways in these young people were marginalised and pathologised as not fitting in (Demie, 2008; Strand *et al.*, 2010; Strand, 2012a). In the

following decade, these inequalities were perpetuated as resistance and fear towards migrancy continued to be evidenced in responses to the refugee crisis, further terrorist attacks and the rise of so called Islamic State, the rise in hate crime following the "Brexit" result and the "Windrush scandal", to name a few key examples (Hobolt, 2016; Sigona, 2016; Rutter Pooley, 2017; Dearden, 2018; Gentleman, 2018). Social attitudes to refugee communities as unwanted, illegal and dangerous were particularly prevalent for Somali young people due to the continuation of terrorism in Somalia, and the growth of piracy (Tharoor, 2009; BBC, 2017; Monks, 2018). In 2015 referrals to the "Prevent" programme, a part of the government's counter terrorism strategy which aims to safeguard those who are at risk from becoming involved in extremism in all its forms, became a mandatory aspect of safeguarding for schools (DfE, 2015a; Counter Terrorism and Security Act, 2015; Townsend, 2016). Schools were also required to promote "Fundamental British Values" to their pupils (DfE, 2014). Both programmes have been critiqued for being delivered in ways that alienate and essentialise rather than engaging young people and their communities (Greenwood, 2017; Vincent, 2018). This wider social and political context serves to emphasise the ways that Somali young people could be discriminated against within schools, considered to be a threat, with their rights to appropriate support for their education potentially denied.

1.4 "Disadvantage" and a new SEND system

The marked "othering" of migrant young people was implicated in the decision by the coalition government in 2010, and successive Conservative administrations since then, to move away from an achievement focus on ethnicity and EAL. These politically motivated changes increased the risk that the needs of particular groups of migrant pupils could be hidden within assumptions about their learning. EMAG funding stopped being ring-fenced in 2011, and the ways in which EAL funding was allocated changed, leading to concerns about the negative impact on pupil progress (NALDIC, no date; Arnot *et al.*, 2014; Strand, Malmberg and Hall, 2015). Additionally, the decision not to require the new codes for EAL pupils' language proficiency to be submitted in the school census further marked silences in policy around migrant pupils (DfE, 2018a; Whittaker, 2018; DfE, 2019a). Despite representations from leading practitioners, the revised Ofsted framework for school inspections made no mention of EAL pupils' particular needs (NALDIC, 2019; Ofsted, 2019). At the same time, asylum applications increased from 2010 to 2015 due to the refugee crisis, decreased slightly from 2015 to 2017 but then rose again. Despite the numbers of EU citizens migrating to the UK falling sharply after the "Brexit" result, non-EU migration increased (Office for National Statistics, 2019; The Migration Observatory, 2019).

Whilst pursuing silence in relation to migrant pupils, the coalition government introduced a new policy to support pupils seen as disadvantaged through the Pupil Premium Grant (PPG)

(DfE, 2015b). This policy was created at the start of my research and rolled out during my field work. It meant that extra funding was allocated to schools for all pupils who were in receipt of free school meals at that point in time or over the previous six years. This shift in policy was seen by scholars concerned with race as a reaction to political and media debates about immigration and claims that the needs of the white working class, particularly boys, were being ignored (Tomlinson, 2011). Gillborn's (2002, 2008, 2010) work drawing on Critical Race Theory argues that white working-class families are constructed as an underclass by those in power. He contends that this is in order to sustain notions of White supremacy, so that Black and other minoritised ethnic young people and their families are blamed for white working-class underachievement, thus taking the spotlight away from inequalities around poverty. Others suggested that the reason for the change in policy was due to the lack of effectiveness of previous achievement strategies (Copeland, 2018). Positively, the introduction of PPG meant that many refugee pupils were eligible for this funding due to their families' low-income, whether or not they came from higher social classes in their home countries, whilst Pupil Premium Plus was also allocated to all unaccompanied asylum-seeking children due to being "looked after" by the local authority. There was also separate premium funding allocated for those who had low prior attainment in order for pupils to "catch up" to the level of literacy and numeracy required by the government when they started secondary school. This was of benefit to migrant pupils who arrived mid-phase and were still "behind" their peers, but did not specifically address concerns around migrancy and SEND (DfE, 2017).

The Education Policy Institute's (2018) report stresses that although underachievement and SEND are risk factors for children and young people designated as disadvantaged, the latter is not a homogenous category. Their literature review sets out inequalities that can impact children's educational development including a mother's physical and mental health, lack of access to medical resources, poor housing and nutrition. All of these can be significant experiences for migrant and refugee young people, constraining possibilities to learn effectively and in some cases producing disability through lived experiences of poverty, whatever their social class background (Liasidou, 2012a). As the report says, measurements of social class and poverty are highly contested and there also continue to be complex debates about assumed or actual links between poverty, SEND and low achievement. It is noteworthy that Warnock (2010a) asserted that she was not allowed by the government in her initial report to raise the relationship between social class and SEND, an aspect she argues is highly significant. Interrogating political discourses around this, Tomlinson (1985) argued that the SEND system could be seen to categorise the working classes as failures once manual labour jobs vanished, thus absolving those in power of the

need to cater for them. Whilst once all were expected to achieve, there was no need for a distinction between low achievement and SEND (Tomlinson, 2013).

Although the PPG policy offered some potential for pupils to access support, identifying those who require "educational help" rather than pupil premium support was still problematic (Macleod *et al.*, 2015; Crenna-Jennings, 2018). There were also other inequalities embedded in PPG funding. First, those not eligible, including undocumented young people, could receive less teacher attention (Sigona and Hughes, 2012; Rogers, 2017). More fundamentally, the government's focus on the concept of "closing the gap" through a neoliberal focus on meritocracy was strongly criticised from a race and disadvantage perspective. Scholars asserted that "gaps" do not close fast enough, or that they even widen as pupils progress through school, due to wider social and material inequalities (Lu *et al.*, 2006; Demie and McLean, 2017; Gillborn *et al.*, 2017).

At the same time as PPG was being implemented, changes to the SEND policy promised early identification to avoid children and young people's need for SEND support being missed. The Children and Families Act 2014 introduced a revised system of school based support, and Education Health Care Plans (EHCP) to replace statements of SEND. The aim was to ensure that schools put in appropriate school-based support before moving to formal assessments. The new term "educational help" was introduced, steering away from "special needs" which as noted above had become laden with notions of deficit. For the first time, mental health was included whilst "behaviour" was removed (DfE, 2016a; Education and Health and Social Care Committees, 2018). Although the overall number of pupils with EHCPs remained fairly stable after the system's implementation, the number of pupils with SEND support fell. The government argued that this meant that whole class teaching was working, but teachers were concerned that pupils who need this help were losing out (ATL, 2016). Furthermore, these changes did not result in addressing the disproportionally high identifications noted in 2005, of boys, pupils who have free school meals, Travellers of Irish heritage and Black Caribbean pupils in SEND support and in EHCPs, whilst EAL pupils were still underrepresented (DCSF, 2005; DfE, 2018b; Strand and Lindorff, 2018).

With regard to schools' accountability for those identified with SEND, an aspect also investigated by Lamb, Ofsted (2010) introduced more stringent requirements on how schools reported on these pupils' achievement (Gillie, 2010). The resulting focus on all pupils achieving an A* to C grade in English and Mathematics GCSE (public examinations taken at age 16), whatever their learning needs, was then widened through the introduction of the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) where schools were monitored on their pupils' success in academic subjects (Humphrey and Squires, 2011; DfE, 2019b). The increased demands around accountability in examination grades heightened negative consequences for schools

in disadvantaged areas, which often cater for many vulnerable pupils, including recently arrived EAL and refugee pupils and those with SEND. This was acknowledged by the government as amounting to social segregation (Greany and Higham, 2018; Ministry of Housing, 2018). To recognise the work that these schools do in increasing achievement, the progress as well as the attainment of pupils in eight key subjects at GCSE was monitored (DfE, 2016b). However, some argued that the continued lack of value placed on practical, non-academic subjects seriously affected the ways that attainment and achievement of SEND pupils is considered (House of Commons Education Committee, 2018a). By contrast, although the Department for Education admitted that the new GCSE examinations would disadvantage both EAL and SEND pupils, they insisted that allocated funding for these groups had to be used to ensure that all pupils accessed more academic subjects (Wiggins, 2016).

In the new Code of Practice (DfE and DoH, 2015), an emphasis on shared practice between schools, health professionals, families and community organisations aimed to introduce a holistic approach in the system. The SEND process had become marketised over time, with some families even migrating to the UK to access its SEND provision (Singhal and Oliver, 2012; Tomlinson, 2012). Social class was implicated in parental advocacy. Those from middle class backgrounds were found to be more likely to request for their child to be identified with "acceptable" types of SEND such as dyslexia and autism in order to gain educational resources to improve attainment (Elliott and Grigorenko, 2014). Contrastingly, those from working class backgrounds were found to encourage diagnoses of issues such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), which for some could increase their welfare benefits (Allan and Harwood, 2014).   Non-statutory, community organisations argued that the new system, as with the previous one, particularly excluded working class and migrant families. This was due to bureaucratic systems which were not clearly explained and were inaccessible for those with low levels of English and/or literacy. For families such as those from Somalia with different experiences of how SEND might be viewed and supported, this posed significant problems, together with possible fear of authorities due to migration experiences. Furthermore, there were racist and discriminatory approaches to families' abilities to know and support their children's needs and a lack of access to legal aid (Broomfield, 2004; Corbett and Perepa, 2007; Temple, Young and Bolton, 2008; Singhal and Oliver, 2012; Kulz, 2015; Gillborn *et al.*, 2016). It must be noted however that there were significant constraints on all parental "choice", both in the previous system and even more pressingly in the new one, with schools, local authorities and families battling over provision (Tomlinson, 1985; Allan, 1999, 2008; Tirrarao, 2018a; Weale, 2018).

Since completing the fieldwork for this study there have been increasing concerns around vulnerable pupils' placements in mainstream education. Accessing school places for SEND pupils and newly arrived refugees, including those designated as SEND, has become increasingly difficult (Sharma, 2014; Gladwell and Chetwynd, 2018; Weale and McIntyre, 2018). Racialised, gendered, classed discourses around "natural difference" still operate within schools' use of setting, streaming and reporting systems, thus increasing disadvantage (Francis *et al.*, 2017; Archer *et al.*, 2018). There has been a 40 percent increase in formal exclusions between 2015 and 2018, with nearly half of these pupils being designated as needing SEND support or having EHCPs (House of Commons Education Committee, 2018a; Weale and McIntyre, 2018). Practices of zero tolerance behaviour policies and "off-rolling", where pupils are told to go elsewhere without being formally excluded, have also risen substantially (Longfield, 2017; Bloom, 2018; Daulby, 2018; House of Commons Education Committee, 2018a). More children and young people are being taught in Pupil Referral Units (PRUs), with disproportionality particularly noted for those designated as SEND, "looked after" children, those in need and in poverty, boys, Black Caribbean pupils and those from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller backgrounds (Gill, Quilter-Pinner and Swift, 2017; Tirrarao, 2018b). The Children's Commissioner has raised questions as to whether these units are the best place for all these young people to learn (Longfield, 2017). There are chilling echoes of Coard's (1971) and Tomlinson's (1981) arguments about "special" schools decades ago.

This, along with the rise in "home education", including in private tutoring centres, has also caused concern around children and young people's vulnerability to crime and gangs once they are outside mainstream education (Apland *et al.*, 2017; Busby, 2018; House of Commons Education Committee, 2018b; Sheridan, 2018; Weale and McIntyre, 2018). Representation in the criminal justice system continues to be a problem with young people with identified SEND five times more likely to enter it, (Talbot, 2010; Smithson, 2016; Ministry of Justice, 2017). In the absence of government policy focus on Black Achievement, different local authorities are promoting well researched approaches such as mentoring, curriculum relevance and high expectations to address their serious concerns about continuing disproportionality in attainment and the marginalisation of black boys in particular (Demie and McLean, 2017; Millard *et al.*, 2018; Gammon, 2019). With regard to SEND, the new Code of Practice and EHC plans are being reviewed by the Department of Education (Barratt, 2016; Tickle, 2017; House of Commons Education Committee, 2018b). Although the report had not been published at the time of writing, the Chair of the Education Select Committee has gone on record as saying the system is a "disaster" (Murray, 2019).

There is possibly better news for EAL pupils' achievement. Despite the squeeze on resources for EAL pupils referred to above, GCSE results have been reported to show that these learners are now "narrowing the gap" and even outperforming their monolingual peers (Freedman, 2018). However, these reports have been questioned by analyses of local and national data which highlight the complexities around understanding the educational experiences of heterogeneous groups of migrant young people over time and at particular moments in policy (Demie, Lewis and McLean, 2008; Strand, Malmberg and Hall, 2015; Hutchinson, 2018). Importantly for this study, these findings point to continuing risks for pupils who have EAL around race, SEND, poverty, recent migration and age, and the ways in which prevailing notions of Somali underachievement persist.

1.5 Developing the research questions

Drawing these multiple threads together regarding government educational policy for refugee pupils over time with regard to SEND, it is clear that there are continuing and deeply embedded inequalities as well as constrained possibilities around how Somali young people who have recently arrived in the UK might negotiate their learner identities around the need for "educational help". The dimensions of race, religion, ethnicity, gender and class, I have argued, are all important to consider in these negotiations, with the aspect of refugee either pathologised or ignored. It was thus central to my research question that I explored how the young people negotiated EAL, underachieving and disadvantaged learner identities as well as refugee and SEND, and that I considered the racialised, gendered, classed dimensions of these negotiations.

I have also pointed to the potential problems experienced by migrant families in relation to SEND systems in England, raising questions about how far families have opportunities to advocate for their child's educational provision. Considering these issues within the wider context of diasporic Somali families' pre-migration experiences of education and their understandings of SEND, the potential for a disconnect between school and home is very present. It was therefore important that my research question explored how a group of Somali boys and girls negotiated their learner identities around notions of SEND at home as well as at school, and in the "spaces" in-between. I wanted to find out how they negotiated a sense of belonging in these different contexts, within racialised, gendered, classed assumptions about what it means to be a learner. These research questions are developed through Chapters 2 and 3. The challenge was to find a theoretical framework that was useful in analysing the dynamics at play, which is outlined below.

1.6 Theoretical Framework

I set out in this section my main ontological and epistemological approaches, first giving a rationale for the choices I made, and then discussing in more detail my understandings of these approaches and their importance for this study.

To understand more about this group of Somali young people's lived experiences as learners, I had to interrogate the dominant knowledge operating in schools which designates pupils in fixed, essentialised ways as certain types of learner within prevailing racialised, gendered and classed views of what an ideal learner looks like. To do this, I wanted to explore the young people's and their families' knowledge and views, which I had found to be silenced and ignored. I therefore needed a theoretical framework which opened up possibilities to privilege "other" perspectives, to challenge whose knowledge "counts", to uncover silences and explore the processes by which the young people were seen as not "fitting in" (Strega, 2005; Mazzei, 2007b). Post structuralism was therefore a useful ontological tool to employ, concerned as it is with notions of power, knowledge, subjectivity and agency (Howarth, 2013). Fitting with this approach, I was not looking for "the truth" but to know many truths, to understand the intricacies and complexities within different incomplete, partial stories and interpretations, about how these young people negotiated a sense of belonging as learners with the resources available to them (Ramazanoglu, 1993).

Feminist and post-colonial approaches were key tools to address these requirements of the study. I needed to explore what the concept of SEND meant for schools and for young people and their families, at a point of power imbalances between western institutions and diasporic, refugee communities. Here the power to label and assign support and resources was located firmly in schools, where, as I have discussed above, colonialist assumptions of ignorance, illiteracy and being ineducable were operationalised in a system which saw British, white, upper to middle-class boys as ideal learners. My study aimed to interrogate these binaried, deficit and fixed views with regard to race, gender, class and notions of SEND. A feminist approach challenged negative, subjugating assumptions and opened up alternative interpretations. It could be usefully employed with post structuralism through its interrogation of dualisms, exploring the ways in which difference operates and positively acknowledging and respecting different forms of experience and knowledge (Weedon, 1997; Weedon 1999; Strega, 2005). Intertwined with this, a post-colonial approach was crucial in challenging deficit views of the young people and their families as inferior, lacking and "other". It interrogated the power relations in operation within which they were constructed in fixed, essentialised and homogenising ways, exploring understandings of different educational experiences in specific social, historical and political contexts (Brah, 1996).

Throughout, I was acutely conscious of the fact that I, as a White, British, middle-class, female teacher/project worker, was conducting research with Black, refugee young people, and that inevitably I was hearing and interpreting their stories and representing them within my thesis through my own lens. It was thus vital for me that I chose these ontological and epistemological approaches as I needed to be constantly aware of how my own experiences had shaped how I saw the world. These approaches emphasise the need for critical self-reflexivity and therefore helped me to interrogate the power relations at play in my interactions with others and consider my own as well as others' racialised, gendered, classed assumptions around what being a learner means.

A post structuralist ontology understands meanings as produced through discourses. Foucault (1979) theorises discourses as systems of language, thoughts, attitudes, beliefs and practices which represent but also create knowledge about our social practices and the frameworks within which we live. Thus, social and learner categories of young people as Black, Muslim, working class, boy, girl, refugee, EAL, SEND, underachiever and disadvantaged are conceptualised not as entities in themselves, but as produced and represented by discourses within social, historical and political contexts in education and in wider society. The discourses within which learner identities are constructed are gendered, classed, racialised, ethnicised and ableist, with essentialised, hierarchical and often binaried views of young people from particular social groups as able or unable (see for example Youdell, 2006a; Archer and Francis, 2007, reviewed in Chapter 2). Notably, both the social and learner category of "refugee[3]" is often used in slippery, marginalising and pathologising ways (Wallace, 2011). This understanding of how learners are perceived resonates with debates among scholars about how disability and normalcy are constructed (Swain and French, 2008; Hughes, 2009; Allan, 2010; Liasidou, 2012a; Gallagher, Connor and Ferri, 2014).

These ways in which young people are designated to be a certain sort of learner can be understood as learner identities, acting in the same way as social identity markers which are assigned and taken up, resisted or rejected by the one to whom they are allocated. A post-structuralist approach to identities dismisses the idea of identity as stable, unified and derived from origins (Hall, 1996). Instead, it focuses on how identities are constructed through ideas of difference and the marking of the "other". Hall suggests that the notion of identification, rather than identities can reflect the fluid and temporary nature of identities. Identity negotiations are understood as co-constructed, negotiated moment to moment by

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[3] For the purposes of this thesis I use the term "refugee" on its own when describing this as an aspect of identities. This is not to essentialise it, but to desist from using terms such as refugee status which are loaded with sensitive personal and political significance around official leave to remain in a country.

actors within social interactions and the discourses available. Discourses therefore constitute the subject, providing a position from which to act, but at the same time subjectifying them within those discourses, thus constraining them. Within these processes, multiple, shifting, temporary, even conflicting subject positions can be taken up or refused (Davies and Harré, 1990; Hall, 1996; Wetherell and Edley, 2009). Wetherell (1998) argues that discourse analysis should focus on wider genealogies of meaning and the repertoires on which people draw as they perform their identities. Analysing subject positions as configured over time, contingent, fleeting and highly situated within an array of discursive practices, she explores how these positions may be "troubled", unsettled and insecure as they negotiate recognition by others (Phoenix, 2013).

As Youdell (2006a) argues in her exploration of theories around subjectivation, Butler's concept of performativity and discursive agency is important here. Performativity is theorised by Butler as a process whereby an utterance produces a way of being in the world, constructing a subject as identifiable and intelligible through reiteration. What is constructed as intelligible in turn produces what is seen as unintelligible. These subjectifying process are not completely constraining, but are "restriction in production", by which she asserts that although the subject is produced through the discourses available, allowing possibilities for agency, it is also constrained by those same discourses (Butler, 1997, p. 84). Drawing on these understandings to conceptualise how learner identities are negotiated, Youdell (2006b) argues that to make sense as a certain type of pupil and/or learner, for example a "good" female pupil, the rules within the discourses around what that means need to be continually cited. She contends that social identities are deeply implicated in these processes, affecting how far it is "discursively possible" to be recognised as an acceptable learner. Where performativities do not make sense or conform to these discourses, the subject may be constituted as an "impossible" learner and/or pupil. Youdell suggests that Butler's concept of performative politics opens up possibilities for agency within these discursive constraints, where a subject may take up counter, subordinated or silenced discourses and make meaning from them, challenging what is intelligible or possible.

An intersectional approach can help to understand the complexity of these processes. Crenshaw (1989, 1991) first introduced the term intersectionality in her explorations of how Black women "disappeared" if gender and race were considered separately. She argued that instead there needed to be an understanding of how intersecting patterns of racism and sexism were experienced. Although scholars were already engaged in these considerations, Crenshaw coined a term which others took up as a useful way of capturing the simultaneity and power relations they were theorising (Davis, 2008). Feminists welcomed this approach, particularly those writing from a post-colonial perspective, as it helped to open up the

contentious area of debate as to how feminism can claim to represent all women, without essentialising and stereotyping who "woman" is. Hence intersectional approaches provided an "acknowledgement of differences among women" (Davis, 2008, p. 70), by extension recognising differences amongst all social identities.

The term intersectionalities focuses on the range of dimensions within social identities and in turn the possibility of multiple positionings within them. It interrogates how, as identities are co-constructed in shifting, fluid, unstable ways within discourses, some dimensions may be rendered invisible, others more marked, and the complexity of identities obscured within hierarchical power relations (Phoenix, 1987; Potter & Wetherell, 2001). Intersectionality aims to explore negative visibilities as well as making powerful, invisible subjectifications visible (Crenshaw, 1989; Yuval-Davis, 2006). For example, this approach helps to understand how a Black Muslim Somali boy who has recently arrived in the UK might be perceived as a learner. Identifying the different social and learner identities that are available within the material realities of discrimination, marginalisation and exclusion serves to interrogate the discourses which position him in certain ways. If we only considered him as a Black, working class boy, without considering his identity as a newly arrived refugee, or Muslim, the complexities at work in negotiations of his learner identities could be ignored, with significant implications for his learning. As I will discuss in Chapter 2, there is a wealth of research in education which draws on these understandings to explore the ways in which learning is a gendered, classed and racialised experience for young people, to which this study seeks to contribute.

Although many scholars have drawn on this concept of intersectionality, its nature and use has been considered to be confusing, ambiguous and vague (Denis, 2008). In attempting to convey what takes place, scholars wrestle with how to present it without using images of fixed separateness, which the concept seeks to contest.

Phoenix and Bauer (2014: 492) offer an apt description upon which I draw in this study, ensuring that we see categories as mutually constitutive and not separable:

> People are always simultaneously positioned in many categories so that there is no one essence to any category. A focus on one social category can, therefore, only be understood in the context of other categories and of differences, as well as commonalities, within groups … all categories are associated with power relations and cannot be neutral.

Post-colonial theories help to uncover the workings of these processes, engaged as they are with interrogating power relations and notions of belonging and unbelonging. Conceptualising a different space where processes of identity negotiation in a transethnic

society are played out for all, Brah (1996) proposes the notion of a diaspora space. She describes this space as "includ[ing] the entanglement of genealogies of dispersion with those of 'staying put'"(Brah, 1996, p. 181). This concept challenges notions of "them" and "us" and opens up a way of understanding the fluidity of identity negotiations in post-migration educational contexts for adults as well as young people.

The concept of diaspora space also assists considerations of the impact of colonialist educational practices on understandings of SEND. Education for pupils designated as SEND in post-colonial contexts is mostly studied through a western gaze, and from the perspective of provision and identification in different countries rather than within a migratory setting. 'Non-western' discourses about dis/ability are often seen as "behind" and conflicting with dominant western views (CESVI, Handicap International, & European Commission, 2012; Elshabrawy & Hassanein, 2015; Richardson & Powell, 2011; Tomlinson & Abdi, 2003). Brah's notion of entanglement instead usefully allows an exploration of how discourses might also intersect and inform each other rather than being constructed in binary ways as "developed" and "undeveloped". However, Anthias (2002) critiques "diaspora space", suggesting that the notion of entanglement is at risk of not addressing inequalities and exclusion, the lived experiences that my study seeks to interrogate. Mindful of this caution, I draw on "diaspora space" in this study with consideration as to the nature of entanglement, and whether this inevitably conveys a sense of equality.

A post-colonial approach was also key in understanding how Black and other minoritised young people may be misidentified as SEND. Within special needs approaches this inequality is seen as disproportionality, where SEND is understood as an aspect of learning which can be identified, but is misrecognised for certain young people on the basis of racialised, classed, gendered assumptions about learners (Strand and Lindorff, 2018). Alternatively, other inclusion scholars, often working from a Disability in Education perspective, approach these inequalities through interrogating the ways in which learners are positioned as deficient and therefore excluded within racialised, gendered, classed, ableist discourses (Allan, 2010; Slee, 2011). They argue that the focus needs to be on how difference is understood and embraced.

Two key scholars' arguments about the importance of post colonialism in relation to understandings of misrecognition helped to guide my thinking, Artiles and Tomlinson. In his work on how migrant young people negotiate the dimensions of race, class, gender and SEND, internationally as well as in the USA, Artiles (1998, 2003) suggests that neither an inclusion nor a disproportionality approach works, as whichever way pupils are constructed as "different" they are overlooked. Drawing on Bhabha's (1994) notion of surveillance, he argues that inclusion literature does not consider the historical, social or cultural reasons

behind categorisations of learner and ignores broader structural inequalities around poverty and race. Alternatively, he suggests that the disproportionality approach can construct difference as intrinsic rather than comparative, and family practices as reified and rooted in deficit discourses (Artiles and Bal, 2008). Artiles proposes instead that post-colonial, in-depth studies of complex individual and community lived experiences must be undertaken if we are to understand how to teach and support these young people appropriately. Similarly, in her extensive work in the UK, Tomlinson (2004, 2005, 2008) argues that a post-colonial, post slavery approach is the only way to understand the overrepresentation of Black young people in SEND systems and school exclusions. She points to the continued presence of social Darwinism and thinking in the persistent stereotyping of these pupils, and boys in particular, as inferior, disturbed and dangerous, whilst insisting that race and class must always be considered together.

Over the course of this study, there have been key developments in the ways in which scholars have drawn on different, blended theoretical approaches to study the intersection of race, class, gender and disability. Tomlinson's work is seen by inclusion scholars as a key contributor to the development of Disability Studies in Education (DSE) (Slee, 2011). This aspect of scholarship critiques a special education approach and can draw on structural or feminist post structural theories. Despite Tomlinson's influence, this body of work attracted criticisms that experiences of multiple inequality, particularly regarding race and ethnicity, were being ignored. Interrogating this gap, scholars using theoretical approaches such as Critical Race Theory have contributed to a more nuanced and incisive exploration of lived experiences of inequalities in education for those with disabilities. Erevelles and Minear (2010) analysed contemporary and historical narratives of lived experiences of education in the USA. Using a Critical Race Theory approach to DSE, they argue that employing intersectionalities helps to resist fragmented understandings of identities and can usefully expose how certain pupils are subjectified as unable and worthless. Turning to how teachers' practice may be informed by pupils' experiences of discrimination and marginalisation, Annamma, Connor and Ferri's (2012) work in the USA argues for Dis/ability Critical Race Theory, or DisCrit to increase understanding of these experiences. These scholars have also argued that class must be more thoroughly analysed with regard to disability in DSE and Critical Race Theory (Ferri and Connor, 2014). Liasidou (2012a, 2012b) draws on critical, feminist approaches to DSE, to interrogate the ways in which disability is produced through power laden, neo-liberal systems, and uses a social justice framework to consider all forms of disadvantage. She also concurs that Critical Race Theory can be productively used with an intersectional approach to DSE to ensure that disability is not hidden within wider notions of inclusion (Liasidou, 2014).

These studies demonstrate scholars' recognition of the complexities inherent in interrogating lived experiences at a point of multiple inequalities, and the usefulness of using an intersectional approach. Furthermore, they grapple with the challenge of addressing many dimensions together. Some suggest that to do this, researchers should form coalitions, complementing each other's work, so that individuals can more thoroughly interrogate specific aspects in detail, avoiding the risk of trying to explore too much at once (Liasidou, 2013; Ferri and Connor, 2014). In this study, and to contribute to these considerations, I interrogate the effectiveness of intersectionalities as a tool within a post-colonial, feminist, post structuralist approach which seeks to uncover silences and challenge pathologising assumptions. It aims to privilege the experiences of those learning "at the margins" and unsettle notions of belonging and unbelonging at the intersection of refugee, gender and SEND. I consider whether it is possible to consider the full range of social and learner identity categories within the limitations of a thesis, while aiming to do justice to the research findings. At the same time I am conscious of the fact that where a dimension is ignored or minimalised, there are potential implications for the research.

The next two chapters review what we currently know about how Somali young people negotiate their learner identities around notions of SEND both at home and at school. There is a wide range of social and learner identities that my research interrogates in novel ways, particularly since studies of refugee young people and SEND are rare. It was therefore a challenge to encapsulate the breadth of research that the study draws on. I did this by focusing on what literature tells us about how young people negotiate their learner identities in different spaces of school and home, organising the review into two chapters, with Chapter 2 focusing on Somali young people's negotiations at school, and Chapter 3 looking at their negotiations at home and in the community. In Chapter 2 I look at what we know about young people's learner identities at different intersections of social and learner dimensions: refugee and SEND, EAL and SEND, Black, Muslim boys and girls as underachievers or as having SEND. In some senses this structure runs counter to the very nature of our understandings of intersectional categories as inseparable and risks seeing the young people's performances at home and at school as separate, an aspect that my study set out to interrogate. However, through focusing on different intersections, the review allows aspects of young people's learner identities that have often been hidden within literature as well as in practice to be exposed and critiqued.

Chapter 2: Negotiating refugee, gender and SEND in school

Two previously quite separate bodies of literature inform my review of Somali young people's learner identity performances in school: those concerned with newly arrived refugees, and the body of work on Black, Muslim underachievement. I structure this chapter around these two areas of study, with a main section on each. I start with considering how notions of SEND are present or absent in literature on refugee young people's learner identities and consider how far research on EAL/SEND considerations can inform the gaps which exist. In the light of this discussion, I then review research which focuses specifically on Somali young people's negotiations as refugee learners and highlight where notions of SEND are explored, implied or missed out.   I then review literature which focuses on notions of underachievement with young people from a range of ethnicised backgrounds, including Somali. Here I explore again how far SEND might be present or implied, alongside reviewing key studies which focus on Black and other minority ethnicised young people's negotiation of SEND where there were formal identifications of need. An intersectional approach is a key tool for this review, as I consider the ways in which SEND and refugee are visible and invisible within studies in order to argue for the need for further research.

2.1 Refugee young people and school notions of SEND

Research into refugee young people's lived experiences of education in westernised countries can be loosely categorised into four intersecting groups: adaptation and trauma; mental health; inclusion and social justice. For this first main section, these themes are a useful way in to interrogate how notions of SEND are present and/or absent within the literature.

Rutter's (2003a, 2004, 2006) extensive research with refugee young people and their families in the UK around education set out to counter what she saw as homogenising processes produced through the medicalised, trauma discourses within which much research with refugee young people operated at the time. She contended that this approach masked significant issues the young people faced in their present experiences which affect their learning, including SEND. Her use of Bronfenbrenner's (1992) ecological model aimed to redress these tendencies and look at young people's adaptation to the host country in terms of micro and macro systems. This places a young person at the centre of local contexts such as family and school, within wider arenas of society, politics which are surrounded by cultural attitudes and beliefs. In comparison to Hamilton and Moore (2004), whose use of this ecological model still leads them to conclude that learning difficulties are solely related to trauma, Rutter suggests that refugee young people are over, under or misidentified as having SEND for a range of reasons. Critiques of the ecological model have

argued that it draws on a normalised view of childhood, which does not engage with how young people respond to disability or other challenging life experiences. Furthermore, even with additions of resilience and disability the model may constrain understandings of the heterogeneous, situated, contextualised and fluid ways that young people may co-construct their learner identity performances (Watters, 2008).

Despite these drawbacks, Rutter's work usefully points to key issues around the intersection of SEND, gender and refugee. She highlights significant inconsistencies in allocating support and difficulties with assessments, as well as raising issues around gendered constructs of refugee boys as traumatised and refugee girls as passive and oppressed, with Somali boys found to be particularly overrepresented in exclusions. Drawing on notions of failed learner identities, Rutter suggests that some boys took up a "laddish" anti-learning street culture to negotiate racial harassment, whilst girls' needs were overlooked. Furthermore, she found racialised assumptions around identification of particular needs such as speech and language, literacy or BESD in specific ethnicised groups, particularly Somali and Congolese pupils (Rutter, 2001, 2003b). Although many of her reasons for these inconsistencies around SEND align with work on EAL/SEND reviewed below, Rutter emphasises aspects which are more likely to be related solely to refugee young people, and which align with Kahin's (1997) findings in his book on Somali young people's education in the UK. This includes lack of knowledge of learning in the home country; high mobility post migration; lack of opportunity to develop print literacy in Somali and English; minimal support in academic English at school and at home, exacerbated by poverty and parents' lack of formal education. Furthermore, Rutter argues that the underachievement label is often attributed to refugee pupils due to racism, the relevance and structure of the education system and their lack of access to education before migration, potentially obscuring specific need for support. Her analysis of the fluid ways that EAL, refugee, SEND and underachievement categories are referenced helpfully highlights the complexities around young people's learner identities and she provides important pointers to the issues that refugee young people face with regard to SEND identifications. Although Rutter is clear that we must not focus solely on mental health, she does not dismiss this area which is considered next.

2.1.1 Interrogating approaches to mental health

The intersection of mental health and refugee learner identities has consistently been a point of discussion in refugee education literature. Mental health being positioned within the SEND Code of Practice (DfE and DoH, 2015) allows these considerations to be examined even more rigorously than before with regard to learning. Kaplan *et al.* (2016) argue that refugee pupils' experiences of trauma and the link to cognitive development have not yet

been considered in detail in research. Due to the limits of this thesis, I highlight here the main findings within mental health literature as they pertain to education and schooling, and the issues which have been found within this in understanding a refugee young person's need for "educational help".

Several scholars have joined Rutter in criticising the trauma model and psychological approaches as homogenising and limiting in their usefulness (Arnot and Pinson, 2005; Rutter, 2006; Hughes and Beirens, 2007; Matthews, 2008). However, others argue that psychological studies provide important insights into the gendered and family aspects of mental health needs and how these may surface at transition points in school (O'shea *et al.*, 2000; Leavey *et al.*, 2004; East *et al.*, 2012). Psychosocial studies consider the impact of a young person's post migration experiences and stressors, along with critiques of school policies and structures particularly around inclusion, bullying and racism. These, they argue, may all present further risks to mental health beyond pre-migration experiences (Fazel and Stein, 2003; Weine *et al.*, 2004; de Anstiss *et al.*, 2009; Pinter, 2010). Added to this, discussions around resilience and coping strategies challenge deficit, racialised and gendered discourses which position the young people as victims (Maegusuku-Hewett *et al.*, 2007; Hulusi and Oland, 2010). For example, Mohamed and Thomas' (2017) conducted a qualitative study of the role of risk and protective factors in positive acculturation with 21 refugee young people, including some Somali young people, in five London schools across three boroughs. They found that a sense of safety, belonging and support from staff, family and friends were key to the young people's adjustment and educational progress.

Within this body of literature, some scholars explore the use of multi-faceted, accessible, non-medicalised support strategies which recognise gendered and non-westernised responses to stress, and the consequent barriers in accessing support within westernised, sometimes inappropriately delivered services (Hodes, 2002; Kohli and Mather, 2008; Brownlees and Finch, 2010; Colucci *et al.*, 2015). Davies and Webb's (2000) study of health provision for newly arrived Somali young people in Wales analysed data collected in clinics in the 1990s attended by 115 children aged up to eighteen, and draws on psychological and psycho-social approaches. It found that boys were more likely to express their struggles through challenging behaviour whilst girls internalised their emotions. With inflexible, insensitive approaches from educational and health professionals, differing western and Somali understandings of mental health meant that other needs were not identified. Notably, the scholars argue that psychological assessments masked aspects such as the need for "educational help". These findings are contrasted in a study on emotional wellbeing and its relation to schooling by Chase, Knight and Statham (2008) in their narrative study with 54 unaccompanied and looked-after young people aged eleven to 23 in the UK. Using a

grounded theory approach aimed to avoid findings being obscured through choosing a particular approach at the outset, a useful approach given the dominance of westernised views of mental health in present literature. The scholars found that their participants interpreted mental health through focusing on the heart, not the head, with differing gendered responses to stress. Young men could give the impression of being in control, but disclosed high levels of anxiety in discussions, whereas girls were found to be more able to express their emotions. The difference in these two studies' conclusions highlights the need for continued awareness about the contextualised, individual, intersectional nature of identity performances. It is particularly important to consider the age of the participants, the location and the date of the data collection.

The significance of the misrecognition of mental health, behaviour and learning needs raised in Davies and Webb's work is explored in detail in Hart's (2009) interactionist, ecosystemic case study of one Montenegro refugee boy's experience of schooling in the UK.   Hart shows how his support needs were firstly unidentified, then categorised as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in a new school and finally assessed as due to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). He concludes that SEND assessments need to be conducted within wider, anti-racist understandings of young people's needs as refugees. This work usefully resonates with Allan and Harwood's (2014) critique of the ways in which ADHD is identified, this time from a social class perspective, in their study which interviews ten professionals in Scotland. Rather than a diagnosis, they advocate for a consideration of the expressed need, the context and attachment developmental aspects of a young person's practices in order to appropriately assess what support is needed.

Exploring SEND assessments from a race perspective, Wright's (2017) autoethnographic study with five trainee educational psychologists draws on Black feminist, Critical Race Theory and decolonising methodologies which challenge how racialised groups are positioned as subordinate and interrogate counter narratives. Wright asserts that a colonialist, assimilation agenda is underneath notions of education and "betterment" and concludes that the profession must employ reflexivity and explore subjectivity within a "third space" approach (Bhabha, 1994). This can critique the Eurocentric ways in which the system claims to "know" a young person whilst ignoring the social and political and historical contexts which inform their judgements, and recognises the complex ways in which they are positioned and position themselves as migrant young people within their families, communities and in wider society.

Whilst engaging in different theoretical approaches, and focusing on either young people or professionals, these studies all demonstrate that multidisciplinary, critical research can expose confusion and misunderstandings at the intersection of gender, SEND, race and

refugee. They highlight the importance of reflective, in-depth research and practice in this area. Furthermore, they point to contested understandings of school as a place of safety for refugee young people, not just in terms of protection from stress and violence, but also around access to appropriate "educational help" and the need for non-judgemental, reflective approaches from professionals. These findings therefore point to the need to focus on wider aspects of inclusion.

2.1.2 "Good" inclusive practices?

There is general agreement in guides and research on inclusion for refugee pupils about what schools need to do (Ofsted, 2003; Harris, 2004; Appa, 2005; Franks, 2006; Doyle and McCorriston, 2008; DfE, 2011; Walker, 2011). Rutter (2006) suggests that three discourses dominate: a welcoming environment free of racism; meeting psycho-social needs and addressing linguistic needs. Arnot and Pinson's (2005) "bottom up" investigation into UK local authorities' practices similarly advocates for a holistic model which focuses on young people's multiple needs, parent and community partnership and an ethos of inclusion with celebration of diversity. These findings are mirrored by work in Australia around inclusion where scholars argue for a funded, targeted, whole school approach which recognises the importance of well-being, challenging notions of difference. They caution about a focus solely on language learning, considering wider issues of structural inequality and power relations (Sidhu and Taylor, 2007; Due and Riggs, 2009; Taylor and Sidhu, 2012; Block *et al.*, 2014; Heer *et al.*, 2016). There is an important difference to note here between provision in different countries. In the UK at the time, segregated initial provision for new arrivals was almost unheard of, whereas in Australia, in the USA and in some European Union countries, this was standard practice, often for the first year of a young person's education. The studies in Australia cited above therefore address assumptions that young people would have learnt what they needed to in the initial provision and are then able to fit in to mainstream schooling.

It might be assumed that inclusive "good practice" approaches would address the issues around SEND identifications for refugee pupils as a significant system within whole school approaches to learning. However, it is only clearly drawn out in a recent UNICEF report into refugee young people's education in England, Scotland and Wales conducted by a charity, Refugee Support Network, who provide mentoring and advocacy for refugee young people regarding their education (Gladwell and Chetwynd, 2018). Using a practice-based approach, the report analyses data on newly arrived children and young people's difficulties with accessing school places from 77 local authorities. They conducted in-depth interviews and focus groups with 86 participants who were part of their and other charities' support programmes, some with their parents, and 48 interviews with professionals. As part of wider

findings around the difficulties of remaining in education, it highlights the challenges associated with identifying SEND for refugee children and young people once they are in school, meaning that their ability to "thrive" is significantly constrained.

The reasons for the absence of considerations of SEND in good practice approaches are possibly found within the temporary, fleeting, as well as hidden nature of a refugee learner identity in schools. Accepted practice is for newly arrived, EAL pupils (including refugees) not to be formally assessed for SEND for the first two years in England, by which time their identity as a refugee may be further obscured or rejected by them. Walker (2011) highlighted this issue in her study of the efficacy of a three-year mentoring project for newly arrived young people set up by the Refugee Council in London, West Midlands, Yorkshire and Humberside. Using an action research approach, she conducted interviews with seventeen volunteers, nineteen young people aged ten to eighteen (twenty percent of the young people who took part in the project) and three volunteer coordinators. She also analysed feedback from school talks and questionnaires conducted with all who took part in the project. Here an NGO, working with refugee young people across educational phases, highlighted the issue about SEND as being lost within transition between different educational institutions. However, as Gladwell and Chetwynd (2018) point out, this waiting time is outdated given the requirement to consider mental health within SEND processes, and the present system of prioritising the resettlement to the UK of Syrian families who have children with SEND.

A further concern with the good practice approach is that it can reify the troubled notion of barriers, a term which tends to be used within deficit, homogenising discourses to subjectify refugee young people and their families as problematic, within which notions of SEND and inability can circulate, rather than focusing on the problems caused by systems around them (Keddie, 2012). Although not addressing SEND for refugee pupils directly, Matthews' (2008) interrogation of the "good practice" approaches in Australia helps to suggest ways forward. Arguing for a post-colonial framework which interrogates difference and exposes power differentials, she suggests that multiculturalism, a prevailing approach at the time, is ineffective. She focuses on interviews with fifteen school personnel in four high schools and one intensive language provision as part of a wider critical analysis of policy for which she also interviewed young people. Drawing on an acculturation perspective, she concludes that pre and post migration experiences need to be understood so that a pupil's individual needs can be identified and addressed.   Within this, she agrees with Rutter's suggestions in the UK (2006) that the progress of those with disrupted prior education needs to be measured in appropriate ways that recognise progress, rather than subjectifying them as consistently "behind". Matthews further contends that disaffection, alienation and anti-school cultures are

produced by systems which construct these young people as "other", and leave them to "sink or swim" (Davila, 2012). A decade later, Baak's (2019) thematic narrative analysis of in depth interviews with six Sudanese refugee young people in Years 6 to 8 finds that inclusion can only be possible if the focus turns to exclusionary practices, around the systemic, everyday occurrences of racism and othering that the young people experienced.

These studies, through interviewing school personnel, or young people and those supporting them through charities, point out deeply embedded inequalities within the structures around how refugee young people are educated together with the ways that they are viewed as "other". It is interesting to note that it is charities working one-to-one with young people who have highlighted issues around SEND identifications first raised by Kahin (1997) and Rutter (2004) with regard to Somali young people. There is less reflection in this body of work on how teachers and pupils' relationships may be constructed within these structures. This is considered in more detail within the literature which focuses on social justice approaches which is reviewed in the next section.

2.1.3 Justice not judgement?

Chubbuck's (2010) work turns the attention of teachers to the whole child, offering scope for a non-judgemental approach to refugee young people. Drawing on this approach and Nancy Fraser's (1997) model of redistributive, recognitive and representative justice, Keddie (2012) conducted an ethnographic, qualitative study over one year in an Australian primary school which taught a high percentage of migrant and refugee young people. She argues that as teachers focus on the individual and their experiences, complexities and diversities become visible and thus essentialised, gendered, racialised, classed constructs of refugee young people as unable and disruptive are resisted. This has significant implications for how SEND might be identified and supported. Keddie highlights the need for self-reflexivity in how young people are perceived within a profession staffed mostly by white, middle class teachers, paralleling the findings regarding educational psychologists' practices discussed above. Focusing on one case study with Mills (2012), she explores how a new, white female Australian teacher takes up a position as a "saviour" of Muslim, Lebanese young men, aiming to "fix" them to assimilate into dominant white middle-class behaviours. Rather than her knowledge of their backgrounds, it was her low expectations which were found to reinscribe inequalities within binaried, gendered, racialised constructs of academic inability, abnormality and bad behaviour or academic ability, normality and civility. To address these issues, Australian scholars have argued that programmes where new teachers attended after school provision for refugee young people have enabled teachers to construct the young people in positive ways once they learnt about their individual lives, experiences and aspirations (Ferfolja, 2009; Naidoo, 2009). However, Sellars and Murphy (2018) assert in

their review of Sudanese young people's negative experiences in schools during fifteen years of settlements in Australia that initial teacher trainees should be learning these lessons wherever they are practicing.

Issues around teacher perceptions of migrant young people in the UK are explored by Abreu and Hale (2014) in a study which interviewed a wider number of staff, 27 British and nine Portuguese teachers. Drawing on understandings of difference as socio-culturally constituted within contact zones, the scholars explored how the teachers constructed Portuguese children living in Britain and Jersey as learners. They thus investigated ethnicity and language rather than race. The findings suggested that those considered "bright" were assimilated as British, whereas those who needed more support were seen as deficient and having "difficulties", demonstrating quite binaried responses. They note that teachers who were from migrant backgrounds took more account of bilingual and bi-cultural competency, emphasizing the need for all teachers to understand these aspects. Exploring these marginalising processes from young people's perspectives, Sharples (2017) conducted an ethnographic study in one South London school's separate programme for newly arrived migrant pupils aged fourteen to nineteen. Considering notions of local practices and migrant trajectories, in this paper he analyses how one Ethiopian boy's learner identity performances were misconstrued by teachers. They saw him as demanding and misbehaving, rather than recognising his significant previous formal learning experiences and identifying that he needed guidance in how to negotiate the differences in systems, teacher behaviour and expectations in England.

These small-scale studies were conducted in different contexts, either observing and interviewing teachers or focusing on pupils' experiences. They all demonstrate aspects of the complexities that need to be grasped not just around refugee, but also around race and ethnicity within an approach which challenges racialised, colonialist assumptions, in order to appropriately assess a learner's need for "educational help". Gender and class, although indicated in Keddie's (2012) study, require more careful exploration at their intersection with these dimensions. The problematic ways that teachers drew on understandings of EAL, migrancy, notions of in/ability and disruption indicate that young people's need for "educational help" potentially could be ignored or misunderstood.

A possible response to these issues is found in a small, body of work within refugee literature, mostly from the USA and Australia. This focuses on how the curriculum can be designed and delivered by teachers in socially just ways through training them in cultural competency. It aims to draw reflexively on migrant learners' strengths, skills and knowledge gained informally as well as formally through past experiences within a culturally sensitive curriculum. Positioning the young people as agentic learners, capable of critical literacy and

experts of their own learning experiences, it challenges deficit discourses which position them as needing to fit in to the status quo, whilst training them in the school's ways of learning (Alford, 2014; Nwosu and Barnes, 2014; Kaukko and Wilkinson, 2018). Interrogating these issues in the UK, Wallace (2011, 2013) conducted a sociocultural, sociolinguistic longitudinal study over ten years in state schools and colleges in West London. Using a critical literacy approach, she explored how the young people, of whom a significant number were from refugee backgrounds, negotiated a sense of belonging as learners. She found that many home languages were not valued by schools or indeed families as tools for learning, but also cautions not to be overly romantic about home language learning, asserting that this too can be constrained. Highlighting how reading and written literacy were constructed by teachers as synonymous with learning, Wallace argues that only the "right kind" of literacy was recognised in the pupils and learning through orality was ignored. These findings emphasise the need to consistently challenge white, westernised, colonialist views of what being a learner means.

Multilingual scholars have demonstrated for many years that pupils who speak more than one language bring a range of rich learning experiences to their mainstream setting that are largely unrecognised and constrained (Conteh, Martin and Helavaara Robertson, 2007a; Conteh, 2012; Safford and Drury, 2013; Robertson, Drury and Cable, 2014). Drawing on Cummins' (2001, 2009) influential linguistic work on multilingual learners, together with Moll *et al.* (1992) and Gregory's (2001) socio-cultural theories on family literacies, these scholars point to the importance of schools and teachers constructing pupils and families as skilled and capable rather than as problematic. I explore this in more detail in Chapter 3. Wallace's work adds to these understandings significantly, as most of these studies focus on early years and primary pupils. These explorations regarding language, curriculum and pedagogy help to point to the deficit assumptions that can be made by teachers around migrant young people having intrinsic difficulties with learning, rather than focusing on the context within which they are learning. An area that these studies do not address in any detail is how far need for "educational help" could be potentially misrecognised within assumptions around lack of literacy and fluency in English.

It is important to note that teachers are not always positioned as problematic within research into refugee young people's education. Studies also focus on teachers' kindness and caring towards their refugee pupils, finding that these attitudes are significant in the young people's co-construction of possible learner identities (Hek, 2006; Hastings, 2012; O'Toole Thommessen and Todd, 2018). What the notion of "kindness" means is explored in Due and Riggs' (2009) mixed methods, participatory study with 63 pupils aged five to thirteen who were learning in initial educational provision in Australia. They found that their participants

constructed teachers' care not just in terms of feeling safe, but also in how they were rewarded and praised for their progress. Added to this, De Heer *et al.* (2016) look at how these same pupils transitioned to mainstream education. They highlight the importance of lessons for the pupils' sense of belonging and opportunities for appreciation which did not require significant academic language skills, along with the importance of supportive peer relationships. However, Patel Stevens' (2011) in depth consideration of two migrant young people's educational experiences in the USA argues that being kind and helpful is not sufficient. Drawing on Bourdieu's notion of capital, her findings show that these attitudes do not properly expose, recognise and therefore appropriately challenge the wider structural inequalities that migrant young people face and how these impact on their learning and future options. Comparing these studies, it is important to note the need to interrogate young people's positive views of their teachers within the wider context and inequalities in which they are learning.

Constraints around "caring" teacher roles and pupils' access to support are discussed in detail in Pinson, Arnot and Candappa (2011)'s book, which gathered together ten years of empirical, sociological research into policies and practices by local authorities and schools in the UK. Using a rights approach within a sociological framework, they advocate for schools to adopt a "safe visibility" approach to those refugee young people who were non-citizens. They found that entitlement to resources through single, specified categories such as EAL or SEND was constrained through lack of government monitoring of refugee pupils' progress, the school's exemption from reporting on the achievement of newly arrived pupils' examination results at sixteen, and little communication between staff.

Despite the possibilities afforded by a social justice approach through teacher and peer support, these scholars suggest that it does not engage with the structural constraints and substantial inequalities that face a refugee young person, of which access to SEND support is a key consideration. The next section reviews the literature on how EAL pupils may be assessed as needing this support, before considering research with Somali young people in particular.

2.2 Deficit discourses around EAL/SEND

Cline (1998) is one of the few scholars who has contributed substantial research to considerations of EAL/SEND identifications in the UK. Aligning with the UK SEND system, he uses an interactionist SEND model to argue that staff conducting assessments need to have a knowledge of the young person's family experiences, insisting that their multilingual learner identity is recognised along with appreciation and understanding of the young person's present learning context and relationships with peers. This resonates significantly

with the social justice approaches outlined above. He proposes that an assessment of the language provision already given, along with full bilingual assessments at the start of their learning, can then inform the rest of the process. As well as carrying out a bias test on any materials used, Cline emphasises the importance of assessing the young person's learning environment, including observing them in other learning spaces in the community. However, although Cline's advice around EAL/SEND has been drawn on in good practice publications in some local authorities, it is often not included in wider guidance on EAL and refugee pupils and guidance on this issue is not mentioned in the latest SEND Code of Practice (Cambridgeshire Race Equality and Diversity Service, 2013; DfE and DoH, 2015; The Bell Foundation, 2016).

Furthermore, the separation of EAL and SEND in research is highlighted in Cline's literature review with Shamsi (2000). What literature does exist, they conclude, suggests EAL pupils are more likely to be under rather than overrepresented on SEND lists as these young people are assumed to need time to learn the English language. At the same time, their review cautions about the difficulties around assessing "too early" or relying on first language assessments where young people are no longer learning in this language. Cline's comprehensive book written with Frederickson (2015), presents the question of EAL/ SEND as one aspect of a broader issue around SEND and diversity. They focus on pedagogical strategies as well as asserting that prevailing racialised, gendered, classed discourses which construct the young person and their family as problematic must be challenged, as these contribute to under, over and misidentifications. Thus, these scholars put the onus on teacher and school systems to change to fully include EAL learners, rather than demanding that the pupils fit in. However, EAL researchers argue that assimilationist approaches persist, with learners rendered invisible, constructed as underachieving and expected to fit into a monolingual, monocultural curriculum, again resonating with the refugee literature discussed above (Foley, Sangster and Anderson, 2013; Wallace, 2013; Arnot *et al.*, 2014; Costley, 2014). Furthermore, Andrews (2009) shows in his review of fifty-four studies about EAL achievement that scholars tend to focus on policy, teacher practice and teacher training, with no discussion of issues around SEND.

Research in the USA into the system of Response to Intervention, can help to inform this gap, highlighting issues around how the curriculum is delivered when considering EAL/SEND. Some scholars' analysis draws on a special needs' perspective. For example, Garcià and Tyler (2010) suggest that despite the constraints of the curriculum, there is a need to look beyond EAL, disrupted education and poverty to find an intrinsic difficulty, but that this assessment needs to be conducted bilingually. However, an analysis of data from three case studies of EAL pupils referrals for SEND specialist intervention (Ortiz *et al.*, 2011)

found that professional judgements by bilingual and other staff were found to be subjective, partial and inconsistent, not clear about where SEND or other factors such as poverty or language might be impacting learning. Thus, they call into question how effectively a SEND assessment system can be used that is based on the notion of an intrinsic difficulty, constructed for white, monolingual, middle class young people, and they highlight the discriminatory attitudes of teachers. Furthermore, López (2013) argues that the Response to Intervention system was not designed with relevance for EAL pupils' needs and experiences. These studies raise questions around how far intervention strategies appropriately meet the multiple needs of the young people, and point to the difficulty of using cohort wide approaches to assess needs.

Liasidou (2013), in her analysis of Response to Intervention's impact on EAL/ SEND identifications suggests that although this system may counter some of the misidentification of SEND in EAL pupils, it is the monodimensional approach of school policies and the curriculum that acts against inclusion, perpetuating discrimination and pathologising EAL pupils. Thus, without a Quality First teaching approach that reflects cultural and linguistic diversity, Response to Intervention will not appropriately support these pupils' learning. She argues that bilingual and special needs educators need to come together on this subject and proposes to use intersectionalities as a useful way forward. Concurring with the need to focus on teaching approaches, López and Mendosa (2013) undertook a case study of a large urban district in South Texas where they interviewed fifteen school staff. They conclude that Response to Intervention subjects EAL/SEND pupils to failure before their needs are assessed. Furthermore, from a theoretical perspective, Barrera and Liu (2010) contend that this approach does not take into consideration a young person's life and educational experiences or their language proficiency. They argue that instead a pupil needs to be compared with their "true" peers to identify possible SEND. However, although this highlights the comparative nature of SEND assessments, the notion of "true" peers is problematic, suggesting a fixed understanding of how young people's lived experiences and the ways that they learn, as well as essentialising the comparators.

Debating the problems found in both special needs and inclusive approaches, Artiles (1998, 2003; 2008; 2011) argues throughout his work that EAL and SEND learner identities cannot be considered together in isolation from other aspects of a young person's identity. In his paper with González (2015) focusing on Latino/a EAL pupils with SEND in the USA, Artiles contends that in order to address the category-based, restrictive approach to support and funding, the whole way that literacy is taught needs to be reframed. This radical shift demands a sociocultural focus on speaking and collaborative writing, moving away from the problematic reading to learn approach which Wallace (2011, 2013) highlights. In a similar

way to Cline, Artiles and González insist on full assessments of family educational backgrounds and learning within the home which is inclusive and non-judgmental (see Chapter 3, section 3.4 for further discussion about the family dimensions to this).

Drawing these findings together from literature on refugee pupils' learning around trauma, mental health, "inclusive" school practices and socially just approaches, alongside knowledge about EAL/SEND, two consistent themes emerge. Firstly, attention is drawn towards school policies, structural inequalities, professionals' attitudes and teaching practices, with the notion of testing for SEND being found to be flawed. Secondly, an emphasis is placed on the need to understand the complexity of a young person's learner identity and their family background to counter deficit discourses and assumptions about their learning. This provides a useful landscape within which to consider research into Somali young people's experiences of education in western countries with regard to notions of SEND.

2.3 Somali young people as refugee learners

Somali families have arrived in western countries as refugees from the 1980s onwards, with the highest numbers arriving at the end of the century. The small body of literature that has focused on these young people's learner identities in Europe, the USA and Canada over several decades has often employed narrative and ethnographic methods, using observations and interviews in school and with families. The literature usefully focuses not only on Somali young people as new arrivals, but also as more established learners. This potentially opens up opportunities to explore how notions of SEND may be negotiated at different points in time within these young people's lived experiences as learners, as they settle in, learn a new language and negotiate what it means to be a learner.

In Finland, Alitolppa-Niitamo (2002) conducted an ethnographic study with a small group of newly arrived Somali young people who were attending an initial educational provision. Using a structuralist theoretical approach and drawing on notions of acculturation, she found that some persisted with their formal learning, despite facing significant challenges, whilst others did not engage due to the stressors they were experiencing. Analysing both observations and interviews, she suggests that boys were seen to be particularly at risk of dropping out. Families' high expectations of the boys' academic and career success, which they felt were unattainable, were sometimes a catalyst for their involvement in crime and gangs, whilst the girls struggled with the demands of home care responsibilities and study. Furthermore, parental fears of "losing" their children to western practices meant that young people were also having to negotiate tensions around home expectations. Resisting

dominant negative constructs of these young people, Alitolppa-Niitamo advocates for them to be seen as "in need" rather than unable, requiring time to adjust and achieve.

Focusing instead on experiences in mainstream education, Oikonomody (2007, 2009) conducted an ethnographic study with seven recently arrived Somali girls in an urban, multi-ethnic secondary school in the USA. Through a thematic analysis of observations and focus groups, she found that the girls constructed themselves as possible, aspirational learners, despite facing significant barriers including language learning, Islamophobia and negotiating the curriculum after arriving mid-way through their schooling. Oikonomody (2010) then conducted a critical discourse analysis of the girls' narratives a few years later. She found that the girls' responses to difficulties with accessing the curriculum at this point were perceived by teachers as signifying underachievement and disruption, their refugee learner identities hidden. The girls' reactions of liking or not liking both subjects and teachers were, according to Oikonomody, not just "teenage" responses. Instead they reflected the reality of their experiences as refugee, Black, Muslim learners, positioned as outsiders through powerful, marginalising discourses. Resisting these subjectifications, peer support amongst the group was crucial, as were "teacher-helpers" who did not mark them out, made the curriculum relevant and understood their educational needs.

Negotiating the relationship between language, education and integration is also the focus of Sporton and Valentine's (2007) much larger two year research project with Somali young people in secondary schools in Sheffield, also focusing on narratives. Drawing on Somer's (1994) understanding of identities as constructed through social practices in particular settings, they explored how experiences of migrancy impacted the young people's sense of themselves as Somali, Muslim, British boys and girls. Sporton and Valentine used snowballing techniques to recruit 50 children and their parents. Interviews, participant observations in community spaces, online exercises, a general survey of 3,313 pupils and art therapy sessions were analysed. Their findings, also in collaboration with other scholars, are presented in several papers, which are referenced within different sections in this and the next chapter.

Interrogating young people's negotiations of multilingualism in school, Valentine and Sporton's post structuralist, post-colonial study with Nielsen (2008) draws on Butler's theories of performativity. It analyses how Somali young people who had migrated to Sheffield from European Union countries negotiated a sense of belonging within different linguistic spaces in fluid and creative ways. Their narrative analysis of interviews with the young people found that where multilingualism was ignored and silenced, the Somali language was used as a tool in constructs of disaffection, or disruption (Valentine and Sporton, 2009). Although by comparison, Somali was used constructively to form

relationships with their peers, it was also found to be implicated in struggles over peer status as "new" and therefore deficient, or "White" and therefore not Somali.

These studies, whether small and in depth or interviewing a larger group, focusing on new arrivals or on those who have been resident for longer, all point to the young people's experiences of marginalisation as learners. They demonstrate the ways in which determined, disruptive and/or disengaged learner identities were performed in response to these challenges and indicate the need to explore possible gendered aspects of these performances. However, there is no particular reference to SEND, in parallel to much of the wider refugee literature reviewed above.

One aspect of Somali young people's learner identities which is often foregrounded by schools as a significant barrier and can be confused with SEND is the lack of print literacy in Somali (Kahin, 1997; Rutter, 2003b, 2006). Bigleow and King (2014) focus on this aspect of learner identities in their qualitative, linguistic anthropological research in an American High School. Analysing observations, interviews and language and literacy assessments with pupils aged 14 to 21 in two EAL withdrawal classes, the majority of whom were Somali and Spanish speakers, they compare a Somali boy and girl's identity negotiations. Saiful, who knows Somali script, is found to take up a dominant role as a model male pupil with distraction or disobedience being ignored by teachers, whilst Ayan, who had no prior education, is shown to have her knowledge of spoken Somali unrecognised, her attempts to gain help being constructed as disruptive. Bigelow and King see these performances as agentic as well as constrained, highlighting the gendered and print centred subjectifications of the young people as certain types of learner, which resonates with Wallace's (2013) findings discussed above.

Returning to this class with Hirsi, their Somali-American teacher on the research team, King and Bigelow (2017) collected data twice a week over one year through participant observations, video recordings, photographs and examples of the students' work. The make-up of the class was almost all Somali recent arrivals, aged 16 to 22, with little or no prior formal education. Analysis of the classroom interactional data focused on the ways that peer support was operationalised in ways that did not conform to standard expectations and could even be seen to be disruptive. For instance, whole class tasks that mirrored community-based, religious learning, such as choral reading, activated peer support more effectively than structured paired tasks. They conclude that manageable tasks which opened up opportunities to "do school" successfully, drawing on past and out of school experiences of learning, created safe spaces where the young people felt recognised as learners. This resonates with Sharples' (2017) findings about how teachers assume

learners learn, and points to the ways in which refugee young people may be wrongly positioned as non-learners.

Several studies with Somali young people consider their future aspirations and the ways in which these are used by the young people as a tool to negotiate the challenges they face as refugee learners. Oikonomody (2010) found that the girls who were her participants transformed negative experiences at school into imagined possibilities for the future, hoping to take up gendered, caring roles "back home". Considering social class intersected with gender and refugee, Mohme's (2014) thematic analysis of eleven year old Somali-Swedish girls' narratives of their future found that although they were living in poverty in Sweden, a wealthy status in Somalia significantly influenced their families' aspirations for them. The girls were found to take up some agency in their future imaginings, planning small families whilst often planning to take up gender-stereotyped jobs, but in Sweden not Somalia. These differences are possibly due to their age and varied migration experiences, as well as the context in which they were living: the need for security is found in other studies to be an overriding concern in Somali young people's planning the future (Sporton, Valentine and Nielsen, 2006; Mohamed and Thomas, 2017).

How notions of SEND may be implicated in these choices is highlighted by Mahmoud (2011). Conducting interviews with 26 Somali young people and ten parents in London, firstly in 1997 and then ten years later, he analysed their reflections on educational progress over time through drawing on theories of capital, assimilation and adaptation. High expectations, family resources and support were found to be vitally important, with many going on to university, whilst others were sent to Somalia or other countries when they faced problems at school or in the community, including around their safety. These moves were positive for some, but detrimental for others. One young woman who had found it difficult to learn English, and clearly had needed "educational help", was now at home in London suffering with depression. This pointed to the significant impact on these young people over time where SEND is not identified and supported. Exploring whether as a boy this young woman would have been more likely to be sent back to Somalia would be a useful aspect to consider here.

We see in this literature, which draws on a range of different theoretical approaches in different contexts and points in time, a dichotomy of Somali young people as potentially successful learners, but with the potential for marginalisation and exclusion ever present. Flexible, resilient and determined to learn, drawing on all the resources available to them, whether through peers, teachers, or support classes, compared to prevailing school discourses of them as unable, underachieving and disruptive. Where the young people find "help", mainly as EAL, possibilities for being recognised as learners are present but

constrained through deficit discourses around disrupted prior education, print literacy, home languages and language learning. Within the complex and contested nature of these young people's academic, social, multilingual identities, there are hints of the possibility for notions of SEND to be misidentified within prevailing, racialised, colonialist discourses around inability and resistance to learning. Thus, these studies concur with much of the findings in wider refugee literature above. Importantly, this review of the studies points to the ways in which identities as refugee and EAL are not the only aspects that need consideration in relation to SEND. They need to be interrogated in relation to their wider social identities around race, class and gender. The second half of this chapter addresses these aspects in more detail.

2.4 Intersections of gender, race, religion and social class with notions of SEND

The next section reviews what we know from research with Somali young people about how they negotiate their learner identities at the intersection of racialisation, gender, social class and disability. Given the sparsity of reference to SEND within these studies, I consider them alongside some key research with wider groups of Black and other minoritised ethnic boys and girls. Referring to these texts allows me to reflect on the commonalities and differences which appear pertinent in my enquiry into how notions of SEND are negotiated by Somali young people in school.

Class is referenced throughout the following discussion and considered in relation to young people's learner identities at home and in the community in Chapter 3. The studies reviewed below can be understood within the context of scholarship in the UK which has researched the intersection of social class classed with gender, race and more recently, religion over many decades. This explores how young people considered as working-class are perceived and managed as underachieving and/or as unable (non) learners within a high stakes, pressurised educational context (Willis, 1977; Skeggs, 1997, 2004; Cremin and Thomas, 2005; Reay, David and Ball, 2005; Shain, 2011, 2012; Cederberg, 2012; Tomlinson, 2013; Reay, 2017).

2.4.1 "Doing" boy

Research into black boys' learner identity performances focuses on their negotiations of dominant "Black cool" masculine identities embodied in hyper visible ways through speech, style and dress. These draw on classed, gendered notions of academic study as effeminate and sporting prowess as a key motif of strength. Notions of danger, threat and crime are inscribed in these performances. These studies find that a few boys are able to take up both popular and academic identities, others resist academic success, whilst some work at the need to maintain social acceptance with their desire to study (Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Sewell,

1997, 2009; Renold, 2001, 2004; Rhamie, 2007; Wright, Maylor and Becker, 2016). They thus refute stereotypes of all black boys as anti-learning and anti-school, whilst recognising the strength of these discourses. Furthermore, scholars have pointed to the ways that classed discourses around boys as "bad" at literacy and "better" at practical subjects need to be interrogated in relation to colonialist discourses which position black boys as uneducable, understandings which are key to my thesis (Artiles, 2003; Francis & Skelton, 2005; Jones & Myhill, 2004; Tomlinson, 1982, 1985, 2008).

Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman's (2002) post structural, qualitative, narrative study of a diverse group of eleven to fourteen year old boys in twelve London schools found that the visibility of these dominant learner identities was countered by explorations of less visible alternatives. The scholars suggest that their findings opened up possibilities to engage with the boys and their learning in ways that did not revolve around them as aggressive and disinterested. Phoenix's (2002) paper, which draws on the data collected with Frosh and Pattman, refers to the boys' agentic awareness of their nuanced negotiations, constructing themselves as "authentic" in comparison to those who were "acting" in hyper masculinised ways. This sense of different ways of "doing boy" in school is highlighted by Archer and Yamashita (2003) in their qualitative, small scale study of inner city London, working class masculinities. Through their analysis of semi structured interviews and focus groups with twenty boys, they point out the range of diverse, "Black", ethnicised, "culturally entangled" identities available to the boys, whether or not these were highly valued by peers. However, in contrast to the above study, they found that dominant anti-school and anti-learning performances were hard to resist, even if they were not fully attained.

Youdell's (2011) work usefully informs understandings of these performances in relation to notions of SEND. Her ethnographic study presents analysis of vignettes from her observations conducted in a school for boys with BESD, now SEMH (Social, Emotional and Mental Health), an aspect of SEND which has been over-identified in Black and working-class boys (see page 22). Developing Butler's (2004) work on the interrelation of subjecthood, intelligibility and "liveable lives", Youdell explores how recognisable learner identities may be performed within available discourses, whilst those that are unrecognised are excluded as a threat. Drawing on Deleuze and Guattari's (2008) notion of assemblages and Laclau and Mouffe's (1985) work on hegemony, Youdell argues that these concepts enable understandings of why negative, abject subjectivities might be sustained, as well as opening up possibilities to explore transformation and resistance. For example, a "badly behaved boy" may sustain this performance even though the behaviour will result in sanctions, as an alternative, "unable" or "needy" performance is unacceptable to him and stigmatised by his peers. These findings suggest that other aspects of SEND, not just

behaviour, may be implicated within the boys' performances. They open up questions around how this may inform understandings of performances within mainstream provision are interpreted, and with reference to refugee young people, a dimension not addressed specifically within Youdell's study.

Although according to Rutter (2003a) Somali boys are often listed as SEND by schools in the UK, research tends to report on their performances of aggressive, "laddish", "Black cool" learner identities with rare reference to SEND.   Within racialised, classed gendered discourses around achievement, Somali boys are found to attract low expectations from schools, with intervention and behaviour sanctions drawing on deficit, SEND and ability discourses that are highly racialised, gendered and classed (Strand, 2012a, 2014). Valentine and Sporton's (2009) narrative inquiry explores how the boys were unable to attain fully a "Black cool" identity, but resisted stigma around Asian Muslims and therefore took up stronger identities as Somali, in turn being misidentified as African Caribbean. Sporton, Valentine and Nielsen (2006) also suggest that tensions with Black Caribbean pupils constrained the Somali young people's Black identities. In response to associations of a British identity with being "White", which potentially disavowed their identification as Somali, the boys as well as the girls identified as Muslim. Furthermore, some of the Somali boys in Sporton and Valentine's (2007) study were reported to turn to gangs and crime as alternative sources of material and social status, taking up a hyper masculinised, racialised, "Black cool" identities in response to multiple inequalities and racism. Sporton and Valentine state that the community attributed lack of male role models to this behaviour, constructing it as a crisis of masculinity. This conclusion is often referred to in reports on Somali achievement in the UK (Harris, 2004; Harding, Clarke and Chappell, 2007; Demie, 2008).

Sporton and Valentine's study does not consider how these identifications are drawn on in learner identity performances, an aspect analysed in Abdi's (2015) ESRC funded narrative PhD study with four Somali young men where she explores their everyday embodied experiences around belonging and difference. Abdi draws on Fanon, Althusser and Butler to consider racial performativity in the classroom, analysing reflective conversations, which in this paper focus on one participant, Ahmed. Although achieving well in his studies, thus conforming to his mother's expectations and his own religious values, Ahmed reported using covert strategies to do this in order not to "act White", identifying himself not "as" Black but "like" in response to experiences of discrimination. These practices resonate with Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman's (2002) findings around the nuanced ways that boys negotiated their learner identities. Abdi reports that Ahmed was placed on the SEND register due to his behaviour and excluded from three schools. Challenging the assumptions around the schools' responses, in similar ways to Wright (2017) reviewed above, Abdi advocates for a

decolonising methodology which reflexively analyses narratives not observations in order to understand a Black, migrant young person's need for "educational help".

How race is negotiated in relation to misidentification of SEND is explored by Gilborn *et al.* (2016) into Black, middle class parents' engagement with their children's education, choosing middle class participants purposefully to interrogate the intersection of class with race (Gillborn *et al.*, 2012; Vincent *et al.*, 2012). Interviewing 62 parents in Northern England, thirteen of whom were fathers, the scholars draw on the concept of DisCrit to interrogate the ways that disability, although not an aspect they set out to explore, was deeply implicated. For both boys and girls, considerations of SEND were ignored through teachers' resistance to parental concern and/or through racialised, classed assumptions around their behaviour. Alternatively, SEND was imposed on young people who were in fact victims of racist abuse, blaming them for their responses and refusing to acknowledge their experiences. The scholars argue that disability is used by the white majority to access resources, but that these are denied to black pupils, whatever their class. Instead these pupils are controlled and excluded through operationalising pathologising, deficit labels around emotions and behaviour. Although it is not possible to make direct comparisons between Abdi's in-depth small-scale study and this larger one, it is noteworthy that they both raise similar issues around how SEND may be misidentified within racialised discourses around behaviour.

The fluid and at times contradictory performances around being Muslim, Black, working class, Somali boy learners highlighted in Sporton and Valentine's (2007) and Abdi's (2015) studies resonate with Shain's (2011) and Archer's (2003) post structuralist studies on South Asian boys' identities. Both scholars use a post-colonial approach to argue that the boys' performances shifted across and between what it meant to be Black, Asian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi, working class, British and Muslim in strategic ways, depending on the context. In Shain's analysis, those in low sets invested heavily in alternative, anti-school and anti-learning performances, with only two boys managing to negotiate successful learner identities and peer accepted Asian social identities. In her study, Archer found similar negotiations and concluded that we must not ignore the real effects of stigma on Muslim boys' learning. Shain and Archer insist on the importance of class within these performances, an aspect taken up by Mac an Ghail and Haywood (2014) in their research with forty-eight South Asian young men in the West Midlands. Social class was found to be intricately woven with religion and race and in the boys' take up of strong, collective, anti-school responses to negative, stigmatised, constraining subjectifications of them as underachieving or unable.

Comparing the findings in research with Somali boys with the studies on Black and Muslim boy learner identities, a pattern emerges of anxieties around belonging, academic failure and rejection by peers, together with the impact of structural inequalities and possible misidentification of SEND. These processes are found to constrain and even foreclose Somali boys' take up of more positive, achieving learner identities, although possibilities are present. It is interesting to note how SEND is explored or absent in these studies. Within the Somali literature it is raised by a researcher who is Somali herself conducting in depth research with a small group, possibly therefore able to negotiate the stigma around this. Rutter, on the other hand identifies the issues through school data, whilst Gillborn *et al.*'s (2016) study discover the issue by chance, possibly as parents find the research process a trusted space in which to articulate their struggles. The section below similarly considers research into Black, Muslim Somali girls and notion of SEND.

2.4.2 "Doing" girl

Girls are often considered as "doing better" than boys within prevailing educational discourses, however feminist scholars argue that these views are based on a moral panic about boys (Walkerdine, 1990; Reay, 2001; Jones and Myhill, 2004; Francis and Skelton, 2005). Black girls are similarly found to make more progress than Black boys (DCSF, 2005; Demie and McLean, 2017; GOV.UK, 2019). However Phoenix (2002) argues that they are still subjected to multiple inequalities and must not be overlooked. Her caution regarding normalised absence / pathologised presence illuminates this: Black girls are a focus where there are problems, but ignored when they are not seen as a threat (Phoenix, 1987). Rollock (2007a, 2007b) takes up this argument, critiquing the ways that educational research considers this group of girls, and arguing that racialised assumptions may influence how different, gendered performances of learner identities are interpreted as more or less anti-school.

Research which focuses on Black girls' lived experiences of education highlights the importance of these struggles. Mirza (1992) conducted a structuralist study of Black girls' experiences of education in two inner city London schools, to which she then returned ten years later using a post structuralist approach (Mirza, 2009). She considers how the girls were subjectified as unable, deficient and disruptive but also how they found agency, expressed in "educational desire" and "determined activism" (Mirza, 2009, p. 4,77). In a similar response, using postcolonial and post structuralist theories, Phoenix's (2010) narrative study of Black Caribbean girls' recollections of educational experiences on arriving in the UK found that the girls she interviewed were "positioned as embodying lack of ability … because of how they spoke and looked and where they came from" (p.111). Thus, sound as well as appearance, ethnicity and recent migration were implicated in the girls'

subjectification as non-learners. Phoenix concludes that colonial relations were both disrupted and reproduced, that all women reported agency and resisted marginalisation. These findings resonate with Oikonomody's (2010) work with Somali girls in the USA. Although in this study, the girls were in some senses recognised positively as new arrivals, once they had settled in, assumptions around disruption and underachievement masked their need for language acquisition and support, whilst they in turn resisted low expectations.

Notions of Somali, Muslim, refugee girls as quieter and more passive than boys are interrogated to some extent in Somali literature. Oikonomody (2007) draws on a multiculturalist approach to integration and uses a constant comparative method to analyse observations and focus group discussions with the girls who were her participants in the USA. Focusing on language learning and religion as two major structural factors, she explores the creative and resistant ways in which they worked to belong socially and academically after their move from a Qur'anic school where their religious beliefs were valued to a society imbued with Islamophobia. In a different context in the UK, the girls in Sporton and Valentine's (2007) study in Sheffield were found overall to perform more "modest", less anti-school identities than the boys, suggesting that stereotyped, more stable Muslim identities were negotiated. However, Aisha Phoenix's (2011) narrative study in inner London with ten older girls attending a further education college found that Black female identities were drawn on at their intersection with Muslim identities. Taking as her focus rising Islamophobia and the "war on terror", Phoenix explores how the girls constructed new Muslim and new ethnicised identities[4] to negotiate a greater sense of belonging and to avoid discrimination and stigma. Working to attain a higher status within racist discourses around migration and being seen as "new", they drew on ambivalent and contradictory "Black cool" and "not Black" performances, in parallel ways to Valentine and Sporton's (2009) findings around peer hierarchies. Furthermore, some performed classed, racialised, anti-school, anti-learning learner identities to avoid bullying and fit in with their peers, resonating with the studies detailed above about boys' learner identity performances. This points to questions around how far notions of SEND intersected with these negotiations.

Girls' responses to a sense of marginalisation as learners and notions of passivity are explored more from a social class perspective in Archer, Hollingworth and Mendick's (2010) research into young people at risk of leaving education. Their analysis from a longitudinal study focuses on a series of semi structured interviews conducted over two years with a

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[4] I use the term new ethnicities with caution around the risk that it conveys notions of "old" ethnicised negotiations as static with older generations not changing (Archer, 2003). The term "new Muslim" identities can similarly suggest fixed, homogenised assumptions about "old" Muslim performances and must be used with care to point to some aspects of post migratory negotiations.

group of working-class Year Ten and Eleven pupils in the UK. The research reports that both boys and girls struggled with the stigma around fixed, unable, disruptive or disengaged learner identities, where they were perceived as responsible for their own educational failure. To negotiate a sense of belonging with peers, they performed embodied, classed, "loud", hyper sexualised, "Black" identities. However, girls were more likely to be unidentified as "at risk" than boys through assumptions that quietness meant that they were learning. Furthermore, the girls also drew on notions of being "good underneath" within feminised discourses around work on the self. Here there are possible commonalities with boys, although performed differently, in the ways that girls balanced peer acceptance and a desire to study, in a parallel way to that discussed by Frosh, Pattman and Phoenix (2002) in their research into masculinities.

The question raised by this research for my study is how far notions of SEND are implicated in these processes, whether SEND identities are available, useful and recognised in Black, Muslim, Somali girls' performances, and how far gendered low expectations and notions of passivity and disruption conceal or resist learning needs. As with the research into boys, Youdell's work is useful at this point. In her ethnographic study in two schools in the UK and Australia, she encompasses a range of dimensions including SEND and sexuality (Youdell, 2006b). Although not specifying their particular minoritised ethnic backgrounds, she concludes in her analysis of her observations that subjectifications as Black girls were inseparable from their constitution as bad students. Thus, she asserts that fixed, binaried views of ab/normality around learner identities prevailed, despite attempts by the young people to take up agency to resist these subjectifications. Misidentification of SEND may therefore, these findings suggest, be highly implicated in these performances.

Benjamin's (2002) study explores girls' negotiations of SEND learner identities in school in relation to dimensions of religion, race and gender, again highlighting how far notions of passivity are drawn upon. Using her role as a learning support teacher, she undertook a feminist, post structuralist, ethnographic study in a secondary girls' school in England. Participant observation, interviews and multimedia activities were conducted with nine girls in Year Eleven and nine in Year Seven who were all receiving SEND support, also interviewing four members of staff.   In her analysis, she finds that the girls took up three main racialised, classed, gendered positions which were fluid, unstable and at times contradictory within deficit discourses around SEND and inability. In the Year Eleven group, the two Somali girls were found to be constructed by teachers as "lazy", "unmotivated" and disconnected from school, whilst the girls were angry at teachers for not imparting knowledge to them. Their take up of passive-resistant performances differed to both the Asian Muslim girls, who positioned themselves as "sweet" to gain help or as "lazy" to refuse help but desiring

"rescue", and those from Black and other minoritised ethnic backgrounds who constructed themselves as "big, bad" students. Despite a focus on how class, gender and race were drawn on in these performances, the Somali girls' identities as EAL and refugee are not analysed in any depth. An inquiry into home learner identities may have explored this more.

This aspect is drawn on in Shain's (2003) intersectional study of South Asian girls' learner identities in a secondary school in the Midlands, although she does not enquire into SEND. Drawing on Gramscian theories around subordination and dominance, Shain points to the ways that the girls negotiated high expectations from home and pathologising discourses within teacher assumptions of them at school as either submissive or "going wild". Shain discusses her findings through drawing out similarities in performances, as Benjamin does, and so risks reproducing notions of fixed identities. However, she reminds us to see these descriptions as aspects of complex negotiations, with passive, resistant, conforming or transformational performances intertwining with each other in different ways.

Considerations of the impact of teacher assumptions about Muslim, minoritised ethnic family approaches to girls, this time those with SEND, is noted by Allan (1999) in her study with eight young people with SEND in Scottish mainstream secondary schools. She used a Foucauldian approach to analyse how policy and school discourses on SEND were negotiated within interviews with the pupils and peers whom they nominated. With reference to one of the girls who was from a Pakistani background, Allan highlights pathologising discourses around teachers' assumptions about Raschida's family's attitudes to disability and arranged marriages. They saw her emotions as due to her disability not adolescence. Furthermore, the support offered to her to aim for higher education (at the time of the field work she was seventeen) was framed within "rescue" discourses. This individual finding, pointing to the ways in which teachers' views of families need to be clearly informed, is situated within Allan's overall conclusion that teachers constructed the pupils as passive objects in need of fixing and support. The colonialist attitudes that she highlighted thus converged with these charitable discourses. Allan argues that this approach was challenged by the pupils, who resisted teacher support, constructing themselves as active, and with desires, not needs, their peers often colluding with this approach.

The ways that Muslim girls' embodied intersectionality through the hijab may be implicated in constructions of their learner identities is important to consider in relation to notions of inability, passivity and understandings of religious beliefs. Drawing on wider research into issues of social justice in three English schools, Keddie (2011, 2014) analyses discursive positionings taken up in narratives produced through interviews with three Muslim women educators. She argues that reflections on how Muslim girls construct themselves and are constructed in school are vital, resisting seeing them as an homogenous "them" and as

racialised objects (Mirza, 2012). Zine's (2001) ethnographic, narrative study of Muslim girls' learner identities in mainstream schools in Canada, including some from a Somali background, points to the ways in which the girls were positioned in the secular school system in that country as unable, oppressed, low achievers through what she terms "gendered Islamophobia". Further analysis explores how the wearing of the hijab was performed as resistant to racist and racialising discourses, an agentic performance of solidarity, and/or piety and/or compliance (Zine, 2006, 2007). In the USA, Hamzeh's (2011) study of four Muslim-American girls' negotiation of what she term "hijabophobia" draws on an Arab-Muslim critical feminist perspective to explore how the girls strategically negotiated physical, spatial and ethical aspects of the veil within homogenising discourses at school and patriarchal systems at home, thus opening up new learning experiences such as swimming and challenging gender separated practices. She asserts that we must not trip up on the issue of wearing the veil but consider the complexities of how these young women negotiate their learner identities within gendered, racialised, post-colonial discourses, including those around the hijab, which threaten to marginalise them as non-learners.

In-depth studies focusing on small groups of girls in very different contexts cannot be used to generalise about Somali, Black, Muslim, working class girls' experiences and how they may negotiate their learner identities around notions of SEND. Furthermore, the longitudinal, larger studies reviewed here were conducted in specific parts of the UK at particular points in educational policy and with specific groups of young people. However, when critically reviewed for the ways in which SEND is present or absent, these studies point to the complex ways in which Somali girls may take up agency to resist stigma, racism, discrimination and marginalisation at school. Within these significant constraints, the girls' performances can draw on anti-school, anti-learning discourses thus further marking them as "other", but they can also negotiate more acceptable, and possibly new, learner identities. The research reviewed here suggests that whether performances are perceived as resistant or passive, disruptive or conforming, how far notions of SEND may be hidden or more exposed with these negotiations is, as with the boys, a crucial aspect to investigate.

2.4.3 Negotiating Muslim identities in school and at home

Negotiating new learning experiences in the curriculum is not just relevant to Somali girls, but to boys as well. This is explored by Collet (2007). Drawing on a grounded interpretive biography approach, he used a thematic analysis of reflective interviews with a group of 33 Somali young people from 17 different high schools in Canada, who had migrated from Somalia. Finding that there was autonomy and choice about what to accept or reject along a continuum of reflection-ambivalence-acceptance around subjects such as sex education and P.E., he also found a fluidity within gendered performances. Collet concludes that "new

Muslim" identities disrupted the binary of secular versus religious, whilst the young people concealed some aspects of their negotiations from their parents. It must be noted here that for recently arrived refugee families, learner identities within a wider range of subjects than those mentioned in the paper may be "new".

Research into Muslim families' relationships with westernised school systems has highlighted the struggles within families over commitment to education and religion, coupled with marginalising, pathologising school discourses around Islam (Abbas, 2002; Collet, 2007; Ijaz and Abbas, 2010; Shah, 2012; Ghaffar-Kucher, 2014). Somali young people are often found to be caught up in these negotiations in complex ways as they work to construct themselves as learners in both spaces. Langellier's (2010) post-colonial, feminist narrative analysis of a Somali young woman's account of her experiences as a refugee in Maine, USA, argues that Caaliya's identities were negotiated within the "confluence and contradiction of ambivalence" (p.89), and as such were fluid, marked and highly contextualised.

Bigelow's (2008, 2010a) longitudinal, ethnographic, socio-linguistic research in Minnesota suggests, in parallel ways to Langellier's findings, that Somali young people's negotiations within the "third space" (Bhabha, 1994) are complex. She suggests that these young people negotiated alternative and unexpected identities within a multiplicity of social contexts, contesting and taking up racialised identities in creative and fluid ways, with Somali and Muslim identities closely intertwined. She finds that as Somali young people negotiated their identities between westernised behaviours and family traditional values, their work to resist stigma and establish a sense of belonging with their peers meant that intergenerational relationships became a key site of tension. Furthermore, outside of school, Bigelow (2008) explores how Somali boys in particular were constructed as deviant by local police and suffered significant injustices as they were unequally targeted for searches. At home, she found that young people who chose to adopt "hip-hop" culture had to negotiate anxious responses from adults that they were discarding their religion as well as traditional ways of life, even in some instances being sent back to Somalia. Taking up this issue of generational clashes in her conclusion, Bigelow suggests that as the young people negotiated new, "hybridised" identities, they struggled with watching parents not change. However, scholars have also highlighted how some young people take up traditional Islamic identities in response to Islamophobia, suggesting that these negotiations are not the only option for Muslim young people (Alexander, 1998; Archer, 2003). This discussion demonstrates the problems of trying to understand Muslim young people's negotiations at home and at school in isolation from each other. I therefore return to these considerations of Muslim learner identities in the next chapter.

2.5 Interrogating the absence of refugee/SEND

The rich, empirical studies reviewed in this chapter convey a depth of understanding about how Somali boys and girls may negotiate multiple, contingent and conflicting learner identities within school. Many scholars usefully draw on a post structuralist, feminist, post-colonial understanding of identities, exploring how racialised, gendered and classed discourses around notions of acceptability and ability are negotiated, their social identities deeply entwined with categories of learner. The studies outline the constraints around Somali young people's identity work to be recognised and gain a sense of belonging as a learner. EAL identities are shown to be quickly rejected by the young people as they resist stigmatised views of new arrivals and refugees, and these learner identities are often found to be hidden or pathologised within school structures, both in separate provision and in mainstream classes. Racialised, classed, gendered underachieving and disruptive identities are shown to be readily available as Somali young people negotiate negative assumptions from peers and teachers about their learning. Multilingualism, although holding potential, is found to be marginalised within schools and therefore often used in subversive rather than productive ways by young people. However, possibilities to resist negative subjectifications are also present, with the research suggesting that this may be easier for girls, whilst challenging racialised, gendered assumptions about them as passive.

Where research exists, SEND learner identities for refugee young people are shown to be highly constrained, and if available, potentially wrongly assigned within problematic systems and subjective processes. Interrogating the absence of SEND in much of the literature, I have argued that this aspect is implicated in Somali young people's experiences of exclusion and disadvantage. I have argued that the ways in which young people take up, resist, reject or even transform learner categories of EAL, refugee, underachievement, disadvantage and SEND need to be understood together, particularly around binarised, deficit notions of passivity, being anti-school or anti-learning. As the research reviewed demonstrates, it is important to consider how racialised, ethnicised, gendered and classed learner identities are played out within these processes. It is these questions that my study seeks to address.

The majority of the studies reviewed here draw on ethnographic approaches and are conducted within a school, observing and interviewing staff and young people in groups, with fewer conducting one-to-one interviews, very possibly due to the ethical constraints around conducting research with vulnerable young people. Furthermore, I have indicated where some bodies of work draw on parent and community-based interviews, particularly where they are interested in recent arrival, language and religion, pointing to the complex and sometimes troubled ways in which these young people negotiate their learner identities as migrants within notions of the "third space" (Bhabha, 1994). The next chapter reviews

knowledge produced through studies which focus on the home and the community, considers what we know about how Somali young people co-construct their learner identities in these spaces and how far notions of "educational help" may be obscured but potentially present within these negotiations.

Chapter 3: Negotiating "educational help" in Somali families and communities

In Chapter 1 I outlined understandings of how children and young people with SEND might be educated in Somalia, referring to religious beliefs that for parents, these children are a gift and a responsibility to be cared for and protected within the family and community. I touched on the lack of special schools in Somalia, the impact of the war and poverty on the numbers of young people with disabilities and the continuance of cultural, negative attitudes to SEND in some families (Tomlinson and Abdi, 2003; CESVI, Handicap International and European Commission, 2012; Koshin, 2015; Disability Rights International, 2018).

Somali families who have migrated to the UK have often had difficult experiences of statutory services and face significant turmoil and stress in adjusting to a new country and learning a new language. They arrive into a different education system where SEND is assessed by professionals, categorised and additional support is allocated. As highlighted in my discussion of SEND policy in England, the Code of Practice (DfE and DoH, 2015) requires parents to be involved in considerations of SEND, and positions them as advocates for their children. However, in NGO reports and in research, parents from working class and Black and other minoritised backgrounds are found to be marginalised in these processes (Kulz, 2015; Gillborn *et al.*, 2016). My research set out to understand how Somali young people negotiate their learner identities around notions of SEND within this very problematic and disconnected context, at home and in the community. To inform this question, I review here what we know about how Somali families support their children's learning when they arrive in the UK.

There is a range of qualitative, sociological, linguistic and inclusion research into parents from Black and other minoritised ethnic backgrounds' engagement with their children's formal education. Scholars focus on different dimensions such as social class, multilingualism, migrancy or particular ethnicised, religious groups to interrogate prevailing assumptions about these families as uninterested or unable to support their children (Gregory, 2001; Archer and Francis, 2007; Crozier and Davies, 2007; Conteh and Kawashima, 2008; Siraj-Blatchford, 2010; Conteh, 2012; Crafter, 2012a; Vincent and Maxwell, 2016). These studies point to the ways that parents and other family members strove to construct positive, supportive home learning environments, focusing on their children's education in order for them to have a better life. However, most of these studies do not address concerns around SEND. Therefore, in this chapter, in similar ways to Chapter 2, I consider how literature about parental engagement indicates the need to explore SEND as a vital aspect of these processes within schooling and community learning.

I refer to key studies around Black and other minoritised families where pertinent in order to position the Somali literature within wider understandings of lived experiences of inequalities. There is some debate about the best terms to use to describe parents' approach to and actions regarding their children's learning. I use the term engagement to refer to how families are committed to their children's learning, whilst the term involvement can be understood as particular actions that a parent may take, from helping with homework to attending school meetings (Goodall and Montgomery, 2014).

The first section in this chapter looks at research into how Somali parents and families engage with their children's school learning in new, post-migratory settings in westernised countries and how young people are found to negotiate their learner identities around home-school relationships. The second section looks in detail at what we know about how refugee young people's learner identities are negotiated in the home and in the community including the madrassah. As in the last chapter, wide ranging, quantitative surveys are less employed in the bodies of literature reviewed here. Smaller samples often within qualitative, ethnographic studies drawing on socio-cultural, socio-linguistic, critical race and feminist theoretical perspectives use interviews and focus groups for their data collection. These approaches are useful in providing the space needed to negotiate researcher-participant relationships and investigate the heterogeneity and complexities of identity negotiations in question.

3.1 Interrogating deficit discourses around Somali parents' engagement with schools

To discuss the ways in which research has explored Somali parents' engagement with schools it is useful first to compare two key studies which approach this question in relation to two different ethnicised groups of parents. Crozier and Davies' (2007) study chose to interrogated the notion of parents as "hard to reach" by schools through conducting a two-year qualitative, grounded theory study with Bangladeshi and Pakistani families in two towns in the North East of England. They interviewed parents and young people from 20 families, 69 teaching staff and youth workers connected to thirteen schools and one college. Power relations between school, the young people and parents were highlighted as the key issue for communication and relationship building. Young people often acted as "gatekeepers", both protecting their parents from stigma and hiding negative communication. Aspects of family identities as new, multilingual, literate, educated and Muslim were not recognised or utilised by the school. Rather, parents were expected to fit into the schools' systems which were based on white, middle class normative values, and teachers made negative assumptions about lack of engagement.

In the same year, Archer and Francis (2007) chose to focus their qualitative study on Chinese young people and their families as a group of pupils often seen as high achievers from supportive families. Drawing on Bourdieu's theories of capital, they argue that even though the families were considered to possess attributes closely associated with stereotypes of white, middle class, stable structures, their attitudes to learning were subjectified as oppressive, drawing on colonialist, orientalist, "othering" discourses. Parents struggled over their loss of cultural capital due to migration and were aware of the effects of racism, using their economic capital to try to mitigate this by employing tutors. They were also concerned about negative behaviour, some threatening to withdraw money for university or sending the child back to China should they not achieve. Reviewing these studies side by side points to the ways in which assumptions about parental engagement based on migrancy, ethnicity, race and class can draw on fixed notions about family practices, whether seemingly positive or negative. These processes then marginalise parents and position children and young people in problematic ways.

Taking an overview of a wide range of research in this area, Goodall's (2011; 2013) work with other scholars argues for the need for schools to understand and value families' diverse experiences and knowledge in order to challenge prevailing discourses around what constitutes parental engagement. She and Montgomery (2014) draw on notions of agency to conceptualise a continuum of practices which encompasses the different ways that parental roles may be performed. This, they argue can depend on the age of the child, family situation regarding issues such as work hours, finances and health and situations at school, for example concerns about achievement. However, they remind us that this model needs to be used with clear recognition of the inequalities experienced by families. Vincent (2017) usefully informs considerations of how these inequalities impact on parental engagement with schools. In this article she draws out key areas from her qualitative research with parents over twenty years. She argues that the implication in government policy that parenting can overcome disadvantage must be challenged and points out the gendered dimensions of this, that mothers often carry the responsibility for providing the best learning opportunities at school as well as at home. Emphasising that whilst it is clear from research that class and ethnicity are implicated in how parent-school relationships are negotiated, Vincent argues that this is not just about parents possessing capital but about how far they are able to draw on these resources. Furthermore, when considering parents of all ethnicities, binaried views are contested of working-class parents as disengaged and middle-class parents as committed. Importantly, Vincent notes the time lost for teachers to focus on home-school initiatives due to pressure on finances and standards.

As Crozier and Davies (2007) indicated in their study, difficulties in families' negotiations with schools about learning and educational progress are further played out when young people act as language brokers for their parents. Monzó (2010) conducted an ethnographic, sociocultural research doing home visits, participant observations in school and interviews with eight Latino/a families in the USA. Drawing on Vygotsky and Bakhtin, her analysis found that compared to their resistance around formal first language learning with their parents, the children in their study readily took up collaborative, literacy-based language broker roles in the house, including on issues around educational systems and ICT. She suggests that the language broker role, when able to be performed well, increased young people's confidence. This fits with wider research with Latino/a families in the USA which argues that these roles are agentic and reflect strong literacy practices (Eksner and Orellana, 2012; Phoenix, 2015). However, children who acted as language brokers also acted as gatekeepers, for example blocking letters from school. García–Sánchez, Orellana and Hopkins' (2011) study addressed concerns around the ways that the language brokering role might be used by children and young people in school, not just at home. Their analysis of recordings of eleven parent-teacher meetings with Latino/a families as part of a wider ethnographic study, found that teachers' praise was downplayed by children rather than inflated. This was where children who were not from the same family were used, raising questions about how appropriately young people can perform this role for themselves as well as ethical issues around confidentiality where others are employed.

Blackledge's (2001) social constructionist, linguistic research with Bangladeshi women in Birmingham focused on the ways that language was used within power relations to co-construct positions within teacher-parent meetings and when supporting homework. He found that through their children being positioned as language brokers, the mothers were subjectified as inferior not just around language and literacy, but were also often erroneously constructed by teachers as illiterate, this extending to intellect, culture and morals (see also Whitmarsh (2011)). However, Sporton and Valentine's (2007) social constructionist approach interrogates how meanings are socially constructed, whilst being perceived as real. They point out that the language brokering role resists westernised notions of child/adult work, although the potential for intergenerational tension is acknowledged. These studies, employing different theoretical approaches, reflect the complexities around how language brokerage roles are perceived and performed, suggesting that they should neither be dismissed nor accepted without question, but carefully and ethically negotiated by schools in relation to a young person's learning.

Within this wider context of teachers', parents' and children's roles in home-school engagement, many studies with Somali families suggest that prevailing discourses around

underachievement are unreflective of the inequalities which impact on a young person's learning and their family's ability to perform a supportive role (Alitolppa-Niitamo, 2002; Hamilton and Moore, 2004; Rutter, 2004, 2006; Harding, Clarke and Chappell, 2007). Strand, Malmberg and Hall's (2010) quantitative and qualitative study of Somali, Turkish and Bangladeshi pupils' achievement found several advantaging factors within family and pupil approaches to education. Their study analysed UK-wide data and surveyed nearly 300 school leaders, as well as conducting interviews with teachers, pupils and local authorities and focus groups with parents. They found that the high aspirations held by Somali families were significantly related to attainment, their children's own aspirations and positive attitudes to school. Before the start of a targeted programme, they found less achievement within the Somali group compared to the other groups. However, this was positively impacted by the programme, in contrast to the other groups for which the programme did not make a difference. They also contested the view suggested in literature on disadvantaged pupils that studying in poorer resourced schools has a direct impact on achievement (Liasidou, 2012a; Crenna-Jennings, 2018). These findings point to complex questions around how class, poverty and disadvantage intersect with refugee learner identities and suggest that the ways in which Somali families support their children and how schools engage with this require further exploration.

A range of smaller, in depth studies in local areas, mostly in London, help to answer these questions. Ali and Jones (2000) conducted a study in four primary schools and three secondary schools in Camden borough, interviewing recently arrived young people and talking to adults in eight different Somali community groups. The scholars reported that parents took up agency to engage with their children's school learning and they recognised they should do more. Parents felt they needed better communication from schools and higher expectations for their children, alongside tougher discipline, recognition of the impact of migration on the children and more educational support. The importance of schools taking a proactive approach is demonstrated in Demie's (2008) analysis of case studies in four primary schools and six secondary schools, within six inner and outer London boroughs. He found evidence of effective practice, where schools did not make assumptions about what the Somali parents would know, employed liaison staff to work on parental engagement strategies and were involved with local supplementary schools. This is also reflected in studies not just based in London. Hughes and Beirens (2007) conducted research on the impact of family and community level factors on educational attendance and achievement of refugee young people. They analysed case studies with six school or education-based services in London and in North England which worked with Somali families amongst others. The scholars found that once systems were explained, the parents engaged with schools.

However, they insisted that funding is key to enable schools and other organisations to devote time to engaging with parents in this way. Rutter (2011) similarly argues that the problem of engagement is not about parents, but about schools which do not explain the different educational systems in the UK to refugee parents, and do not understand the pressures that these families are under. As a result, families are constructed as troubled and problematic in gendered, classed and racialised ways. She found that Somali mothers in particular withdrew from school engagement due to their anxiety about their lack of English and experience of formal education (Rutter, 2004).

It must be noted here that some Somali mothers who arrived earlier on in the war, or who migrated to the UK via other countries, can have had a high level of education. This is an aspect highlighted by Whitmarsh (2011) in her narrative study of six asylum seeking mothers' experiences of their children's primary schooling in the UK. She found that westernised, racialised, classed assumptions about home-school relationships ignored the women's social class, their level of education and their values for their children's education. Importantly, regarding social class in the Somali community, the clan structure means that families can access economic, social and cultural capital within the wider global community. This can contribute positively to families' ability to support their children's education. However, the responsibilities that families have for others within this system can also increase financial pressures, family conflict and isolation within the community. These stresses can impact how a family can support a child's achievement in school and may not be recognised by teachers (Kahin, 1997; Harding, Clarke and Chappell, 2007).

Kahin and Wallace's (2017) study was conducted by a Somali researcher with significant experience supporting Somali young people's education. It contributes important understandings about the ways that pre-migratory parental roles about formal education still prevailed in some families, but in others were shifting and challenging schools' practices. This was a three-year, qualitative, ethnographic study with Somali young people and their families in Hounslow, and analysed questionnaire-based interviews with 45 parents and discussions in four focus groups with 33 parents in total and 30 in-depth interviews. Kahin and Wallace found that many families did what they knew from their own family experiences, focusing on getting the children to school and tuition, providing materials and exhorting the children to work hard. Although possessing limited social capital, they used their extended family and community networks extensively to do this. Where these networks were weak, they sometimes fell victim to questionable tuition centres, being misled by other families about what support was best for their children. Furthermore, Kahin and Wallace reported constraints on non-parental attendance at meetings due to work, language, family and health, concurring with Crozier and Davies' (2007) findings about the pressures on families.

Analysis of the focus group responses found that parents felt the most pressing issues were their need to learn more English and to overcome cultural misunderstandings with schools, gaining cultural capital to navigate the systems, which fits with Ali and Jones' (2000) findings in Camden.

Kahin and Wallace's in-depth narrative analysis of two different parents' accounts of their experiences of supporting their children's schooling informs these findings about the need for change. The analysis demonstrates the heterogeneity of gendered roles taken up by the parents, neither of whom had attended formal education as children. It brings out marked differences in how a lone mother challenges the inequalities she faces, whilst a married couple struggle to engage with school and how best to support their children. Kahin and Wallace conclude that parent ambassadors from within the community are best placed to mentor others to make the changes needed within the home as well as in school interactions. They thus affirm the place of agency within the community to address inequalities, whilst advocating for diverse, different family practices to be recognised and respected.

These studies show that Somali parents' engagement with their children's schooling can be marginalised, ignored or pathologised within racialised, classed, gendered discourses around what it means to be a supportive parent. However, when inequalities and assumptions are addressed by schools and challenged by Somali parents, there is potential for fruitful engagement and positive relationships as parents receive recognition and support. These findings are positioned within wider prevailing discourses around how parental engagement with schools may be performed, considering it the parents' responsibility to engage, on the school's terms, without addressing the significant inequalities which constrain and even foreclose these possibilities. Considering the government policy's focus on parental involvement with SEND processes (DfE and DoH, 2015), this literature raises serious questions about how far Somali parents are able to take up roles as advocates for their children when they are concerned about their learning needs, both in initial discussions and in formal assessment processes. The few studies which explore this aspect with Black and other minoritised families are considered in the next section.

3.2 Family-school negotiations around SEND

My study looks at families' experiences where there are not necessarily formal identifications of SEND, but rather when aspects of learning support may or may not be in place and SEND may be a consideration. It is therefore helpful to review literature which explores parents from Black and other minoritised ethnic backgrounds' experiences of engaging with schools when there are issues with their child's learning, as well as where SEND has been identified.

Hornby and Lafaele's (2011) suggestion of a model for what they term parental involvement in schools considered a wide range of literature on this subject. From this review, they drew out the gendered, racialised, classed nature of potential barriers within child, parent, school and society factors. They found that differences in a parent's and teacher's aim for meetings and beliefs about how a child should be educated had a marked effect on how far trust could be built for all parties. Parents with a low level of belief about their role through their own learning around language, or through negative experiences, and those with significant caring, work or health issues were more likely to avoid school meetings. Furthermore, where parents conceptualised ability as fixed and innate, they were less concerned to attend meetings than those who saw effort as having an impact on achievement. As the child got older, parental involvement lessened, although there was evidence of mistaken assumptions that teenagers did not welcome support at home. Where there were problems with the child's learning, they found that if parents disagreed with the school or it was related to behaviour, their involvement with school decreased.

The need for effective communication is considered in Fan and Williams' (2010; 2012) metasynthesis study of data from educational longitudinal studies in the USA. Their findings suggest that negative parent-school communication decreases motivation whilst "benign" communication raises it, with ethnicity not being found to be implicated in the results. At home, young people saw rules around learning as useful, but considered parents using sanctions at home in order to push for specific achievement to be pressurising and negative. The research concludes that it is therefore important for schools to initiate parent meetings, and for parents to focus on their aspirations and values, both using praise and encouragement in meetings, especially where there are concerns (see also Wilder (2013)). When considering these findings in relation to traditional understandings of ability and SEND in Somalia, they raise significant questions about how far Somali families might engage with schools where there are issues with their child's learning, whether or not SEND was specifically being considered. However, the wide-ranging nature of both reviews do not allow this depth of understanding about experiences of particular minoritised ethnic groups.

There is very little research into Black and other minoritised parents' lived experiences of school engagement with regard to SEND. Gillborn *et al.'s* (2016) study with Black middle-class parents, introduced in Chapter 2, page 61 helpfully informs this gap. The scholars used Critical Race Theory with Bourdieu to analyse interviews with 62 Black middle-class parents, thirteen of whom were fathers. Finding a continuum of varied practices by parents who could draw on considerable capital, they concluded that due to the context of "entrenched racism", the comparative fragility of Black middle-class parents compared to White meant that their responses to educational issues were strategic and determined, but

also anxious, in the face of considerable discrimination (Vincent *et al.*, 2012). A further paper on the same research asserts that institutional, racialised assumptions and practices in school persisted to constrain effective parental practices and sustain notions of Black underachievement (Gillborn *et al.*, 2012). The scholars then drew on the concept of DisCrit to interrogate their findings that although disability was not a part of their initial inquiry, one quarter of their participants raised SEND as an issue, with only one parent having an overwhelmingly positive experience in their relationships with schools around this (Gillborn *et al.*, 2016). Teachers' reaction to parental concerns ranged from lack of interest to hostility, from racialised, inappropriate action to non-action. Although the parents drew on their extensive capital to mitigate the schools' responses, they were positioned as pushy and over demanding, their views dismissed and questioned as illegitimate. These findings point to ways in which, where SEND is a consideration, Black and other ethnic minoritised families continue to be positioned within racialised discourses as problematic by schools, in line with wider research reviewed above. This is in direct opposition to the requirements of the Code of Practice (DfE and DoH, 2015).

Where SEND has been formally identified, the potential for misunderstandings and miscommunication may still be present. Li's (2010) socio-linguistic analysis of social dynamics around language and literacy learning practices for migrant pupils references a case study with a Chinese middle class family in the USA who were proficient in English. When their son, who was in grade 4/5 at the time, was identified by the school as having Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), his mother felt that the pressure was on her to act, rather than the school. She stopped speaking Cantonese at home, and sent him to swimming, piano lessons and Maths tuition after school. She also argued that being seated in groups rather than in rows in a mixed age class did not support his learning. Through these responses, she felt that she was caring for her son's needs in ways that were far more helpful than the school's diagnostic approach. However, her values were dismissed by the school and they did not engage with her desire to support her son, thus constraining ways that professionals and the family could work together.

The need for professionals' careful, sensitive understanding of different approaches to SEND is further demonstrated in an ethnographic study conducted over seventeen months with three South Asian Muslim families who had children with autism in a midwestern city in the USA (Jegatheesan, Fowler and Miller, 2010a; Jegatheesan, Miller and Fowler, 2010b). Adopting a grounded theory analysis of interviews and participant observations, the scholars aimed to understand how the families responded to SEND. They found that only professionals from similar backgrounds to the families conveyed recognition and understanding of the families' cultural and religious approaches to protect and nurture the

boys, maintaining a "normal" life as much as possible. In parallel to the Chinese family in Li's (2010) study, the parents were isolated in terms of support and engagement in educational approaches. However, in different responses to the situation, these families insisted on maintaining multilingualism, rejecting medicalised professional advice they received from European American professionals. Belonging to different branches of Islam meant that they had varying beliefs around disability, however the families all drew strongly on their convictions that their child was a gift from Allah, embracing difference and seeing their struggles as a test. They therefore found professionals' focus on the children's deficits alienating and unhelpful.

We can see from these studies the ways in which parents from Black and minoritised ethnic backgrounds may be positioned by professionals as being in conflict with their processes or lacking understanding where there are concerns about a child's progress, rather than appreciating different approaches to SEND and learning from each other. We know there are potential differences in understandings of SEND between recently arrived Somali families and teachers, particularly regarding stigmatised notions of inability, and the need to care for a child within the family, thus resisting outside agency involvement (see Chapter 1, pages 19-20).   Furthermore, we know from the research reviewed above that Somali parents are positioned within prevailing racialised, gendered, classed, deficit discourses around parental engagement, and may lack confidence, economic and/or social capital to engage in advocating for their child's needs. This therefore suggests that Somali families face significant inequalities in relation to engaging with schools about SEND but highlights the gap in literature in understanding these lived experiences.   What this literature does not address, is how Somali families take up their role to care for and support their children's learning at home. The next two sections review what we know about this at home in the community. As before, I consider wider literature within which specific studies with the Somali community can be understood, and commonalities and differences drawn out. SEND is hardly addressed in these studies, so the review interrogates where gaps and assumptions may point to the need to consider this aspect in order to fully understand young people's negotiations of their learner identities.

3.3 Learning with the family

To start this section, it is useful first to refer to Moll *et al.*'s (1992) anthropological, qualitative, ethnographic, action research with working class, migrant, Mexican communities in Arizona. This aimed to address the inequalities in the ways in which schools viewed families' learning practices. The study recruited teachers to observe family dynamics, and then to consider changes to their own teaching practices through observations and collaborative study groups with researchers. Bringing teachers and families together opened up spaces for

transformation of pedagogical practice into a more participatory approach. It shifted power relationships between teachers, parents and the young people as the teachers took up the role of learner in the home, and understood the different ways in which young people practised literacies with their families in their broadest sense (see also Gonzàlez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). The scholars coined the term "funds of knowledge" to recognise the resources on which families drew.

In their consideration of disproportionality in EAL/SEND identifications in the US, González and Artiles (2015) argue that this notion of funds of knowledge provides a valuable tool, as it recognises the wealth of literacies that migrant families practise in their day to day lives, thus potentially challenging misconceptions and assumptions.   They suggest that a post-colonial, antiracist approach to identifications of SEND is vital in order to interrogate imperialist, monocultural, monolingual attitudes to difference. As discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.2, Frederickson and Cline's (2015) work on EAL/SEND from a UK perspective proposes a similar holistic approach to identify SEND which may be hidden through a monolingual, monocultural, school-based assessment system. Rutter's (2004, 2006, 2011) work adds further aspects around refugee learner identities to consider such as lack of previous formal education. These scholars thus argue for an intersectional approach to notions of SEND for migrant young people which focuses not just on school but also on understanding how the young person negotiates their learner identities within the family and wider community.

The nature of learning support that families provide for their children is explored in Siraj Blatchford's (2010) study of home learning environments in working class families from all ethnicities. She analysed data from qualitative case studies conducted for the Effective Provision of Pre- School Education research project (Taggart *et al.*, 2003) which used mixed methods to consider how far preschool, primary school and home learning reduces social inequalities. Surveying families of three to eleven-year-olds in 141 preschools and 800 primary schools (numbering 3,000 children) Siraj-Blatchford's wide-ranging findings point to the quality of the learning environment at home being the most significant factor for achievement when other background factors are considered. For parents from minoritised ethnic and lower socio-economic backgrounds, it was noted that there was a high level of learning within these environments in comparison with white working-class British families, despite the inequalities they experienced. Drawing on Lareau's (2003) work, Siraj-Blatchford found that parents used strategies of "concerted cultivation", developing their role through the support of family members and community resources such as churches rather than schools, an aspect discussed in the next section.

However, in smaller, more in-depth studies with migrant families, the ways that parental roles may be performed within the home have been found to be inconsistent. A small body

of sociocultural work explores the tensions when parents try to help their children with homework, comparing experiences across different ethnicities. The studies draw on Vygotsky's theories around the role of social interaction in learning development and focus on Maths as a subject often considered by migrant parents as easier to access.   De Abreu and Cline (2005) interviewed Pakistani and White British parents of twenty-four "high achieving" primary school children from four multi-ethnic schools in the UK. They found that children resisted the strategies parents used as old fashioned and not useful, and therefore many parents hid their knowledge. Also, they did not find that multilingual learning was valued by the children. These findings are important for my study as they suggest that struggles over supporting with homework are present where children are doing well and are not confined to situations where children are struggling with their work. However, de Abreu and Cline's (2008) second project with British South Asian and White seven to eleven year olds found that the young people accepted help in some instances. This depended on whether they felt that their parents could give them support for a specific topic and whether they found using the home language useful. The purposeful value that parents placed on past learning experiences had the greatest positive impact on home learning.

Taking up a similar methodological and theoretical approach, Crafter (2012a) argued that mis/understandings and hidden meanings within teacher-parent discussions about achievement, within English as well as across languages, are linked to social and cultural values, experiences, power and status.   Problems for parents who felt unable to help when a child was stuck were not confined to migrant parents and increased as children got older. Also, parents generally did not see the teacher as a resource for support (Crafter, 2012b). These studies point to the ways in which all parents and children from different ethnicities experience intergenerational tensions about how schoolwork can be supported in the home. However, this small body of work focuses on primary levels of education which may be more accessible for parents from minoritised ethnic backgrounds who had different formal educational experiences. Raising the impact of age on parent-child relationships regarding home learning, Monzó's (2010) study with eight Latino/a families in the USA shows that parents helped younger children with homework, but felt unable to help the older ones, added to which the latter resisted reading in the home language. These responses draw attention to wider school and societal discourses around hierarchies of literacies and languages discussed by Wallace (2013), and their impact on learning in the home not just at school.

The issues raised in these studies about language, generation and parents' levels of formal education are also reflected in research with Somali families. Ali and Jones' (2000) study in Camden and Harding, Clarke and Chappell's (2007) report on intergenerational conflict in

the wider London Somali community both concur that Somali young people wanted their parents to be more involved in, and supportive of, their learning, despite the difficulties the parents experienced in their relationships with school. However, tensions between parents and children are also found to be present in the home. Sporton and Valentine's (2007) study in Sheffield found that the children interviewed, aged eleven to eighteen, used English to signify their integration into the UK, but this in turn positioned adults as unable to understand their schooling. Furthermore, the young people's preference for English challenged the value put by parents on Somali as needed for their imagined return "home" and added to intergenerational tensions. Kahin and Wallace's (2017) ethnographic study in Hounslow also asked the children of the parents who were interviewed about what educational support they received in the home. Analysis of data collected with 40 young people who participated in a survey, focus groups and one-to-one interviews showed that they felt their parents were not as knowledgeable about their educational levels as the parents had said. Many reported that their parents did not praise as much as the parents had indicated and did not assign specific homework space. These findings thus alert us to a disconnect between how the young people and their parents viewed their home learning relationships and how their school learning was understood.

In Mohamoud's (2011) PhD narrative study in London which explores notions of adaptation, he interviewed young people and their families about their learning whilst they were at school and then ten years later. Through its use of retrospective accounts, the young people's recollections about their parents' support for their learning are explored at a distance from the immediacy of the intergenerational tensions reported by other studies. Mohamoud found that the young people all reported receiving homework support from their parents or tuition where the parents felt unable to help. However, it was the racism, discrimination and poor educational support they received as EAL pupils which they felt had affected their achievement. Furthermore, where family support was weak, the young people said they found it harder to address the inequalities they faced as recently arrived young people. The findings point to a heterogeneity of responses by parents and suggest that, from their different positions as young adults, the young people foregrounded the wider inequalities which impacted on their home learning.

However, it needs to be emphasised here that help with learning in the home, including the use of home languages to study, is not limited to parents. The positive ways that different languages and experiences of learning can be drawn on by all family members to support and encourage children's learning is considered by a body of work in the UK on multilingual literacies (Martin-Jones and Jones, 2001; Gregory, Long and Volk, 2004). This work initiated a body of research termed Synthetic Literacy Studies (SLS), exploring how migrant

young people successfully negotiated and drew on varied ways of learning at home, the madrassah and school with siblings, parents and extended family members. It should be noted here that as with EAL and multilingual research, SLS tends to focus on early years and primary aged children, rather than the secondary pupils analysed in my study (Taylor *et al.*, 2008; Kenner and Ruby, 2012). Gregory and William's (2001) socio-cultural, ethnographic research with Bengali families in East London analysed formal and informal literacy practices in the home. They highlighted the values placed by family members on aspects such as formal or rote learning; prioritising reading facts not for pleasure; and not considering "play" as learning.   Regarding the role of siblings, Gregory (2001) found that within formal understandings of learning in the Bengali home, older siblings were expected to teach younger siblings, rather than siblings playing together or sharing learning opportunities. However, with young siblings at around the same age, Drury's (2004) research suggests that there are opportunities within play. Her case study of a family where the slightly older sibling "plays school" in Paharia and English with her younger brother finds that this enables her to use the English she is learning at school in a safe space. However, Drury warns that as the child knows they need to learn English to succeed, unless there are concerted efforts by the teacher, the use of the first language as a learning language can be lost as the child grows up. Additionally, Markose, Symes and Hellstén's (2011) ethnographic study of a Chinese and a Lebanese family newly arrived in Australia found that, as migrated families establish themselves in school, older sibling support was used to encourage younger family members to syncretise school approaches within the home.

Considering the intricacies involved in performing these roles, Volk and de Acosta's (2004) study of Latin American families found that their effectiveness depended on the family's approach to literacy and whether siblings could act as support. Where the role was recognised, negotiations between siblings centred on the ability to assess what help was needed, the difference between their competencies, their age, what stage of the curriculum young people were at when they arrived in the UK or started school and what support the "helper" had from more capable readers. Relating these findings to Somali families, the role of older siblings, relied on by their parents to know about schooling and therefore be able to guide their siblings, is mentioned in Kahin and Wallace's (2017) study, suggesting there are commonalities which could be explored as families engage with the demands of homework, something not experienced in Somalia where all the learning takes place in the school.

These studies emphasise the importance of recognising multiliteracies and multilingualism in our understandings of EAL and refugee young people's learner identities and point to the ways in which learning relationships within the wider family, not just with parents, need to be considered.   However, Wallace (2013), in her sociolinguistic study of young people's

negotiations of bilingual, literate learner identities in London sounds a cautionary note that family learning practices can be narrow, whilst agreeing that out of school knowledge needs to be in a "productive relationship" with school in order fully to develop literacy practices. Furthermore, lead scholars in bilingualism argues that children and young people only fully gain the benefits of this in their academic achievement if both languages are used for study (see for example Cummins, 1979; Cummins & Swain, 2014).

Considering the research about home learning conducted with Somali families alongside studies with families from other Black and minoritised ethnic backgrounds, prevailing school discourses about Somali families as unable to support their children's education at home are problematised. At the same time, the significant challenges that exist with the inequalities these families face in are highlighted. The findings from wider literature about home learning suggest that there is a range of negotiations around learner roles between parents and children within the heterogeneity of parental educational experiences, ethnicities, class and age of the child. Where parents help with specific pieces of work, this may be welcomed, but it is not guaranteed that their help will be taken up unproblematically. Home languages may be used to assist or constrain parent-child learning relationships. The emphasis on the parents' value for learning chimes with wider parental engagement research reviewed above which argues that it is encouragement and expectations, not homework help, which has the greatest impact on young people's attainment. This counters assumptions often held by parents themselves as well as schools about constraints on their roles due to their different formal educational experiences and level of fluency in English. It emphasises the need for good communication about school systems and understanding about how their child is faring in school. Considerations of SEND, not mentioned in these studies, may be missed, ignored or painfully exposed at each of these points, for instance where parents support homework and see difficulties persisting, through lack of understanding of educational levels or through buying in tuition to try to raise progress. The ways that migrant families aim to encouraging their children's learning through engaging with outside school support is a further important aspect to consider. This can be through complementary, supplementary schools, private tuition, voluntary organisations and learning in religious institutions. The section below discusses what is known about how young people negotiate their learner identities in these different spaces and considers this in relation to SEND.

3.4 Learning in the community

Resourcing outside school learning support is often considered to be a vital aspect of parental support within Black and other minoritised families (Archer and Francis, 2007; Demie, 2008; Strand, 2012b; Vincent *et al.*, 2012; Goodall, 2013). Rhamie's (2007) study of high achieving Black young people in secondary school, found that her participants

constructed community learning spaces as highly significant in their negotiations of racialised, discriminatory discourses at school. Conteh and Brock (2011) consider the impact of these learning spaces in their research on teaching practices with early years pupils who are multilingual. Taking up the notion of "safe spaces", they argue that work done in the margins, often in complementary or supplementary schools, needs to be brought into the mainstream so that young people's potential can be recognised (Mirza and Reay, 2000; Bourne, 2007; Demie, 2008). However, for Somali children and young people these schools are not always focused on bilingual achievement due to the home language not being recognised as an academic language (Bigelow, 2010b). In considering the work of the Hounslow Somali supplementary school where their research was based, Kahin and Wallace (2017) assert that although Somali was spoken, the main aim was to raise achievement in the curriculum alongside maintaining culture, values and traditions. Where these schools are exclusive to Somalis, Kahin and Wallace suggest that they can become monolingual, acting against opportunities for young people to negotiate their learning within a "third space". Arguing that instead the schools need to be a bridge to mainstream schools, they suggest that that a concept of "open" rather than "safe" spaces needs to be employed, where parents can gain confidence and knowledge about educational systems, and active links are made with schools and the wider community. This, they argue, would start to address the disconnect between home and school and counter the sense of "otherness" that schools can reinforce through deficit discourses, thus encouraging parental agency. Communication about SEND, is, as demonstrated by the literature reviewed in Section 3.2, a key area here.

There is little comment in refugee literature on young people's experiences of outside school tuition, as these studies mostly focus on the first few years after arrival when families often have no financial resources to pay for this type of support. There are some references to the success of one-to-one or small group tuition provided by teachers in or after school for newly arrived young people (Refugee Council, 2005; Ferfolja, 2009; Naidoo, 2009). Research into voluntary projects is also a useful source of knowledge. Walker's (2011) study of the Refugee Council's mentoring project (introduced on page 46) found that mentoring was shown to be an effective tool in increasing confidence and resilience, compensating for the disempowering effect of forced migration. However, she concludes that the voluntary support could not overcome deep rooted structural inequalities in the school system, including in relation to SEND identifications, reflecting the constraints within which community learning projects operate.

The notion of spaces within the community where learning can take place is also constrained for many refugee families by the fears associated with living in deprived, urban areas, or in

dispersal areas where they are very much in the minority.   In Spicer's (2008) qualitative, sociological study into experiences of social inclusion and exclusion, he interviewed fourteen parents and twelve children aged between eight and sixteen who were from asylum seeking families, as well as nine workers from voluntary organisations, in three urban local authorities in England. Drawing on concepts of social bonds, bridges and networks, his findings point to the ways in which in predominantly white areas, outside spaces were constructed as more dangerous, whilst in more diverse neighbourhoods, he found that families constructed their local area as more welcoming and safer. However, as children got older, and family surveillance was less possible, parents constructed the young people as more vulnerable to negative influences, particularly where there was a lack of youth provision. Spicer found that school was a key place to form friendships, with some also finding this possible within their immediate neighbourhood. This then opened up opportunities for play and sport in local parks or amenities and meeting up at the shops, or in the library for homework support.   Where a child may have SEND, the findings point to key questions about how notions of protection may be negotiated by families in their interactions with these spaces.

Also, how friendships are formed within school may be impacted by teacher assumptions and attitudes to young people's learner identities. Vincent, Neal and Iqbal (2018) conducted a sociological and geographical study into how friendships are negotiated by children and their families in three London primary schools situated in diverse neighbourhoods. They found that teachers' use of "ability" groups affected who the children socialised with across ethnicities and class, thus constraining opportunities for diverse friendship groups, whilst seating plans were used as a management tool for behaviour in lessons. The intersection of class and ethnicity was also implicated in how the parents managed the children's activities with each other and in structured pursuits after school.   Friendships across able bodied/disabled pupils were not seen as possible by the teachers but valued by parents of children defined as having SEND who disagreed that other pupils could only conceptualise relating to SEND pupils by being "kind" to them. However, the children's ability to pursue friendships was not in the end significantly constrained by the teachers or the parents. Despite the significant differences between young people's experiences in primary and secondary school, this study raises useful questions for my research about the role of friendships in learning in secondary school and in the community, and with regard to those designated as having SEND.

The madrassah provides a resource where parents feel assured that their children will learn about the Muslim faith, a vital aspect of their education, within a safe setting. Also, due to the predominance of Qur'anic learning in Somalia and within Somali families in the UK, this

is an area of education about which parents are often more confident. Therefore, understandings of how learner identities may be performed in religious learning spaces and how notions of SEND are negotiated in these spaces are particularly relevant to my study. In her longitudinal, ethnographic research with multilingual learning in primary school-aged Pakistani Muslim children in the UK, Helevaara Robertson (2007) considered what advantages or additive strengths bilingual children brought from community practices to English literacy lessons. Drawing from data collected through field notes, participant observations, audio and videos of lessons, interviews with teachers and parents, she focuses on case studies of five children in reception and year one. Highlighting the gendered roles around learning in the madrassah, she found that the boys attended more often and were given more attention, while the girls were expected to read quietly, were not asked to recite and would perform religious observance at home rather than in the mosque. Intelligence was constructed by the teacher as due to innate ability and this was gendered, with boys used as role models within mixed ability groups. Progress was considered to be due to aptitude, self-discipline, a good teacher and a supportive family. Lack of success was either absolved through constructs of inability and focusing on other qualities or stigmatised as lazy and the fault of the parents and the children. Aspects such as age, language background or bilingual competency were not considered, although multilingualism was the norm within this setting, as children spoke with each other in their home language or English and learnt the Qur'an in Arabic.

Comparing these learning experiences with those in Urdu classes and in the mainstream school, Helevaara Robertson found that participants who succeeded in the madrassah were still constrained within low expectations, disregard for multilingualism and inflexible setting systems in mainstream school. In contrast, the Urdu classes provided a flexible, inclusive space to learn. Begum's (2014) ethnographic study of a Bangladeshi Muslim boy in her secondary school English class draws on Moll *et al.*'s (1992) concept of funds of knowledge (discussed below). She explores the tensions as Mohamed constructed his successful Qur'anic studies as glamorous within peer racialised, classed "gangsta" discourses but hid them in class to avoid racism and discrimination. When the curriculum was relevant to his life experiences, he shifted from disengagement to a more active, responsive learner identity, disrupting prevailing underachievement discourses. Although neither scholar proposes a romantic notion of learning within religious settings (Wallace, 2013), their findings emphasise the need to contest the stigma around Islamic learning, and for schools to value multilingual, religious learning in the community so that the varied ways that young people are taught to learn, and the knowledge, skills and sense of themselves as learners that they bring to their mainstream work can be drawn on rather than hidden. Their work

also raises further questions around how the stigma around SEND might be negotiated in madrassahs and experiences of children and young people who may find learning difficult in both settings, an aspect into which my study enquires.

3.5 Challenging negative assumptions

The studies reviewed here demonstrate a rich breadth of empirical knowledge about the heterogeneity as well as commonalities in Black and minoritised migrant families' negotiations of their children's school learning. In all these negotiations, the literature demonstrates that dimensions of race, gender and class are key, reflecting the realities of marginalisation and discrimination which refugee young people and their families experience. Particularly where parents and children are interviewed and where researchers have worked in community settings and/or schools over time, these studies contribute significantly to our understanding of the disconnect which often exists between home and school in relation to supporting these young people's educational achievement. It is clear that young people perceive this problem and negotiate it in agentic but also potentially problematic ways to conceal the challenges that they face in their sense of belonging.

The findings in the literature challenge negative homogenising assumptions around lack of literacy and learning in the home, and negative assumptions that parents are not or cannot engage in supporting their children's learning. The studies point to evidence of the positive ways in which migrant young people can perform their identities as learners, and parents as supporters, within school, the home and in the community. At the same time the literature highlights the inequalities that Somali parents face, the gendered dimensions of these experiences, and the new roles in post migration settings that may be available within these constraints. Furthermore, they explore intergenerational tensions within families about how young people negotiate their social and learner identities. The research reviewed here emphasises that home-school engagement is a two-way process and highlights the role that schools must play in their engagement with parents, learning about and respecting families' backgrounds, knowledge and learning practices, as well as explaining their systems and opening up opportunities for mutual dialogue.

The gaps and implications that I have highlighted around SEND in the literature in this chapter highlight the need to understand how Somali young people negotiate this notion not just at school, but also at home, in the community, and in the spaces in-between school and home. My research seeks to inform this hardly explored aspect of the young people's lived experiences. The studies that do exist are not with Somali families and focus on home-school relationships. They point to the possibility of significant tensions around stigma, lack of appropriate and helpful communication from professionals, lack of respect and

appreciation of different experiences, approaches and beliefs. It is therefore important for us to gain more knowledge about these experiences for Somali families in order to understand the significant inequalities which they face. A key area which my study investigates here is how young people take up the role of language broker and gate keeper within this disconnect, an aspect also not researched in relation to SEND in any depth. Furthermore, the discussion above points to the ways in which we need to interrogate views of what being a learner means in relation to notions of "educational help" not only with teachers, but with family members and other teachers in the community. This will then aid our understandings of how Somali young people who need "educational help" negotiate a sense of belonging as learners. Research into these negotiations is limited and it is here that my study also seeks to add to knowledge.

Drawing the arguments from both review chapters together, I have set out within the different bodies of literature that focus on refugee, Somali, Black underachievement, family or community learner identities, the ways in which these young people are found to negotiate prevailing gendered, racialised, classed, deficit assumptions of them as non-learners and their parents or carers as unsupportive. The literature illuminates assumptions and demonstrates the constrained, complex heterogeneity as well as marked nature of performances. Boys and girls at times challenge or subvert negative discourses, whilst at other times draw on prevailing peer led anti-school, anti-learning performances, to establish a sense of belonging. Generational, gendered negotiations within the diaspora space around learning are also shown to be complex, heterogeneous and at times problematic, particularly as children get older, with parents often marginalised by schools.

I have reviewed the ways in which scholars have used intersectional approaches in order to illuminate the complexities of these performances. I have also pointed to the ways in which, over the course of this study, approaches which blend different theories, such as DisCrit, have started to address more thoroughly the intersection of race and SEND. My review of the literature that exists about lived experiences of migrant young people at the intersection of SEND with gender, class, race and or/ EAL shows that notions of SEND are often hidden, denied or misidentified, whilst prevailing inability and othering discourses, together with structural inequalities, marginalise the young people and their families (Tomlinson 1982; Benjamin 2002; Rutter 2004; Youdell 2006b; Gonzàlez and Artiles 2015; Jegatheesan, Fowler and Miller, 2010; Youdell 2011; Abdi 2015, Gillborn *et al.* 2016). However, the intersection of refugee and SEND has remained a mostly unexplored aspect of young people's learner identities, and one that, I have argued, requires in-depth exploration in order for us to more thoroughly understand young people's learner identity performances. With regard to Somali young people in particular, questions have been raised in the literature

about inequalities around how SEND is designated for them (Kahin 1997; Rutter 2004). Despite this, I have shown that there are significant gaps in knowledge about how recently arrived Somali young people negotiate these notions at school and at home, including where SEND may be a consideration but not designated. Nor have studies focused on how Somali parents negotiate notions of SEND in their role as supporters and advocates. Furthermore, there are no studies that focus on both home and school identity performances around SEND, including the young people, teachers and parents in the enquiry.

Where personal, individual narratives are analysed in the literature, the complexities and nuances within lived experiences can be fruitfully conveyed, countering tendencies to homogenise and/or pathologise young people and their families as certain types of learner and parent. Conducting the study through in-depth interviews with the group of young people who were my participants sought, as Allan (2008) suggests, to engage with the "impossibility" of inclusion through involving those who were deeply engaged with these processes. However, given the stigma around the concept of SEND, my methodological approach held significant challenges. I wanted to recruit Somali young people who were not necessarily designated as having SEND in order to find out how they negotiated support, and to explore possible silences and misrecognition around SEND. Furthermore, where young people were designated as having SEND, I did not want families to feel sought out and stigmatised. This therefore demanded a careful, ethical and reflexive approach which I discuss in the next chapter.

Chapter 4: Co-constructing a jigsaw of narratives: the methodology

My aim in this study was to explore how a group of Somali boys and girls who had migrated to the UK as refugees, and who might be considered to require "educational help", negotiated their identities as "possible" learners at home and at school. My review of the literature in Chapter 2 pointed to key issues to consider about how far notions of SEND may be hidden or misidentified within prevailing racialised, classed, gendered discourses around certain groups of young people as anti-learning and/or anti-school, as passive or disruptive and as not fitting in. It highlighted the complex ways that Somali young people negotiate their multiple social and learner identities, often constrained and marginalised, but with some possibilities for positive recognition. My discussion exposed the lack of attention in literature to how these young people might negotiate learner identities around notions of SEND, and, whilst noting the stigma around this concept, explored what this might mean for their recognition as possible learners. To do this I found that I needed to consider the ways in which these young people took up, resisted, rejected or transformed categories of EAL, refugee, underachievement and disadvantage in school, considering the racialised, ethnicised, gendered and classed dimensions of these performances and where SEND might be suggested, overlooked or painfully exposed.

Chapter 3 pointed to the considerable systemic constraints and inequalities that Somali families may experience as they attempt to support their children's learning in relation to SEND. It outlined the lack of in-depth research inquiry into how this notion may be negotiated by Somali families in western contexts. The discussion highlighted potential differences in understandings of SEND within unequal power relations between schools and families. However, it suggested that there may be possibilities for some change, through family and community support as well as in how school-home engagement is operationalised. For my study, recognising the stigma around notions of SEND, I wanted to enquire into the ways in which this was negotiated by the young people and their families within the home, in the community and in the spaces in-between home and school, and what the consequences were for the young person's recognition as a learner. My interest was in how possibilities for change and even transformation around notions of deficit and inability might be possible in different spaces and with different people.

This chapter discusses two distinct aspects of my methodology. First, I present the ways in which I designed the study in order to provide in-depth understanding of how the young people negotiated their learner identities. I set out how I was able to establish multiple interactions with them over time as well as being led by the young people to engage with others in school and at home through observations and discussions. Second, the chapter

details the ways in which I used a narrative approach to analyse the data collected within different contexts through this young-person-centred approach. The ethics involved in conducting the research with vulnerable young people around issues that stigmatise them drove my initial approach and were intricately interwoven into the ongoing process. I therefore give details about ethics throughout the discussion and note salient points in the conclusion. The chapter offers my own narrative of the journey that I undertook. It reflects on the ways in which the process presented significant challenges to me around my unique positionalities as a researcher, teacher and project worker as I negotiated complex, fragile, power-laden relationships between myself as White, British, middle-class, middle-aged female with teenage Somali, Black, Muslim, refugee, boy and girl participants.

4.1 Why I used narrative analysis

I chose narrative inquiry as my methodology for three reasons. First, narrative is generally considered a discursive event situated in time and place which provides a site for the creation of meaning (Tamboukou, 2008a; Phoenix, 2013). I conceptualise the "self" that is constructed within these narratives as intersectional, multiple, shifting and never completely knowable, with the knowledge produced as subjective and partial (Cossett, Lury and Summerfield, 2000; Tamboukou, 2008a, 2008b, 2011; Phoenix and Brannen, 2014). As I will discuss in more detail below, distinctions within narrative research about "big" and "small" stories informed my approach, taking up a position within more recent shifts in understandings where both are encompassed, rather than selecting just one aspect (Sools, 2013). Phoenix (2013, p. 73) suggests that a "small" story approach allows the study of identity co-construction and close attention to the "performative work" involved in narratives. She suggests that these negotiations take place within, and draw on, "big" stories. For the purposes of this thesis, I consider narratives of learning which circulate within local, wider and global educational contexts.

Second, my use of narrative challenged the power relations that I was seeking to explore and had experienced as a teacher and project worker where young people are not consulted, and their families' knowledge of their needs are ignored or dismissed. The use of narrative did not in itself address these issues but helped to explore and interrogate representations of lived experiences. Narrative is seen as a site of identity performance and negotiation for both the researcher and the participant and is thus closely aligned with the post structuralist notions of identities as socially constructed on which I draw (De Fina, Schiffrin and Bamberg, 2006; Squire, Andrews and Tamboukou, 2008; Phoenix, 2013). I recognise how within the interview space, "troubled" subject positions are taken up, fraught with issues of power affecting who speaks, how they speak, what they say and how they are understood (Wetherell, 1998). Therefore, I used critical self-reflexive practices to explore

crucial post-colonial, feminist issues of power, identification and representation in narrative inquiry (Elliott, 2005; MacLure, 2009; Phoenix *et al.*, 2013; Riessman, 2015). As I will elaborate through this chapter, these approaches helped me to interrogate and challenge my own and others' assumptions about whose knowledge is privileged, which stories are "worth" telling, how such knowledge is conveyed, and for whose benefit.

Finally, and linked to the previous point, I drew on a feminist, historical, political use of narrative where participants positioned at the margins express their views and tell their stories, particularly where the representation of lived experiences can illuminate assumptions, recognise difference and uncover silences (Phoenix, 1987; Cossett, Lury and Summerfield, 2000; Mazzei, 2007a; Pinnegar and Daynes, 2007). This use of narrative inquiry does not set out to claim "truth", or give "voice" to those interviewed (Phillips, 1994; Squire, 2005; Doucet and Mauthner, 2008; Mirza, 2012). Instead, it aims to contribute to understandings of how refugee young people identify themselves and are identified as learners within a post structuralist theoretical framework, where new spaces are opened up for alternative meanings and narratives are conceptualised as destabilised, fragmented, incomplete, temporary and contradictory. My reasons for using narrative thus arose from my ontological and epistemological understanding of identities, my lived experiences and from a critical perspective on the rights and experiences of refugee young people in education.

As Block *et al.* (2012) discuss in their study with refugee young people, ethical demands were woven into the research design and informed the methods at each stage of the process. I drew on theories around working with children and young people to be aware of their positionalities as marginalised, but simultaneously to recognise them as competent and capable throughout the process (Mayall, 2002; Thorne, 2010). Using young-person-centred methods within the narrative inquiry aimed to address to some extent the issues around participants' sense of control both at the time of the study and afterwards, for example through the choices about my interviews and lesson observations. Here I was mindful of the ways in which their involvement in some senses created opportunities to negotiate less marginalised positions but only for brief periods within the research design, or as participants in the project (Parkes, 2008).

Using these methods also sought to challenge the "troubled" imperialist history of researching the "other" (Crozier and Davies, 2007; Santoro and Smyth, 2010). Here I used Brah's (1996) notion of diaspora space to help me interrogate how the research was framed and how relationships were negotiated. The concept helped me to critique the ways in which I was positioned within diaspora space as powerful, both in positive and negative ways, due to my Britishness, my race and my role as teacher and researcher. It informed how I approached interactions by giving recognition to the young people's complex

positionalities and belonging. I saw the young people and their families as diasporic, having left "home" but also engaging with aspects of "home" within the migratory context in fluid and momentary as well as more marked ways, whilst negotiating what "home" meant for them. I was interested in the ways in which these negotiations drew on the different educational discourses "here" and "there" available to them, and in what ways both school and family notions of SEND might circulate, be resisted, rejected or taken up. Furthermore, I wanted to explore how the sense of "them" as inferior and "us" as superior and knowing in school-home approaches to education and SEND, could be interrogated, and how these understandings might inform different ways of engaging with the concept of SEND. After outlining the context within which the research took place in the next section, I then discuss how these processes were managed, and with what consequences for the narrative inquiry.

4.2 Context of the research

The 2011 census reports just over 100,000 Somalis living in the UK who were born in Somalia, 57% of these having arrived after 2001 with 65,000 known to have settled in London. This is one of the largest Somali communities in Europe and comprises 21% of the refugee population in the city (Hemmings, 2010; Ipsos MORI Social Research Institute, 2010; Office for National Statistics, 2013; BBC, 2018). There are records of a steady decline in formal applications for asylum from Somalis after 2001, with a significant proportion each year having their request denied (Open Society Foundations, 2014).   My research was conducted within a large, inner city, densely populated London borough which in the 2011 census recorded very high rates of migration, Somalis being by far the largest refugee community (London Datastore, 2011). Many of the Black and other minoritised communities which make up 29% of the population live in deprivation, in stark contrast to the "typical" young, well-educated professional, mobile, middle class residents, of whom 34% were born outside the UK.

As mentioned in Chapter 3 (page 75) social class attribution is complex for migrant families. Due the sensitivities around conducting research with refugee families I did not ask parents about their backgrounds and experiences in Somalia as this would have been intrusive and unethical. The consent I gained was to focus on their children's education in the UK, and this was therefore my focus in my interviews. I also had to be careful to maintain boundaries around what I knew from working with the families, and not draw on this in the research in order to maintain trust as well as to conform to ethical guidelines (see section 4.3.3). However, from what I saw during the fieldwork, it was clear that these families were living within working class environments. They all lived in deprived estates within the borough. Furthermore, the changes to the benefit system which took place as I was doing the fieldwork resulted in two of the families being evicted by private landlords and eventually

rehoused by the council in different council estates in the borough. One father worked in the care sector. The mothers were unemployed, and some suffered with health conditions which prevented them from working. Most of the mothers had no prior formal education and had not accessed ESOL classes. The changes to the benefit system also meant that some mothers then started to take up low paid, shift work in the service or care sector. Family life was focused on the immediate and extended family, in London, within the UK and transnationally. Some attended the local mosque and some accessed community facilities for sport or after school homework support. Some families also had access to financial resources from wider family, which was often used for tuition, and sometimes to visit family in other towns or abroad.

All the schools which took part in the research had majority working-class pupils. "Rowan", the pseudonym of the main school where the research was conducted, achieved a "good" rating from Ofsted in 2013 at the time I was doing the field work and in that year 53% achieved five A* to C grades at GCSE with English and Maths, the measurement then used by the Department for Education. Over half their pupils were in receipt of the Pupil Premium Grant at the time and a very small number were from White British backgrounds: Black African, Pakistani, Caribbean and mixed heritage pupils were the largest groups. The percentage of pupils with SEND was well above the national average. The other schools which I visited for observations were "Oak Academy", where I had previously taught and "Willow" and "Birch", which were in a neighbouring borough. These schools also had very ethnically diverse, working class profiles and all reported around 60% of pupils as achieving five A* to C grades at GCSE with English and Maths. One participant was at "Ash" primary school at the start of the fieldwork, situated in one of the most deprived council estates in the borough. "Alder" secondary school, attended by a majority of Black, Asian, working-class pupils, and not performing well in government league tables, did not take part in the end.

The charity that I worked for had started after some research by the local authority into the educational needs of refugee pupils in the borough, many of whom were from Somali backgrounds. This highlighted the need for homework support, and a club was established first, followed by a volunteer tutor scheme, which I led. A main part of my work was meeting children and young people in their home with their families, discussing their learning and identifying with them what was going well, and where they felt they needed support. Over time we found that we were working more closely with children and young people whose families and/or schools felt they needed "educational help" but were unsure how to proceed. Placing a volunteer tutor often served to inform our considerations, as well as giving the child or young person positive support. My method for this research drew on the skills, knowledge

and experience I had built up over time in this role and previously as a support teacher for refugee pupils, and in turn I learnt from the research and developed my practice.

4.3 Negotiating participation around stigma and vulnerability

4.3.1 Recruitment

My study aimed to start by recruiting a small number of Somali young people who had migrated to the UK and who were considered by school or home to require "educational help". I would ask them to take part in one-to-one interviews and then broaden the focus from there. They would choose with me lessons they would like me to observe, first a lesson they felt were successful and then where they felt they needed support. Finally, they would nominate other people at home or at school whom they would like me to interview about their learning. One-to-one interviews would continue through this process over the space of six months, to build trust and enable us to reflect on the observations and other interviews (Santoro and Smyth, 2010).

As a way in, I asked several schools if I could attend homework clubs to build up relationships with young people whom I could then ask to take part in the study through a system of rolling consent. This meant that at each stage of the research I would gain their consent for the next aspect of my design, thus providing the young people with some sense of safety and control. The two schools who responded favourably were Alder and Rowan, both in the borough where I worked and with good relationships with the charity. These schools did not have homework clubs attended by Somali young people, so I agreed to run groups for two terms, a lunch time reading group at Alder and an after-school homework club at Rowan and to hold focus groups with the participants at certain points within this time. To recruit a group, a cohesive, energising momentum was needed for the clubs to work. I therefore took a broad sweep approach, inviting anyone suggested by the school as needing intervention for their learning, whether EAL, SEND or "catch up", including those born in the UK. This also meant that I avoided issues around misrecognition of SEND and opened up opportunities to analyse how newer arrivals co-constructed their identities with others. I started with young people in Years 7 to 8 to ensure that I there was space to develop relationships over time, an important aspect of gaining insight in research with children and young people (Parkes, 2002). Also, through using a broad sweep approach in Rowan where it was easier to recruit informally as we met after school, I accepted family members and friends of the originally invited group. This meant I gained significant participants such as "Mahmud" in Year 9, who would have been denied through my initial criteria due to his age and the fact that he was not attending any intervention, and therefore was not identified by the school. His was an interesting case as although his mother and the

school were concerned about his progress, but this was framed within school as low literacy and underachievement rather than SEND. I included him in the study as for me, the questions around his learner identity presented a good example of the complexities that exist for this group of young people and comparing his experiences with others who were designated as SEND was a valuable part of the analysis. Thus, a snowballing method, with flexibility about my criteria, together with purposeful sampling, bore fruit in useful ways.

At the end of the first term, Alder failed an Ofsted inspection, was therefore under huge scrutiny and a key participant moved to Somalia. It was therefore not viable for me to continue the group there, so I focused fully on the group in Rowan, which numbered ten young people. Although the homework club followed the school system of delivering support along ethnic or racial lines, as I only invited Somali young people, which could contribute to stereotypes of certain ethnic groups as low achievers, it provided a safer space to explore in positive ways with peers what it meant to receive "educational help" and became a useful source of material. However, when we finished the club, most of the participants did not give consent for observations, only three were happy to do one-to-one interviews and out of these, one agreed to a family interview. Another participant, Asha, was recruited through a SEND teacher, "Ms Squires", but I still did not have enough main participants.

I therefore turned to my workplace as a way in and, after gaining ethical consent from the trustees and discussing possible participants with the caseworker who specialised in SEND, recruited seven young people from five families. All these families had volunteer tutors from my workplace who supported at least one child with their homework. Apart from one girl, "Iqra", whose late recruitment and home situation meant that I was limited to interviews with her, these young people all agreed to observations or teacher interviews and for me to talk to a family member. In total I had sixteen main participants. One of these, Mahmud, I knew through my workplace as well as Rowan. Observations were fairly easy to arrange as I had personal or work contacts with the other schools that these participants attended. Carrying out this part of the data collection over five schools, rather than in one or two locations as I had initially planned limited the number of lesson observations I was able to do. In total I completed twelve observations chosen by seven of my participants (see Tables 1 and 2, pages 104 and 105).

On the other hand, this change to the method was not necessarily negative. It widened the scope of the data collection and meant that the young-person-centred approach, focusing on the co-construction of their learner identities with me and others and became stronger as I relied more on understanding their context through their narratives.

4.3.2 Ethical approaches to consent

As Bourke and Loveridge (2014) discuss in depth with regard to conducting educational research with young people, issues around the nature of assent, consent and dissent were ethically important throughout the project. I was concerned that young people and their parents should not just give their assent to be involved but give informed consent, being seen as competent to make this decision. To explain the project to potential participants, I held a group meeting in school, or for work-based participants individual meetings in the family's home, where I explained my aims. I asked Somali colleagues to act as intermediaries to invite families, not only due to the need for interpretation, but also so that young people and their families did not feel under pressure to agree to the research in order to maintain their relationship with the school or with my workplace.   These intermediaries then interpreted at the meetings to allow for continuity and opportunities to build trust. I made it clear that the school or charity was not investigating the young people, being aware as Thorne (2010) discusses, of concerns around surveillance. In the schools, I established that where issues arose about the participants' learning, I would with their permission feed back to the school. Furthermore, I explained that safeguarding concerns would need to be passed to a nominated staff member.   For work-based participants, I established a process to refer any concerns around education and wider issues, with consent unless someone was at risk, to the charity via a Somali colleague. The information about the study was set out in a leaflet in English and Somali both of which were offered to families in order to respect their different proficiencies (Block *et al.*, 2012) (Appendix A). I gave the young people and families the choice of whether to tell us their decision at the meeting or later.

Issues were raised within this process around how far young-person-centred consent could be or should be gained. As Yee and Andrews (2006) discuss, there were tensions between seeing children as competent and as dependents. A young-person-centred approach to consent was not always welcomed by parents, particularly due to family concerns around external professional involvement. At Rowan, a sense of insecurity was created for families through asking if their children rather than parents/carers could initially attend a meeting with me at school, followed by a family meeting. Attempting to address this, at Alder I made sure that parents and young people were invited together, whilst for families recruited through work, I held information meetings in the home once families had agreed through a Somali speaking colleague. The sense of parents and teachers deciding for young people was stronger in these two settings, pointing to the difficulties around using adults as gatekeepers (Thorne, 2010). In all three cases, how far young person-centred consent could be obtained was difficult to judge, whilst the heterogeneity of family responses to consent within a post migratory setting became very evident: some left it up to the young person, others were very

directive (Ellis *et al.*, 2007; Beazley, Bessell and Ennew, 2009). Furthermore, through using Somali colleagues as intermediaries, I was sometimes unsure about how far families and young people might agree to participate, but not have sufficient information for informed consent. Thus, these negotiations around initial consent were messy, shifting and at times uncomfortable.

To try to address this, consent forms were completed with the young people and their parents. Also, asking for written consent through using a form meant that the research was established as separate from my workplace or the school, with clear boundaries that protected me as well as the families (Ellis *et al.*, 2007). However, there were sensitivities around refugee families being asked to sign forms and for those who were not print literate in either language, this was also problematic. Here, as Morrow and Richards (1996) assert, overformal rules leading from a medical model of research were in danger of alienating my participants, but at the same time I had a responsibility to safeguard and to follow BERA (2011) ethical guidelines. To address these issues to some extent, the Somali intermediaries explained the form verbally. I used a tick list system against simple statements to show agreement and did not ask for a signature (Appendix B). All participants were given a copy of the forms and were assured that all data would be kept confidential, saved on a computer that was password protected, with names anonymised. Although family members agreed to use the forms, they often made it clear that a verbal agreement was sufficient and valued, negotiating a compromise between western and non-western approaches.

I needed to be very careful to negotiate different understandings about SEND, balancing transparency with my aim to research a highly stigmatised area of inequalities. Understanding SEND as a construct within westernised, medicalised discourses helped to alleviate some of my concerns. Although all terms are problematic, using language such as "help" and "support" to "do well at school" was less likely to shut down lines of communication. Although for some these terms were still seen as labelling someone as in need, for many they were more acceptable to families and young people and drew on their desire for achievement and social mobility, not just for themselves but for their wider community (Kahin and Wallace, 2017). Furthermore, it was important to use terms which did not make judgements between categories of learner as EAL, underachieving or SEND in order to mitigate stigma and resist the assumptions I was aiming to explore. I was interested in the ways in which the young people negotiated these categories in fluid, fragmented and contradictory ways and thus my recruitment process needed to be open to possibilities (Hyvarinen *et al.*, 2010). This had useful consequences for my data. For example, in one family I interviewed two brothers, Naseem and Asad, together with an open mind about how

far their narratives would meet my criteria. This provided important data, particularly in their parents' interviews, although I did not use Asad's own interviews for the purposes of this thesis.

Throughout these processes, the roles of the intermediaries were key. My three colleagues who performed this role were educated, middle class Somalis, male and female, not always from the same area of Somalia and Somaliland, or from the same clan, as the families. They had different working and personal relationships with me and brought their own understanding, experiences and concerns about education and SEND to the project. The ways in which they negotiated complex intersectional relationships as intermediaries had an often unseen but significant impact on recruitment and I needed to be aware that through their support, I was not necessarily gaining participants in straightforward, unproblematic ways. For example, in the Rowan meeting for young people, Hamdi, the Somali intermediary who worked there, made a comment about her daughter who had dyslexia which opened up the topic of SEND in ways that I had not planned, as I was highly sensitive to alienating potential participants. One of the future participants, Ahmed, came up to me at the end of the meeting to show me a note in his diary stating that he had dyslexia. A keen participant in the study, his openness about this in the group enabled discussions that otherwise may have remained hidden. This showed me that along with a participatory approach to stigmatised issues, as advocated by Ellis *et al.* (2007) in their research with Somali young people around mental health, it was important not to foreclose discussions through over-anxiety about sensitivities.

On the other hand, I needed to be very aware of the young people's response to stigma. When a SEND teacher at Rowan facilitated school-based interviews with Asha, a Year 10 Somali pupil who had been identified with dyslexia two years before, Asha's condition for her consent was that her mother was not involved in the research as there were still significant sensitivities at home around her identification. I was happy to agree to this, as I was learning that my data would be a jigsaw of different narratives and that I needed to take up opportunities where they presented themselves. Reflecting on this process, critiques of binaried, boundaried notions of insiders and outsiders in ethnographic studies helped to interrogate the multiple, shifting ways in which my intermediaries and I were positioned in relation to potential participants (Santoro and Smyth, 2010; Cunliffe and Karunanayake, 2013). It also emphasised the need to interrogate power relations and challenge homogenising assumptions around how consent can be gained (Phoenix, 1994; Warren and Vincent, 2001).

Although the initial consent process was rigorous, negotiations of ongoing consent throughout the study were also vital. These were more flexible and responsive to individual

situations as Levinson (2010) suggests in his reflections on the situated, contextualised nature of consent.   For example, the young people opted in and out of coming to club and/or focus groups and agreed or disagreed to interviews and observations. For some, changing location to meeting at my workplace helped them to engage more easily in the interview process. Reminding participants of the nature of the research and their choice to take part was often more appropriate at these points than further paperwork. To try to mitigate against adult surveillance, about which Thorne (2010) warns with regard to research in school, I respected the reasons young people gave for their absence and did not enforce the club where they had other activities they wanted to attend. I stressed to parents the voluntary nature of the club and often texted information about absences as this was less threatening than a phone call home but maintained safeguarding procedures. The work-based participants possibly had less sense of control over rolling consent as their parents were more directly involved in arranging my visits to their homes. However, lateness back home from school to meet me could have been a signal of dissent and was difficult to judge, even when I checked with the young person one-to-one if they were happy to continue.

As Renold *et al.* (2008) point out in their exploration of what informed consent means, there were also momentary ways that the young people negotiated their participation within activities, for example asking me to delete a conversation where they complained about a staff member, choosing how and when to respond in a conversation, or speaking in Somali when Maha my interpreter was not at the club. Considering the dynamic, shifting and complex ways in which Renold *et al.*'s notion of "becoming participant" were played out, critical reflexivity was key as I learnt about my expectations and assumptions, at times withdrawing, changing tack or revisiting agreements. As McNamara (2011) asserts in his critique of rights-based approaches to research over time with young people, although adults were to a great extent in control of the process, these young people established boundaries around spaces within which they were happy to take part, and where they were not, signalled dissent.

I felt that the dissent from many of the young people at Rowan regarding lesson observations and family interviews reflected the ways that the club had become a safer space in which to discuss stigmatised issues. However, they were not happy for me to continue the research outside of this context. Valentine, Butler and Skelton (2010) argue in their research with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) young people that this notion of safe spaces for participation is vital in cases where stigma is negotiated. Furthermore, as Crozier and Davies (2007) discuss, these young people were engaged in gatekeeping between home and school, protecting their families as well as protecting themselves. Possibly the "generationing", translocational identity work they were doing was

heightened by the fact that home and school spaces were both potentially unsafe for them as "problem" learners and therefore out of bounds for my research (Mayall and Zeiher, 2003). Thus, although as Block *et al.* (2014) argue, the collaborative aspect of the research had attempted to address some of the power differentials inherent in the study, the use of these methods within school had also opened up a vulnerability in the research design. The tables below provide details of my main participants.

Table 1 - Rowan homework club participants

All names are pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality.

Pseudonym	Gender	Year group	School intervention	Club/Focus group	One-to-one interviews	Observations/teacher interview[5]	Family member
Ahmed	M	7	SEND - dyslexia	yes	Did not return to school		
Amran	F	8	EAL/SEND	yes	1 with Maha		
Farah	M	7		came once			
Hibaaq	F	7	Underachieving/ behaviour	yes			
Mahmud (Maryam's brother)	M	9	Underachieving	yes	3	Maths and English (2)	Mother
Maryam	F	7	Underachieving/ behaviour	yes			
Naima	F	7	Underachieving/ behaviour	yes			
Saleem	M	8	SEND	yes	1	Observed English	
Said	M	8	EAL	yes			
Yusra	F	7	Underachieving/ behaviour	yes			

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[5] All observations recorded in tables 1 and 2 were of one lesson, unless indicated.

Table 2 - Main participants, organised by school year and school

Name	Research period	School	Year	Interviews	Observations	Teacher interviews	Family member
Iqra	April to July 2014	Ash	6	3, at work			
Zaynab	Nov 2013 to May 2014	Birch	7	4, 2 at home, 2 at work	Humanities		Barre, maternal uncle
Omar	Nov 2013 to May 2014	Willow	8	4	Art	Head of Year- Ms Young	Mother, Qadra
Naseem (int. with his brother Asad)	January to May 2014	Oak	9	4	ICT and English Volunteer tutor Diane at home		Mother and Father, Abdul and Amira
Ruqiya	October 2013 to June 2014	Oak	8	5	Maths and Geography		Aunt (main carer), Safiyah
Asha	March to June 2014	Rowan	10	4, first one with SEND teacher	Maths and English	Ms Tyler (English) Ms Squires, (SEND)	
Mahmud	October 2013 to May 2014	Rowan	10	3	Maths and English (2)		Mother, Qaali

4.3.3 Dilemmas around my multiple roles "in the field"

Reflexivity as an integral part of research is interwoven throughout this thesis (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995; Denzin, 1997). At this point, however, it is useful to highlight a specific aspect of this around my unique positionality as a teacher, project worker and researcher. Fox and Allan's (2014, p. 110) analysis of reflexivity within the doctoral process suggests that ethical reflexivity is at the "heart" of the power relations which are present, perhaps especially for those who are also practitioners. Running the club meant that the young people and families positioned me more firmly as a teacher, as Yee and Andrews discuss (2006), and this meant that there were complexities to negotiate in terms of what power I had within the school and with teachers, and in relation to the independence and confidentiality of my research. At the same time, the establishment of the clubs as learning interventions brought the contractual aspect of the project to the fore, from expectations that homework would be done, that young people would make progress, to schools seeing issues with the young people's learning addressed.

For work-based participants, the families already knew me and were used to my visiting them and discussing the young people's learning and therefore trust was more easily established (Ngo, Bigelow and Lee, 2014). The young people and their parents often responded positively in order to give back to the charity, and also, as with school-based families, they hoped that the research would help the community (Crozier, 2003; Ellis *et al.*, 2007; Kahin and Wallace, 2017). Although as Shah (2004) argues, a transactional element was transparently present, the ethics around this had to be negotiated sensitively. Using a fieldwork diary as a tool and asking intermediaries or staff where appropriate for guidance were useful ways of reflecting on these issues.

However, managing the boundaries around my role as a researcher not a project worker was still complex. Concerns around well-being and learning needs inevitably became apparent during the field work. Levinson (2010) suggests that ethical responses need to be tied in to concern for welfare, but it was not always easy to judge if and when to intervene (Barbour, 2010). With work-based families this felt easier as I knew them better. With some there were urgent issues such as mental health concerns, where I made immediate referrals to work with the agreement of the family. Other issues were already recognised by the volunteer tutor or colleagues and could therefore be acted upon without my intervention. There were also more momentary issues that I had to negotiate, for example, a parent would interrupt an interview to comment about lack of homework or detentions. By sympathising with the problem rather than acting on it, I foregrounded my role as a researcher whilst maintaining a relationship with the family. However, my responses may have been taken as supportive and were therefore not passive (Crozier, 2003). Where appropriate, after the

interview I would check with the young person and their family if they needed support from a work colleague.

Longer term, I felt that to leave a young person with no opportunity to ask for the "educational help" to which they may be entitled would have been unethical and unjust. By offering support to families after the field work through the charity, and ensuring that this was taken up by colleagues, I kept a distance between my research and the SEND process, as otherwise I was concerned that schools would consider me to be imposing my ideas. I had no control over the response to these offers from the families or the schools when work contacted them and, in some instances, had to leave situations where I felt support was appropriate but not available or requested. I maintained some distance from the casework at work, although I became more involved over time with a few cases due to staff changes. This meant that even five years later I was still making careful decisions, in consultation with the young people, about how far to use the knowledge I had gained about their learning for their good. Thus I did not completely "leave the field"; the ethical systems I put in place were robust but flexible to try to ensure that through taking part in the research, the influence on these young people had been on the side of positive (Booth, 1998; Hugman, Pittaway and Bartolomei, 2011; Block *et al.*, 2012).

Finishing the data collection well was important in order to recognise the boundaries between this and the ongoing relationships I had with some of the participants. At the end of the clubs, I held a feedback meeting for the families, and offered the young people a trip to a local university and museum. For work-based participants, I offered to provide them with a report at the end of my write up, and to invite them anonymously to a meeting where I would feedback my findings to the wider community. In this way I aligned with Hugman's (2011) argument that "doing no harm" is not good enough, and that participants need to hear back, discuss possibilities for change and understand the constraints of the project. In terms of the participants' responses to taking part, it was possible that spaces for change were opened up as the young people, their families and teachers started to make meaning from co-constructing narratives about their learning experiences at home and at school (Squire, 2008).   However, as McWilliam *et al.* (2009) argue in their critique of notions of research as emancipatory, the interview as a process is fraught with power relations, particularly with vulnerable young people and their families. It is therefore outside the scope of this study to know whether possibilities for change were taken up in this way and dangerous to make such claims.

4.4 Conducting narrative research

4.4.1 Co-constructing narratives

A broad approach to narrative collection was a crucial way of encompassing the different intersectionalities in which I was interested: by collecting data in both home and school spaces, and with a variety of participants, different aspects of the young people's identities as working-class London, Muslim, Somali, Black boys and girls could be explored as they were performed in more or less salient ways. I used small groups and one-to-one interviews as my main approach. I also recorded the club, conducted lesson observations and interviewed teachers and/or family members as directed and agreed to by the participants, continuing with interviews throughout the process and ensuring that I finished with an interview. In this way, aspects that are often conducted in educational research as a list of different events were instead conceptualised as not only separate but also part of wider narratives co-constructed with me over time. Each one-to-one interview lasted between twenty and forty minutes depending on the time available, the stage of the research process and how much the young person wanted to share. Focus groups were a similar length. After each one-to-one interview, I would listen to the recording, note where I had not followed up a line of enquiry, or where there were gaps and draw up a short list of questions as guides for the next session. For the club, I did this in less formal ways within the sessions and then more formally in the last focus groups.

To collect data through observations, I wrote detailed fieldwork diary entries for each, and recorded and transcribed two sessions of the club. For lessons, as I could not record them, I took notes which were typed up straight afterwards. I saw my write-up of the notes as my narrative, co-constructed with the teacher and pupils who performed roles in response to each other and me. I wrote additional reflections in my field work diary to allow myself space to reflect on what I saw. My position as audience, researcher and observer emphasised the performative aspect of the lesson or club. Afterwards, I returned to the participants to discuss what had taken place, creating opportunities for them to agree with, challenge or change my understandings. For example, when discussing with Mahmud where he sat in the class, I realised that he considered his position at the back as representative of a good learner identity, in complete contrast to my assumptions about this position as embodying his lack of focus. I was unsure how far to share these reflections: in retrospect this possibly would have produced a valuable discussion.

A reflexive process helped me to ascertain where aspects of learner identities in which I was interested were hidden. Religious learning for example was an aspect that family members talked about with confidence, but most of the young people did not initially discuss. This

resonated with Ali's (2003) reflections on her data collection in her study with young people from dual heritage backgrounds. She describes how she allowed her participants to speak and illuminate the discourses which appear relevant to them but had to intervene to discover the deeper "forbidden" layers of identities which the children found less "exciting".   For my study, it was assumptions about what my participants thought I wanted to know about regarding religion and learning and their experiences of stigma and discrimination, not their lack of interest, which acted as a barrier (Begum, 2014). Generation was a dimension that I had not considered in my initial research question, but soon it became very apparent that this was key at its intersection with migration through the young people's comments about my age and understanding of their language, hobbies or interest, and family members' concerns about managing their learning.

The young people, their family members, teachers and I all brought to the study different views and experiences about what and how a story can be told, across ethnicities, gender, class and generations, with participants who had different levels of language fluencies and dis/abilities (Luttrell *et al.*, 2011). For Somali family members, orality and storytelling had been a usual practice in families and was thus an easily accessible form of communication, although the presence of interpreters for some family member interviews also added complexities to how narratives were co-constructed, which is discussed below (Temple, 2006; Kahin and Wallace, 2017). A small story approach to narrative encompasses activities that are often dismissed by traditional narrative analysis as non-stories such as tellings about the future, shared, ongoing, refused, deferred or incoherent tellings (Bamberg and Georgakopoulou, 2008). Taking up this approach meant that the differences in how I and my participants constructed narratives were recognised and included rather than rejected. Western, ableist, generational, gendered, monolingual notions of structure, coherence and purpose in narrative were challenged through approaching narrative as a momentary, fragmented process which can be collected in a variety of ways (Booth and Booth, 1996; Parkes and Unterhalter, 2009). This is discussed in more detail below.

My study also demanded an analysis of how both local and wider contexts were implicated in these negotiations (Phoenix, 2013). Thus I considered how "big" stories, personal, institutional and canonical narratives, were drawn on to position the narrator and others in certain ways within a story (Bruner, 1990; Elliott, 2005; Squire, 2005).   This included reflecting on the impact of the home, community or school setting, the time of the interview and who was present, as well as wider social, historical and political contexts of school, education, learning, notions of SEND and migration. Within this, I considered how well-worn narratives of educational success and failure were drawn on within global, diasporic, gendered, racialised, classed, ableist narratives of identity (Brah, 1996; Elliott, 2005;

Pinnegar and Daynes, 2007; De Fina and Georgakopoulou, 2008). Furthermore, the temporality of narratives was important to consider. I drew on a feminist perspective on time which rejects the idea of time as a linear, uninterrupted structured progression, but as far more complex, fragmented, subjective and fluid. I saw participants' accounts of past experiences or future hopes as constructed through the lens of the present context and in response to me at that moment as a researcher and a wider audience (Tamboukou, Andrews and Squire, 2013).

Central to narrative theory is the importance of recognising the subjective, partial, power-imbued nature of the data collection. As Tamboukou (2016) discusses in her exploration of how researchers approach narratives, how I recorded it; how I saw it in a particular moment; how I compared it with other data and with narratives in my mind from my own experiences and from seeing similar or different narratives "become" all had an impact. Furthermore, I needed to keep in mind that whilst there are arguments that the use of narrative counters homogenising accounts of refugee experiences, others are wary around the ethics of the "command to perform" drawing as it does on imperialist notions of belonging, surveillance and power (Jacquemet, 2005; Yuval-Davis and Kaptani, 2009; Langellier, 2013). Whilst recognising the limits of reflexivity to address these issues, I continued throughout the process to try to challenge my impositions, assumptions and misconceptions, using my field work diary to explore these processes (De Fina and Georgakopoulou, 2008; Riessman, 2008; Kearns, 2014).

4.4.2 Conducting interviews around stigmatised topics

As Hollway and Jefferson (2000) discuss with regard to researching stigma, I chose to start interviews and focus groups with questions about positive experiences, for example about lessons where the young person felt successful or had good teachers who helped them, or where the teacher felt they were doing well. This strategy was protective in positioning the young people as able to succeed and learn, countering dominant narratives of failure and underachievement (Block *et al.*, 2012). However, as Langellier (2013) argues, this approach still presented problems as I wanted to ask about difficulties with learning. I framed this in terms of "support" or "help" as I had done in the initial meetings, aware that my participants and their family members may have wanted to save face around learning needs, not just due to different backgrounds and experiences, as Tarry and Cox (2012) discuss, but also due to the global stigma around achievement and SEND.

The young people placed a significant amount of trust in me through agreeing to observations, but perhaps more so when they allowed me to interview family members and/or teachers. To maintain confidentiality and trust, I kept closely in semi-structured

interviews with adults to the same sort of questions I had used with the young people, and had told them I would use, and did not offer information that the young people had told me. I did not share the full transcripts of the family member and teacher interviews with the young people as I did not want to damage relationships. Instead I made reference the next time we met to aspects that had been discussed that they had already told me themselves, for example issues with homework or learning in tuition, thus building on and developing the young people's narratives.

The setting for the data collection significantly impacted these sensitive negotiations (Andrews, 2010). To some extent, as most interviews with the young people and their family members were in the home replicating normative conditions of my work practices, this contributed to a more relaxed atmosphere than at school. However, as Yee and Andrews (2006) point out, as a visitor in the home I had to be flexible with regards to the space that we used to conduct the interview, and tension at times increased as family members were in the room or in earshot. Decisions between siblings who were participants about how to set up the interview also reflected family dynamics and impacted on the ways that sensitive issues were discussed. Although these dynamics impacted on the way that I asked questions, it also opened up rich opportunities to observe how the young person co-constructed their learner identities in the home with their family.

There were aspects of the young people's learning, particularly around SEND and refugee experiences, where, as Parkes (2008) discusses, reflections on painful experiences for the young people and their families could be harmful rather than productive. Also, the interview process could begin to take on aspects of a therapeutic encounter which was outside my remit and expertise. Through referring one participant for counselling through work and school, although our sessions continued to reflect on difficult issues, I was confident that they were accessing professional help. In all interviews, however, it was a matter of negotiating topics with sensitivity. As Andrews (2013) argues, meanings were made about the present as the participants reflected back on the past and projected into the future in that particular moment and context. Some were more comfortable talking about difficulties they had faced in the past and took up confident roles as learners in the present. For others, they acknowledged that their situation in the present was challenging and a discussion of future hopes helped to focus the interview more positively. Temporality, therefore, became a useful tool in the ethics of conducting interviews with vulnerable young people and their families around stigmatised issues.

Within these negotiations, it was important to resist my assumptions around tellability, silences, sequence, coherence and structure, and to recognise where participants might be signalling discomfort or a desire to finish the topic and/or interview (Hyden, 2008; MacLure,

2009; Hyvarinen *et al.*, 2010). Rather than hindering the inquiry, through accepting these aspects of narrative as instructive, not to be dismissed, but built upon, as Booth and Booth (1996) suggest in their research with people with disabilities, these occurences increased my understanding. For example, abrupt endings or unfinished sentences when I asked a young person how their mother helped with learning seemed to signal embarrassment, as well as participants' desire to protect their mothers from stigma and maintain family privacy, whilst parents' silences about their child's learning often signalled their anxiety about ability (Crozier and Davies, 2007). Although I focus here on how I asked young people and their families about stigmatised issues, notions of SEND, refugees and learning support were also a point of sensitivity for teachers, and I had to take care with how I positioned myself in interviews, as well as in how I conducted myself within the schools, trying to ensure that I took up a role as an interested inquirer, not a critic. Teachers' silences or abruptness sometimes conveyed a refusal to comment or an embarrassment about a lack in school provision.

I was also aware of how I opened up or closed down lines of enquiry within my position as a researcher/teacher (Berger, 2013). The decisions I made to move on or stay with a topic were not always appropriate, although at times the participants successfully resisted my leading. At times I shifted my position as a teacher through commenting on my own observations of teacher-pupil dynamics from the perspective of a pupil or talking about the personal difficulties that teachers felt in managing classes. In some instances, I drew on Liamputtong's (2011) notion of a vulnerable researcher to choose to share difficult moments in my experiences of schooling. As Thorne (2010) discusses, there was some common ground in our shared understandings of bullying, being new at school, or feeling a failure at a subject. I chose to share actual experiences, rather than constructing a "hypothetical" me to which Block *et al.* (2012) refer, as I felt it was impossible and unethical for me to invent experiences that mirrored what these young people had been through. I needed to navigate this ethically so as not to draw out narratives through misrepresentation.

As I reflected on the interviews I conducted, I could trace how my anxiety about collecting certain kinds of material dissipated, either through asking direct questions or by being sensitive about not asking, becoming more reflexive and less controlling as the process developed. This was not to say that any interview was "better" or more "complete" than the last: each narrative was partial, momentary and incomplete - but I had attempted to become a student of the discourses that my participants were drawing on, whilst being sensitive to the vulnerabilities around their sense of themselves as learners and aware of my own vulnerability as a student researcher (Mitchell, 2009; Fox and Allan, 2014).

4.4.3 Conducting observations around stigmatised issues

Observations are by their nature intrusive ways of collecting data: as an observer one is highly visible and those being observed are very conscious of this process (Thorne, 2010). Negotiations, normally at the end of an interview, around choosing which lessons for me to observe were key points in learner identity negotiations. Asking where the young person did well was not always interpreted in the way that I saw it: for some this meant a lesson where they felt supported and/or understood most, or where they felt the teacher had control of the class and so learning could take place, or where the activities were more accessible, even if their understanding was still limited. Some of these discussions were not recorded as I was anxious about the sensitivities around gaining consent for the next part of the research. I felt that in switching off the voice recorder, I was allowing the young person more freedom to say what they felt. In retrospect I should have asked for permission to keep recording as these interactions exposed crucial differences in understanding which informed my analysis.

In the lesson observations, to reduce young people's sensitivities around being researched, I sat so that it was not evident that I was watching a participant, and if I was encouraged to interact with the pupils by the teacher, did so with several pupils. However, some participants freely acknowledged me, and some were proud that I was there to watch them. As observations are a common feature of classroom teaching, most pupils did not question my presence. I recorded as much as possible what I saw and heard and wrote this up as soon as possible after the lesson. Although this record was inevitably subjective, I tried to keep my initial interpretations separately in my field work diary. This allowed me to return to an observation at different points and consider it from a different perspective, whilst using the field work diary where needed to check what I felt at the time, and to position the observation within the context of other field work. I also had to make careful decisions about whether to record in my notes what teachers told me before or after lesson observations: the boundaries around this were often unclear. As these comments influenced my interpretations, I included them in my field work diary but took care with how I used them so that I was not breaking teacher confidentiality.

The fact that the club was a focus for my research was something I was keen to remind the young people about, but it also came up in their conversations, demonstrating awareness of my position as an observer, whether the voice recorder was on or not. Due to ethical considerations around surveillance, I consistently stated when the recorder was switched on and off and reminded the group about their ability to monitor what data I collected in this way (Thorne, 2010). Giving transcripts to the participants to read enabled opportunities for them to comment on the discussions, most notably when the group had discussed dyslexia when Ahmed was not present. His reflections on what had been said stimulated a new discussion

with Yusra and me, contributing further to his co-construction of his learner identity as dyslexic and achieving, at the same time opening up ways in which other participants identified as SEND. I was concerned about how some of the club participants might respond to reading transcripts of sensitive discussions and did not do this with every session. Although Ahmed robustly defended himself in this case, others may have found it difficult. There were also sensitivities about some of the young people's levels of English and literacy. Instead, I used the last focus sessions to raise aspects from previous discussions about which I wanted their feedback.

4.4.4 Working with an interpreter and translator

The use of an interpreter, Maha, in most of the family member interviews and with Amran, one of the participants from Rowan who attended the club, had a significant impact on the narrative co-construction between me as a researcher, Maha as an interpreter and participants, since interpreters bring their own experiences and understandings to the process (Lutz, 2011). A young, single woman at college, Maha drew on her experiences of caring for younger siblings as well as being a newly arrived refugee in school. She took up a respectful role with the parents, calling them "auntie" or "uncle". Furthermore, the fact that Maha had been my pupil several years before and had volunteered with me more recently meant that we had a strong relationship and mutual understanding of the issues that we were discussing, which again helped to produce rich, insightful data.

I saw the narratives as co-constructed between me, Maha and the participants and positioned Maha as a key participant in the telling. I recognised that through the act of interpretation, she was taking up key concepts about learning, and conveying them through the lens of her own experience as well as through the Somali language, and similarly as she interpreted participants' answers to me. Her presence in the club supporting Amran's contributions opened up Amran's performance as a multilingual learner in powerful and significant ways within a group who mostly spoke English quite fluently. This was something I, a non-Somali speaker, was unable to do. Even when she was not interpreting, her presence impacted on the ways in which the young people used Somali, encouraging their use of Somali stories and songs, but at times constraining their talk, the girls commenting when Maha was away that they could then talk freely.

It was very hard to find a someone to translate transcripts, as most of the Somali professionals whom I knew felt that this task was too demanding given their time constraints and for some of them, their felt lack of confidence in print fluency in Somali would hinder them. Through contacts at university, I was put in touch with Hassan, who kindly offered to translate for a minimal sum. He had significant experience in interpretation and translation,

in community development, had a Masters in International Relations and a post graduate certificate in Research Methods. Hassan thus brought a wealth of knowledge and expertise to my study, beyond the task of translating. Reviewing the transcripts and his translation of interviews, Hassan told me that overall Maha had performed her role very well. At times her own understandings particularly around notions of inability directed the discussion in certain ways, but in no less constraining ways than my own influence on the process. What was important to note was the ways in which she established trust, through encouraging participants and reassuring them at points where tellings were anxious or painful (Warren and Vincent, 2001; Bathmaker, 2010).

4.4.5 Encompassing difference within narrative co-construction

Collecting narratives with young people with our different language fluencies, ages, SEND and confidence in speaking, I was aware of the power imbalances inherent in interviews and group discussions. One way I addressed this was to use activity-based methods such as drawing and river of life diagrams at different points throughout the process (see Appendix C). These methods drew on participatory approaches, taking up the participants' interests and strengths, but were not used as participatory methods in the way that, for example, Luttrell (2013) or Mc William *et al.* (2008) discuss. The aim instead was to ensure that the activities were useful in engaging the young people, taking the focus away from me, thus helping me not to fill spaces too much or contribute my own ideas (Hyvarinen *et al.*, 2010). Furthermore, where meanings were not clear due to speech and language needs, I could sensitively check through the activity rather than having to ask the young person to repeat what they said. Diagrams also helped to navigate stigmatised issues. Generational differences were also addressed in useful ways through choosing to focus on a diagram representing how the participant learnt, drawn from a hobby or interest about which I was not knowledgeable, such as football or films.

Through using these tools, interviewer-participant power dynamics shifted, and fruitful insights were produced. However, over time, I reflected on their effectiveness, particularly around the ways that I was still imposing my ideas as an interviewer by introducing the activity and prompting the discussion. There were also difficulties in using activities in a school context, where the participants were constrained by school notions of work and deadlines (Christensen and James, 2008). Most had been reluctant to draw, apart from Omar who was a good artist. However, by offering to draw while the young people guided me, a strategy I was used to employing as a support teacher, I became more central to the process than I had planned. Therefore, for the concluding one-to-one interviews at home, I created cards to represent images in the river of life tool. Although it would have been good to have these created by the participants had time allowed, they brought their own

interpretations of what each image meant. For example, Ruqiya decided that the Somali flower I had chosen represented being "crazy". The exercise drew attention to key points in the "big story" of their learning journey, creating interesting patterns and reiterating as well as shifting different aspects of the participants' narratives. Through including their future hopes, we finished positively. Winstone *et al.* (2014) analysed the use of activity-based approaches with autistic young people and suggest that these activities are only useful if they are efficient and produce different insights to other methods. However, in my study these approaches were also helpful in reinforcing or explaining further some aspects of the young people's narratives. The activities illuminated silences and difficulties or differences in understandings through focusing on drawing rather than speaking and provided a sense of completion to the interview process, a vital ethical requirement in this study (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000).

4.5 Analysing narratives

In this section I start by discussing my approach to narrative analysis, before going on to explain how I organised, analysed and interpreted the data.

4.5.1 Narrative as performance

Drawing on my ontological and epistemological understandings of the situated, co-constructed nature of identities, and narrative as a site of identity performance (De Fina, Schiffrin and Bamberg, 2006; Squire, Andrews and Tamboukou, 2008; Phoenix, 2013), I chose to focus on performativity within narrative as a fruitful approach to analysing the data. This was a helpful way to focus on the highly situated, contingent, shifting, agentic nature of the young people's learner identity negotiations (Youdell, 2006b), and enabled the broad ways that I collected narrative in different settings to be analysed within one approach. To conduct the analysis, I drew on and developed Riessman's (2003, p. 8) proposed questions around which roles are performed, how narrators place themselves within wider narratives, the response of the listener and the quest for a dialogical relationship.

First, I explored which roles as learners were, as Riessman says, "performed, suggested or refused" by the young people as they drew on the resources that were available to them from western and non-western, family, school and societal "stories" of learning, failure and success.   I reflected on how these narratives intersected, informed, contested or conflicted with each other, considering how difference was constructed and reflecting on any assumptions I brought to the analysis. I considered how the young people positioned themselves and were positioned within gendered, racialised, classed, ableist discourses around achievement at home, at school and in the "spaces between". Furthermore, I analysed how, in interviews and observations, family members and teachers drew on

available resources to perform roles as educators, guides, supporters, advocates and discipliners, considering how notions of SEND were implicated, inferred, resisted or obscured within these negotiations. In this way, I interrogated how these interviewees co-constructed the young people as learners with me.

Riessman (2003) argues that the response of, and to, the listener must also be analysed. The effect of an audience on the narrative whether formally or informally, in the room or within the consciousness of the participant is key. In my study, family members, volunteer tutors, teachers and peers comprised multiple audiences, whether they were physically present or not. Although I assured the young people of confidentiality, their awareness that I was talking to others about their learning may have influenced the data and thus needed to be considered in the analysis. This along with the power relations inherent in the process opened up questions about how far a dialogical approach, that Riessman (2008) argues is central to a narrative inquiry's success, was possible. This aspect of narrative is questioned by Langellier (2010) in her analysis of a Somali young woman's account of her migratory experiences. She argues that the power relations inherent in interviews are struggled over in complex and intricate ways, within multiple gendered, racialised, classed gazes, unsettling understandings of who is read and being read. Certainly, within my study, focusing on these processes produced fruitful analysis as I traced how, for example, my participants predicted and refuted my assumptions, held onto or relinquished subject positions in response to my enquiries or reacted to my vulnerability as a researcher. Here there were points of tension as I considered my performances within the narratives, at times critical of my part, but through the process becoming more accepting. The notion of troubled subject positions helped to explore these interactions, analysing the ways in which I as a researcher and my participants took up different positions in relation to our concerns around acceptance and rejection (Wetherell, 1998; Phoenix, 2013).

The task for me as I interpreted the narratives presented ethical challenges as I chose and shaped how meanings were conveyed from narratives co-constructed with others whilst being aware of the power I held over the data (Pinnegar and Daynes, 2007; Mosselson, 2010; Sikes, 2010). This process unfolded throughout the analysis which, as Riesmann (2008) argues, is a continual process from the point of starting collection, teasing out the complexities, the inconsistencies and the difficulties that were present in the data. Each time I reflected on the narrative co-construction within the interview or observation and then wrote up my fieldwork diary or listened to a recording to plan the next interview, I was analysing and interpreting the data, and influencing the next stage. At the transcription stage, analysis of the data was taking place as I went along, including making decisions about how to record pauses, incoherences, laughs or sighs, points where people spoke over each other, or

where other people entered or left the space where we were conducting the interview. In retrospect, although I was cautious about sharing my full observation notes with the participants as I did not want to offend them with my interpretations, if I had structured the discussions about the lesson with the participants more formally, reading my notes with them, this would have enhanced the young-person-centred-approach to narrative that I was using and would have added depth to the analysis (Bold, 2012).

Returning to data at different points along the research timetable enabled me to explore layered, nuanced interpretations (Andrews, 2008). This was due to my own understanding changing through my experiences in the research process and through my role at work. For example, after taking some time off to complete the analysis chapters, when I went back to work at the charity, I found that my interpretation changed in some instances, as I was able to see things from my participants' perspectives more clearly once I was working with young people and their families again. When I started school improvement advisory work near the end of the writing up phase, I was able to understand the school data more clearly from a "disadvantage" perspective, through having more access to schools and due to the fact that by this point these policies were more firmly established in schools.

In interviews where Maha interpreted, we discussed after the session what had taken place. My analysis of the session was influenced by her comments to me. When analysing translations of the family interviews, I discussed different possibilities for translating key words or phrases with Hassan, my translator, and considered points where he translated slightly differently to Maha's interpretation. This was not to view one was more correct than the other but reflected what understandings they each brought to the process. As well as his linguistic expertise, Hassan also informed me about the wider social and historical context. My questions to him ranged from understandings of family and religious attitudes to achievement, to interpretation of key words, both from Somali to English or words used in English by participants, checking how they may have interpreted these words or phrases from Somali and thus how my understanding may have been influenced. In keeping with Lutz (2011), I saw both Somali and English narratives, and the contributions of both Hassan and Maha as different if interconnected, and aimed not to privilege one above another.

4.5.2 Organising and interrogating the data

Once the transcriptions and translations were complete, I started by organising the data. For each main participant I created a Word document with the one-to-one interviews in chronological order, the family member's interview and my observation write-ups. I also created one Word document from homework club focus groups and transcripts of audio taped sessions arranged in chronological order. I referred to sections of the field work diary

for clarification about the context of this data where needed, or to remind myself of what I had felt about it at the time. Headings within each large document gave the date and context. After reading through each document several times, noting as I went along interesting aspects of their learner identity negotiations and highlighting references to learning and being a learner, I inserted subheadings to signal the key aspects of the narratives I had identified. From these initial series of readings, I identified themes that were emerging. I noted how discourses around learning were drawn upon through terms I used in questions such as hard, easy, difficult, support, bad and good lessons, helpful teachers. I highlighted where the participants introduced other terms around learning such as challenge, fun, crazy, horrible, knowing nothing. Starting to interrogate how the participants made meaning through these terms, I analysed how they were taken up, resisted, subverted or transformed and with what effect for the participants' learner identity performances.

Drawing on a post structuralist ontological understanding, I was careful not to interpret the data as being evidence of the "truth" of an identity: my interest was in meaning making, not "answers" and in exploring the complexities of how the young people's identities were co-constructed and negotiated moment by moment in different contexts and with different people (Bold, 2012). I wanted to understand how the young people were positioned and positioned themselves as fitting or not fitting in as learners, both within the interview space and in how they co-constructed themselves within the tellings. I considered how learner identities were performed in marked, shifting and conflicting ways, and whether spaces for change and new meanings were opened up within these performances.

These initial explorations produced a list of emerging themes which at this stage were broad and fairly content based, but started to reflect how gender, race including ethnicity and religion, class, EAL, refugee, underachievement and SEND intersected. Mapping the themes against each participant's narrative helped me to deploy a feminist approach to narratives as it made it easier to see gaps or silences, hidden dimensions, misunderstandings, contradictions or assumptions. It highlighted the importance of narratives that I might have been tempted to discard as well as informing understanding of alternative interpretations within the narratives (Parkes and Unterhalter, 2009). If I found an aspect of learner identities in one narrative but not another, I then went back to question why this was, which in turn helped to illuminate meanings. For example, I realised that the lack of clarity around Ruqiya's past learning experiences from her family was possibly due to her position as privately fostered, rather than due to miscommunication or misunderstandings in the interview, which had been my initial assumption.

This example also raises the importance of my post-colonial approach to the analysis. Throughout, I tried to ensure that I recognised the families' and young people's knowledge

gained in different social, historical and political contexts, challenging my own and others' deficit views. Here again self-reflexivity was vital. I maintained an awareness of the power relations within the interviews and recognised as I developed the analysis the ways in which I imposed by own ideas, and where this was resisted by my participants. For example, when I assumed through my questioning that Mahmud needed support with writing, he rebuffed this by telling me that he did not need help.

Through this iterative process, I became familiar with the data and was then able to move on to more in-depth analysis (Richards, 2009). I selected key learning spaces identified in my research questions and in response to the themes that were emerging around performing learning in the classroom, in school spaces, within the family and community. Using these, I created a diagram for each participant, with central themes for each of these spaces to which I mapped points of interest for each participant. With a post structuralist, feminist, post-colonial analytical focus on performance, using the diagrams as a tool I explored in more depth the young people's take up of weak, strong, conflicting, marked or shifting learner identities. I identified more clearly where notions of SEND and refugee learner identities were implied but not stated, resisted or rejected within young people's and their family members' accounts and interrogated my gendered, racialised, classed assumptions around their performances. For example, although I initially described this in different ways, I identified that it was not just the girls who conveyed emotional needs through their performances and it was not only the boys who rejected support, or who were ambitious. The self-reflexive approach that I employed here directed me to further analysis of aspects that I had initially rejected as not fitting with my own sense of meaning (MacLure, 2009; Mazzei, 2009).

At this point, I was fully immersed in the data, and needed to decide how to construct my analysis through selecting key aspects of the narratives which reflected my broader findings, whilst also holding on to my aim to represent to some extent the participants' individual, personal lived experiences. There are evident constraints in trying to represent individual narratives whilst reflecting themes throughout the data, ironically having to pass over much of the nuanced detail of their narratives. By writing short summaries of each young person and family member's account, without quotes, colour coding themes within them and comparing them, I was able to see patterns emerging, and where certain aspects were salient or hidden. For example, I started with the girls' data and did not compare this with the boys until I had finished both sets, so that I illuminated gendered tellings and my gendered interpretations. This process enabled me to decide which participants' narratives and which sections of interviews or observations might illustrate different findings, and how through presenting data alongside each other, different aspects might be conveyed.

The theoretical concept of performance informed and sharpened my understandings of the complexities of these learner identity negotiations within the narratives co-constructed in different research spaces. Focusing on Phoenix and Brannen's (2014) reminder of the way that positions are held simultaneously, helped to ensure that I recognised hidden as well as salient, marked as well as shifting aspects, encompassing the togetherness, the both/and not either/or nature of intersectionalities. Together with this, I held Youdell's (2011) diagrammatic explanation of intersectionalities as constellations lightly as a way in. Her suggestion of this concept of multiple dimensions as able to be joined up in momentary, fragile and unstable as well as marked ways is presented with her own critique that this image may maintain the sense of fixedness that she is trying to contest. However, when used without the idea of a star as a fixed object, this image of the scattered but interconnected way that constellations are perceived helped me to visualise how gendered, racialised, classed, ableist, generational discourses and discursive practices around learning, available through both local and wider contexts, were drawn upon in momentary ways. I developed a notion of swirling, seeing some aspects as more difficult to reach, others always near and easy, some almost invisible, but never available separately. Within this, I conceptualised some aspects as more static, like water captured within rock pools or slow flowing, to convey the ways in which some intersectionalities were marked or solidified over time. Once taken up, however insecurely or firmly, moments of transformation, change or reification were possible.

4.5.3 Re-presenting narratives

I have presented in this chapter the main ethical and methodological challenges that I negotiated through my narrative inquiry. I have shown how the young-person-centred approach, whilst aiming to address the ethical issues inherent in the project and negotiate notions of "educational help" with sensitivity, produced ongoing complexities around consent and welfare. Whilst conducting a substantial part of the field work through my position at work meant that in some senses young people and their families were protected through the trust that was already established and readily available channels of support, it also meant that I had to navigate my binaried but at times intertwining work and researcher roles with extreme care. This had both productive and constraining effects on the ways in which I collected and analysed the narratives. The perseverance, reflexivity and sensitivity which I employed to build relationships of trust and develop the project generated a large amount of rich data. However, although my approach challenged the power differentials present in some respects, it must be emphasised that it did not change them. Thus, the data analysis that is offered in the next four chapters is necessarily my re-presentation of what was said

and done, making coherent and contained to some degree what was rich and powerful, far ranging, diverse, contingent and disparate.

Chapter 5: Disregarded Learner Identities

To explore the depth and complexity of young people's lived experiences at the intersection of refugee, SEND and gender, in this chapter I firstly consider narratives co-constructed with me by participants where a need for "educational help" was not formally identified, but where concerns had been expressed either by the family, the school or by colleagues at my work place. Although the analysis draws on my understandings formed in observations and family interviews, I wanted to present in this first data analysis chapter a sense of how the young people negotiated their learner identities with me in interviews, as a way of trying to emphasise their views and foreground what they felt about their possibilities for learning.

Considering boy and girl narratives alongside each other as an analytical tool, the analysis of their accounts reflects the wider findings drawn from my data about how these young people negotiated identities as EAL and being a new arrival, as needing to "catch up" and finally, as underachieving. Discussing how these learner identities were drawn on in more prominent ways by different participants in their narratives, I draw out how other dimensions were also drawn on, resisted, hidden or rejected. Throughout the discussion, I introduce considerations of how far notions of SEND and refugee learner identities were suggested in these performances, which is then taken up in more detail in the following chapters. I start with Naseem and Iqra's negotiations of EAL and newly arrived learner identities, despite differences in how long they had been in the UK. I then move on to Omar and Zaynab's accounts which highlighted how Year 7 catch up classes helped them to negotiate a sense of belonging. The final section explores how performances of underachievement and disruption by Ruqiya exposed her need for "educational help", whilst for Mahmud, underachieving learner identities only hinted at possible SEND.

5.1 Drawing on EAL and refugee identities: Being denied opportunities to learn

Most of my participants reported that they rejected EAL identities at school early on in their retrospective accounts of arriving in the UK, moving from "not knowing anything" to having a command of English through learning with friends and family, these being valuable sources of support. Through this rejection my participants resisted the stigma and bullying attached to newly arrived, refugee young people in school, instead negotiating London, Somali, Black, Muslim, working class, teenage identities within a low position in a peer and school hierarchical system around what it means to belong. The notion of "not knowing anything" drew on monocultural and monolinguistic educational discourses which reject or ignore past and present learning experiences in different contexts. Although a multilingual, diverse curriculum seemed to be denied to these young people in their schools, despite much research finding that it is an important aspect of encouraging achievement (Bourne, 2007;

Valentine, Sporton and Bang Nielsen, 2008; Cummins, 2009; Wallace, 2013), multilingual learner identities were taken up in fluid and creative ways by many of my participants. Alongside this constraint, EAL identities were hidden, or made unavailable at school through mobility, transition, lack of funding and resources. Particularly when a pupil could speak conversational English, support became harder to access and EAL as well as refugee identities were obscured. As discussed in Chapter 1, pupil premium funding was just starting, catering for "disadvantaged" pupils who needed to "catch up" rather than specific, academic language learning.

The notion of "not knowing anything" was drawn on in more depth by two of my participants, Naseem and Iqra, as they recollected their experiences of migration followed by multiple transitions across key stages and between schools. In this section, I explore what this notion signified for them.

5.1.1 The challenge of being accepted as a possible learner

Naseem was in Year 9, the year before GCSE courses started, and was particularly interested in taking Business Studies and ICT in Year 10. He had arrived in the UK at the end of Year 5 from Somalia with his brother Asad to join his parents and younger siblings who were already in the UK, learning for one year in primary school with limited EAL support before starting Oak Academy. In Somalia, he had attended the madrassah but not school. My work colleague was concerned about Naseem's lack of progress. However, at the time of interviews, the school was providing support for him as an EAL learner and no SEND assessments had been conducted, although the SENDCo felt he might require this. He chose to do his interviews with Asad present.

A theme of punishment and marginalisation as a learner flowed through Naseem's account. His more recent experiences of detentions for "not knowing" how to do his homework resonated with his retrospective account of learning in the madrassah in Somalia, where he had been beaten "if you miss one word even." Research into attitudes to disability in Somalia has shown that young people with learning needs are much more at risk of censure as well as violence and abuse (Tomlinson and Abdi, 2003). This comment suggested that he possibly could have been the target of a greater level of punishment than some. In telling me about several subjects that he found difficult to access in secondary school, notably Science and French, Naseem resisted disciplinary processes, constructing them as failing to recognise his needs as a learner:

Naseem: Cos if you if you don't know your French homework and you say, "I don't know the French homework," she will send she will send you to detention … yeah that's …

K: And does that help?

Naseem: No.

K: No what would you rather she did?

Naseem: Rather help me and learn it.

<div align="right">Naseem and Asad, second interview at home, 22/2/14</div>

Naseem constructed the teacher as wrongly positioning him as unable or resistant, compared to his performance as a willing learner identity with me. The punishment he received did not support his learning but resonated with his earlier experiences in Somalia. These current experiences of sanctions were possibly quite regular, as Naseem admitted to taking up disruptive learner identities in response to his experiences of marginalisation. This reflected Keddie and Mills' (2012) findings about the ways that refugee young people can be pathologised through teacher assumptions (see Chapter 8).

Naseem often questioned why he needed to learn French; however, he also drew parallels between French and Somali when recollecting his experiences of being a new arrival and how different he found the UK:

Naseem: And the thing about difference is how they speak.

K: Yeah go on then tell me about that.

Naseem: Cos in it's like French in err Somali is like French. Yeah say it's a female and something before you say male or female you have to say…

<div align="right">Naseem and Asad, second interview at home, 22/2/14</div>

Naseem approached French more positively, constructing himself as an able multilingual learner through his grasp of language structure. Furthermore, as we talked about the reasons for learning French, I commented on the UK's colonial past, an aspect of Somali history that was not talked about by the young people in interviews. Taking up this theme, Naseem made pertinent links between Somali and Italian. Thus, through drawing on multilingual discourses and his migrant experiences, Naseem highlighted the way that the Eurocentric curriculum acted to constrain a possible learner identity. As Wallace found in her study of bilingual learners in London schools (2013), his refugee identity, including his fluency in Somali and Qur'anic Arabic, as well as his past learning seemed to have been ignored by the teacher as he struggled to engage with French as a subject.

To address these difficulties with accessing the curriculum, Naseem negotiated "safe" learning spaces to take up a more confident EAL and refugee learner identity (Conteh and Brock, 2011). As well as lessons where he felt the teacher explained the work and helped him, these included EAL support in homework club or reading; outside school tutoring sessions with paid tutors or volunteers (although this had been hindered by the family being evicted and rehoused across the borough); help from his father Abdul with Maths in Somali and studying the Qur'an every weekend.

However, these spaces did not address the extent of the difficulties Naseem faced in accessing the curriculum. Regarding homework support, I asked Naseem how he completed it if there was not enough time in the EAL homework club at school or with his volunteer tutor:

Naseem: I ask the teachers if I don't understand it.

K: Do you oh do you? Well done! And do they help you?

Naseem: Yeah or if, if, I completely don't understand it they say err do one bit and just leave it.

Naseem and Asad, fourth (last) interview at home, 28/5/14

My response "Oh well done!" recognised Naseem's agency as he insisted on his identity as an EAL and refugee learner who needed support. However, through the "nice" teachers allowing him to leave the homework unfinished, there was a suggestion that, constrained by time and resources, the teachers were unable make the curriculum accessible for Naseem. Furthermore, allowing the work to be left without help disprivileged Naseem. His phrase, "if I completely don't understand," reflected the difficulties that both he and his teachers faced. This construct of teachers as horrible or nice was also found by Oikonomidoy (2010) in her study of recently arrived Somali girls in high school, suggesting that this was not a gendered, emotional reaction, but a way of categorising teachers' ability to differentiate and engage learners in the curriculum in meaningful ways. Oikonomody found that the term also signalled whether the young people felt that the teachers were being fair or discriminatory towards them, Naseem's comments about the French lesson seeming to concur with this too.

The disconnect between Naseem's learner identity as EAL and refugee and his aspirations to do well was highlighted as we talked about his GCSE options, a crucial transition point for his future possibilities. Naseem was very aware of the standards agenda and what grades he needed to get. However, when I asked what subjects he had chosen, Science was

missing. This was a subject he was keen to study, although he found it hard, and it was highly valued by his family. I asked why:

Naseem: I'm not going to do Science.

K: You're not going to do Science at all?

Naseem: I don't know.

K: Wow are you allowed to not do Science? That's interesting.

Naseem: No, you're not allowed to do like, if you want to, you're not allowed to do like Science, no, it's like a different Science. You will learn it but if you don't pass it but…

K: Is it the BTEC Science? Yeah it doesn't matter.

Naseem: It doesn't matter.

<div align="right">Naseem and Asad, third interview at home,26/4/14</div>

Naseem reflected the hierarchy around BTECs and GCSEs by dismissing BTEC Science as a non-subject. His repetition of "you're not allowed" showed how constrained he was by the standards agenda. However, his comment that "you will learn it" possibly attempted to construct the BTEC as meaningful, even though it did not operate within the pass/fail discourses with which he was familiar. By jumping in with my comment, "it doesn't matter," to help his explanation, I drew on previous discussions about how tough Science was for him to understand, but by doing so, concurred with deficit discourses around who was considered able to study GCSEs. Here the EAL identity Naseem had drawn on for three years to negotiate the secondary curriculum failed to work for him, instead notions of inability that he had consistently tried to resist were more readily available.

However, Naseem continued to perform a determined learner identity in this interview to resist these subjectifications, again drawing on his multilingual identity to tell me that he would practise for the end of year Maths test with his father in Somali. He explained that the results of the end of Year 9 tests in all his subjects would determine what sets he was in for GCSE. Despite referring to these tests in general as "horrible", when I asked again what the results were for, he constructed them in positive, personal ways:

Naseem: No it's like for I got that I need what I need to improve, yeah, they tell me that and what you need to work on, yeah.

<div align="right">Naseem and Asad, third interview at home, 26/4/14</div>

Naseem constructed himself as a mature, able, motivated learner. Possibly at this point in the interview, the fact that his brother Asad had just told us about his success in reaching his English target may have shifted Naseem's performance to drawing on assessment for learning discourses rather than the standards agenda. As both Keddie (2012) and Matthews (2008) argue, recently arrived EAL, refugee young people do not easily fit into the standardised system of measuring achievement. Through focusing on his own progress, Naseem resisted notions of failure where he was not yet gaining C grades (now levels 4-5), and thus could take up a more positive attitude, even though his future possibilities were potentially constrained or even foreclosed by the GCSE system.

Naseem thus insisted that he could learn, drawing on hidden or less prominent discourses around multilingualism, being a refugee learner and assessment for learning strategies to resist deficit discourses which positioned him as unable and behind.   As GCSE courses approached, however, his EAL, multilingual and refugee identities were constructed as less useful for him as he faced the exclusionary practices around who could and could not study certain subjects. Thus as Chase, Knight and Statham (2008) argue with regard to unaccompanied young people in further education, it was the structural inequalities within the system, particularly as he got older, that constrained and threatened to foreclose his sense of himself as a possible learner.

5.1.2 Moving on from "not knowing"

Iqra arrived in the UK at a much younger age than Naseem, aged five, but had to wait a year for a place at school, starting in Year 1. She then moved primary school aged seven and repeated Year 5 when she was ten, due to a mistake made when registering her date of birth. At this point her school suggested they should conduct assessments to establish if she needed "educational help" to which her mother agreed, but these were delayed and then never completed. We did most of her research interviews in Year 6, around the time of SATs (end of primary school government tests). Her next school move was to Rowan Academy for her secondary education and we conducted one more interview at the end of her first year there.

Retrospective accounts of Iqra's learner identities in primary school were collected at a point where her sense of herself as a learner was threatened: she had worked towards the SATs in Year 6 but was then not allowed to take the test due to her low level of achievement. She resisted notions of "not knowing anything" in our interviews to perform a developing learner identity that had been heavily constrained through lack of appropriate support, reflecting her sense of frustration at the time.

Iqra stood out in my participants' accounts through her refutation of deficit discourses around EAL and refugee learners when starting school in the UK. I asked about her experiences of being a new arrival in our first interview:

Iqra: Umm well basically I wi… before I was starting, I was meant to be in reception, but I didn't go to school for a year […] cos my Nan was searching. She couldn't find a good one and basically until then my uncles used to teach me English, so they are teaching me my alphabet so when I went to school, I knew English and I knew my alphabet. So, it wasn't that hard, that wasn't that hard, and I was six years old, so I missed a year.

Iqra, first interview at club, 2/4/14

Iqra constructed herself and her (male) family members as multilingual and literate learners. However, her positive recollection was contested by her awareness of disadvantage as a newly arrived refugee, reiterating to me, "and I missed a year." Possibly there may not have been any spaces in nearby schools (Sharma, 2014) and as Somali education starts at six, her family also may not have understood the impact of this wait on her education, choosing a good school being more important for them in Iqra's recollection than an immediate place. This highlighted the effect of post migration stressors on her learning which as Rutter (2006) and Matthews (2008) argue can be as significant as pre migratory experiences. The theme of a multilingual family's desire to learn coming up against significant inequalities resonates with Naseem's account and sets the scene for Iqra's account of being "behind" but maintaining a possible learner identity with determination.

In a similar way to Naseem, Iqra constructed teachers as responsible for ensuring that she understood the curriculum. In our first interview, once I had established that Iqra liked Maths and found writing hard but was making progress, I asked which teacher present or past had helped her the most and why. She chose teachers in her present school, Ash Primary School, and constructed her first school as unsupportive:

Iqra: But then I at that time I really didn't know anything. I just started the school. And my old school was lots like didn't help me that much. So, so basically when I started, she [class teacher] […] used to tell the rest of the class as well but like she used to sit next to me most of the time and tell me.

Iqra, first interview at club, 2/4/14

Iqra constructed Ash School as opening up opportunities to make progress and be included in the class learning through teacher support. Here her construct of a good teacher was as one imparting knowledge but also giving one-to-one attention, signified by the teacher's physical closeness to her. This was recollected as positive, possibly in earlier years in primary school this attention being less likely to attract stigma.

However, Iqra experienced significant bullying. The main point at which Iqra recalled these difficulties was when she had to repeat Year 5 due to a mistake regarding her date of birth, thus not, as in Naseem's account, around her identity as newly arrived. Recalling how she took up an identity as a "bad student" at this transition point, she described how she had dealt with being targeted by another pupil:

Iqra: Yeah cos there was a boy called Adam in my class, he used to always get me in trouble cos…

K: Why did he do that, what did he do?

Iqra: Well he used to always tell me like things to do and I used to listen cos I didn't really know anything in the beginning of Year 5 and then when I got used to him, I start telling him to do it and he was like, "I'm not that stupid." I'm like, "Why did you treat me like that?"

Iqra, first interview at club, 2/4/14

It is interesting to note that at a point of change four years after she started school in the UK, Iqra continued her theme of "not knowing anything", this time about peer relationships rather than learning. The way that she recalled using the boy's tactics back on him conveyed a transformation from weakness to self-esteem. She told me later that the change had occurred through "listening to myself", drawing on anti-bullying discourses and feminine work on the self. Her wider narrative conveyed her take up of "Black" disruptive girl performances, suggesting that, as Archer, Hollingworth and Mendick (2010) discuss, her negotiations around belonging were complex and multifaceted, and that a readily available, more assertive, "loud" female identity had possibly been taken up to resist being seen as unable, passive and a victim (Zine, 2001). Her learner identities were thus negotiated around stigma and isolation as "new" despite the length of time she had been in the UK, resisting suggestions of SEND through her insistence that she was not "stupid".

Although Iqra constructed specific teachers within Ash school, including her present one, as helpful, at the same time, she strongly resisted being constructed by the teachers as unable. In our interview after she had been withdrawn from the SATs at the last minute, Iqra told me

that she had felt very angry as everyone else was doing the tests, and that she did not tell her teacher or her mother how she felt. I asked her how she felt now, a few weeks later:

Iqra: I was ok because everyone was doing the tests and I went to have fun.

K: Ok *(laughs).* So, what did they get you to do while they were doing the tests then?

Iqra: Well I was helping early years and they do nothing really.

K: Ok. What sort of things do they do?

Iqra: So, I just played with them.

K: Played with them. Was it fun?

Iqra: Yeah.

K: I like it. So, do you still feel you would have liked to do the SATs even though they were hard, or are you happy to have just not had to do them or?

Iqra: I really like a challenge but like it's too bad.

Iqra, second interview at club, 21/5/14

Iqra's response to her exclusion from the tests was resilient and determined. Through constructing the task of helping with Early Years who "do nothing" as "fun" she resisted subjectifications of herself as unable. With Year 6 she was positioned as weak, but with Early Years her age meant that she could take up a more powerful position. In concluding with her desire to be "challenged" she continued her performance of a determined learner. With a SEND learner identity suggested through being withdrawn from the tests but not formally identified or explained to her, this was a painful, marginalising experience. Her anger was not directed at teachers not helping her in this instance, as Benjamin (2002) suggests, but rather at the way she was denied opportunities to show what she could do.

In similar ways to Naseem, Iqra resisted these marginalising processes through negotiating alternative spaces where she could be successful. She attended a homework club, had a main part in the Year 6 school play and loved learning to swim in secondary school. When we talked about club activities, she said she enjoyed cooking and going to the snooker room, telling me, "We cook a load of things that I don't know." Her enjoyment of these new experiences resonated with her determination to learn and make progress, "not knowing" being in these situations a positive catalyst for change. These were broader educational experiences compared to Naseem's focus on schoolwork and the Qur'an.

Like Naseem, Iqra had a volunteer tutor, Sarah, and she constructed these sessions similarly as providing opportunities for her to be a possible learner in ways that the school did not provide. At this point in Year 6, her teachers were focusing on results for the SATs for which she was not entered. I asked her about how Sarah helped and Iqra made a comparison with schoolteachers:

> Iqra: Well basically most teachers I worked with if I if like if I stop making two sentence and got bored but they basically just said you can go on the computer or something then on thing, umm, Sarah she will like bring it out of me.
>
> Iqra, second interview at club, 21/5/14

Here she constructed the teachers giving up on her, constraining opportunities for progress, and leaving her "behind." This treatment was contrasted with Sarah's persistence to "bring it out of me," thus constructing any difficulties she had as due to how she was taught and difficulties with written literacy, not her knowledge and ideas. Hence, she rejected the gaze on her as deficient and pointed towards pedagogical practices and attitudes as lacking.

There was a significant disconnect between these two young people's sense of wanting to progress in their learning, and the systems around them that marked them as failures. Iqra and Naseem both identified ways in which teachers could, as Iqra says, "bring it out" of them as multilingual and refugee learners, and in different ways acknowledged their need for "educational help", with notions of SEND present in their narratives, at times more hidden than others. In contrast to Naseem, Iqra's transition across key stages opened up rather than foreclosed opportunities to make progress. Through the Year 7 "catch up" programme in Rowan Academy, the secondary school she attended, an identity as underachieving with possible SEND was available. Iqra could find through this a way to negotiate an identity as a possible learner in school, seven years after arriving in the UK. From being positioned as unable, she was now positioned as able and expected to achieve. It is to the young people's experiences of this Year 7 "catch up" system that I now turn, along with negotiations of achievement in non traditional subjects.

5.2 Negotiating success through skills and "catch up"

All my participants apart from Ruqiya told me that they were highly aware of the standards agenda and their low "place" within the hierarchy of levels, grades and assessments. For many of my participants, they drew on interventions to help them negotiate a sense of belonging and future hope within this system. Several received this support through Year 7 "catch up" provided for all those at a low level in Maths and/or English on entry to secondary

school, which continued in Year 8 if needed. This was either through a streamed system, so that a whole class was taught, or in withdrawal groups. A further strategy that many of my participants drew on to counter subjectifications of failure and stigma around inability was to negotiate a sense of success in non-traditional subjects. Sport featured in many of the accounts, with secondary school facilities providing free facilities for after school activities as well as in lessons. In this section I consider how successful these two strategies were for two of my participants, Zaynab and Omar.

5.2.1 Replacing failure with "fun"?

Zaynab arrived in the UK aged six, therefore missing Early Years' education, and attended three different primary schools as well as repeating the last year of primary school due to a mistake about her date of birth. When she moved to Birch Secondary School, Zaynab was identified as needing literacy intervention and was in a phonics class every day for an hour, withdrawn from mainstream classes. She was the eldest girl in her family, with two sisters, Iqra (see section 5.1) and Jawaahir. Her mother Nimo was a lone parent who had missed out on formal education and did not speak much English. Zaynab performed a caring and language brokering role in the home.

In her recollection of primary school, Zaynab constructed herself as having lacked support, as Iqra had, whilst in similar ways to Iqra's account of secondary school, she constructed the daily withdrawal phonics lessons in secondary school as enabling a substantial shift in her progress. I asked at the start of our first interview what she did in these lessons:

Zaynab: Umm you read books, you do writing, and you do [unclear] word spelling, and you do spelling. And they won't make it hard for you.

K: Mm, yeah, trying to sort of build you up, make sure it's ok, yeah, ok.

Zaynab: And you do sounds.

K: And sounds as well, so phonics all that sort of stuff, yeah? Cool and err why is she your best teacher then, what, what, really helps you about the way she teaches you?

Zaynab: Umm she helps me when I need, when I need help and she explains the work to me as how it needs to be done.

Zaynab, first interview at home, 14/11/13

Describing the accessibility of the work in this class as "they won't make it hard for you," Zaynab signified where work was fitted to her level. The teacher was constructed by her as attentive and responsive to her individual needs. Here, as well as resisting the exclusionary

nature of the mainstream curriculum, she drew on notions of the need for nurturing in response to the significant inequalities she faced in her learning.   Notably, she used this same phrase about work not being made hard for her in lessons that she found more accessible such as Humanities, raising interesting questions around what strategies were helpful in these classes (see Chapter 8).

In the interviews, Zaynab focussed on her enjoyment of non-traditional subjects and after school clubs that did not need a high level of literacy: Art, Drama, ICT, football and rugby, the latter two challenging racialised, gendered notions around which sports Muslim girls might enjoy (Collet, 2007; Hamzeh, 2011). When drawing a river of life to show her day at school, she described the whole day after phonics intervention, for which she missed Science, by using the term "fun", from playtime with friends through to Art:

Zaynab: The first day of Art was actually fun.

K: Yeah?

Zaynab: Yeah and you know in primary school on Art we didn't actually used to draw. We used to write but we actually got to draw.

Zaynab, second interview at home, 28/11/13

Zaynab's distinction here between the lack of Art teaching in primary compared to secondary school was an example of how her learning experiences had been significantly broadened through transition to secondary school and pointed to the resource constraints within the inner-city primaries that she had attended.   Her learner identity in Art was therefore a new identity, as well as a new Muslim one. The river of life diagram continued through lunchtime with friends to Drama:

Zaynab: And Drama, no one actually listens to our Drama teacher, but it's actually kind of fun.

K: *(laughs)*

Zaynab: It's not fun that no one listens to her.

K: No… so there's a few problems.

Zaynab: But we got to do like drama stuff, we and we were working in groups and there were groups that we were working on.

Zaynab, second interview at home, 28/11/13

Zaynab qualified her use of the term "fun" to distinguish between constructive learning and lack of discipline, ensuring that she took up an identity as a good pupil. The importance for her of the social aspect of learning was highlighted here, contrasting with a more individualistic approach within her reading lessons. This difference pointed to how she negotiated a possible learner identity with me: in the mainstream, she drew on her oral, creative and social strengths, whereas in phonics intervention she could perform a more confident, academic identity.   The resulting diagram of the day was one of calm enjoyment.

Zaynab's teenage, kinaesthetic, creative learner identities contested stereotyped, gendered discourses around Muslim girls' responses to the curriculum. However, it was also possible that Zaynab's use of the term "fun" constructed these lessons as less serious than traditional academic ones, thus drawing on family and religious but also school achievement discourses to reflect a hierarchy in the curriculum.   There was a sense that Zaynab's difficulties in accessing traditional subjects contributed to these constructs, so that possible SEND as well as EAL and new Muslim identities were drawn on in these processes.

Regarding more traditional, academic subjects in the curriculum, Zaynab first refuted any suggestion of difficulties, telling me as we conducted an exercise to put subjects in an order of most to least enjoyable, with Science being top, "I think all of them are alright," (first interview at home, 14/11/13). It was difficult to ascertain what "alright" meant and I was aware that she may have been performing quite a defensive role at the start of our interviews. With more encouragement she put phonics intervention at the top and all other subjects as "middling." Throughout the interviews, Zaynab's enjoyment of Science shifted, the challenges that she faced in accessing the work and managing to keep up when she was withdrawn adding to the fluidity in dis/liking and not/understanding lessons.

When pressed about what she was studying in Science, firstly Zaynab wasn't sure, so I gave her a choice of reading and writing or practical work:

> Zaynab: Umm I like when we do experiments.
>
> K: Yeah experiments. Are you doing, do you know what topic you are doing at the moment, are you doing like plants or the body or chemicals or …
>
> Zaynab: Er we're doing, we're doing like, umm, you know when you need to drop something? Yeah, we're doing that.
>
> K: Oh ok, ah so like weights and things like that ah pendulums like that *(gesture)* or not? No?
>
> Zaynab: Yeah that.
>
> Zaynab, first interview at home, 14/11/13

Zaynab's struggle to know and/or pronounce and explain more difficult vocabulary, such as pendulums and weights in Science, pointed to the challenges she faced in accessing and understanding the curriculum and raised for me questions about possible SEND. However, asking a general question about how newly arrived young people should be supported near the end of this interview, Zaynab was quick to insist that she herself did not need any further help, telling me:

> Zaynab: It was reading but I do get help with reading so it's nothing now.
>
> Zaynab, first interview at home, 14/11/13.

She distanced herself from new arrivals, but also constructed herself as having a specific need, that was not a difficulty now that she had the appropriate support. The inference was that post migration mobility and attendance at under resourced schools explained her previous lack of achievement. Categories of EAL, SEND and refugee were in some senses rejected by her at this point: she strove to negotiate a sense of herself as a recognised learner who was no longer held back now that she had the appropriate support. However, there were hints that she needed a significant amount of support to access the mainstream curriculum in literacy-based subjects. Her position at the intersection of EAL, refugee, notions of SEND and catch up felt very vulnerable to me, in contrast to her determined performance.

5.2.2 Practice makes perfect?

Although he adopted similar strategies around intervention and non-traditional subjects, the difference for Omar compared to Zaynab was that through his aptitude for Sport and Art, which he had practised in primary school and at home, he was recognised as successful. This was held in tension with a desire to achieve within the core curriculum, where like Zaynab, he gave accounts of his struggles to access the work and counter stigma.

Born in Somalia, Omar arrived in the UK from a Middle Eastern country when he was six years old. He was the second of three boys and had three younger sisters. His mother Qadra was a lone parent. Having attended the madrassah prior to his arrival, he attended four different primary schools due to multiple house moves. On starting at Willow Secondary School, he was placed in a streamed "catch up" class due to his low levels in English and Maths. At the time of the interviews he was in Year 8 and was having one-to-one reading for twenty minutes a day. Omar considered Sport along with Art as his most successful subjects.

In our third interview, having discussed the cartoons that Omar liked to watch and draw, I asked him to draw a diagram of the positive and negative things about school. I encouraged him to tell me both good and bad aspects in the present and the past and then we discussed his ideas in more detail. This diagram and our following discussion encapsulated the themes which ran through his account and forms the focus for this analysis.
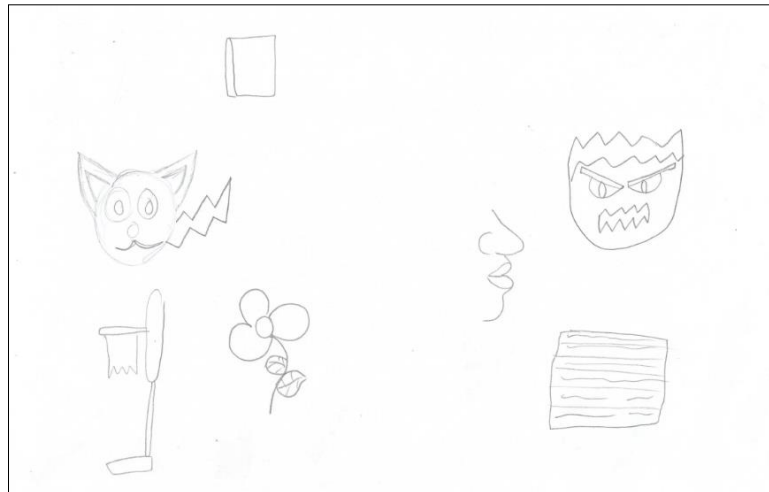
"Good things": Sport, reading, friends.

"Bad things": writing lines, being told off for talking when other people start it.

Regarding Sport, when I prompted about past successes, Omar told me that he had become the "best in the year" at Basketball and I asked how:

Omar: Because yeah um some boy used to say, "I'm better than you, I'm better than you." The, I was like ok I will start coming training. Then in about six weeks after I became better than them.

K: Wow just by going to the training and …

Omar: Yeah practising every day.

Omar, third interview at home, 26/3/14

Omar's commitment to practice contributed to his performance with me as a possible learner. Through drawing on discourses around black, sporty, underachieving boys, his skills in athletics and basketball provided a way for him to take up a dominant position amongst his peers. Contrary to Valentine and Sporton's (2009) findings that being Somali was taken up as a response to not being considered Black, Omar's learner identity as a Black male athlete intersected with his identity as a Somali boy. This reflected, as Bigelow (2010a) suggests, more complex negotiations. As well as admiring Ussain Bolt, Omar's

ambition in Sport was inspired by two Somali male athletes who he constructed as his role models: the coach who led the running club he attended at the weekends and Mo Farah. When asked if he preferred Farah or Bolt, Omar chose Farah:

> Omar: Cos he talks about his family and his culture and that but Usain Bolt yeah, likes eating junk food.
>
> Omar, third interview at home, 26/3/14

In admiring Farah, Omar explored his identity as Somali through his aptitude at Sport, which was in turn drawn on to assert his status within a majority Black working-class urban school. Focusing on family, he rejected more individualised performances of Black male masculinity, drawing on alternative, caring, responsible masculinities, alongside his ambitions to be the "best". His aptitude for Art also drew on these more nuanced, varied discourses, echoing Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman's (2002) findings of a variety of performances in their study of boys' masculinities in school.

Omar constructed the reading intervention in Year 8 as opening opportunities for him to belong within the mainstream curriculum. His account of his progress in English resonated with his earlier account of success in Basketball:

> K: Yeah why has it been really good learning English?
>
> Omar: Cos, yeah, my levels are moving up.
>
> K: Yeah and how's that how's that happening?
>
> Omar: By … reading at home … and by practising … that's it.
>
> K: What's given you the confidence then to sort of make progress?
>
> Omar: Cos, yeah, I wanna be in the top set for everything.
>
> K: That's your goal yeah?
>
> Omar, third interview at home, 26/3/14

These themes of practising, making progress, and aiming high were drawn on throughout Omar's account in Sport and in academic learning, constructing a strong sense of himself as a learner in process. His reference to reading at home and his high aspirations resisted a SEND identity, insisting on belonging within the standards agenda, although his aim to be in top sets, drawing on masculine but also family notions of success, was possibly unattainable.

Along with his ambitions, Omar constructed peer disruption as a significant problem for him. I asked what he meant by this term:

> Omar: Cos people yeah like want you to get in trouble while you're doing your test. Then when you fail you start get frustrated at them and that.
>
> K: Why do you think they want to, want you to, to, get in trouble?
>
> Omar: Cos, yeah, they after they move up a set yeah. They're gonna say, "Ah you're dumb, you're dumb."
>
> K: Ah and then they try to wind you up.
>
> Omar: That's what they said to some girl, yeah.
>
> K: Oh, that's really bad yeah. And how do you how do you react to people doing that cos that's a really difficult thing to deal with?
>
> Omar: I just go to the Head of Year and tell them. They'll get in trouble and I'll do my test again.
>
> Omar, third interview at home, 26/3/14

Omar's account constructed the bullying as subjectifying him as a weak, disruptive learner. This in turn led to further stigma through being held down in the setting system. His response of frustration signalled his resistance to the ways in which this positioned him as a learner. When I pursued the account of the test as being about him, he then further resisted subjectifications of weakness, taking up a "good" pupil identity by referring to his relationship with authority, the Head of Year. This also suggested his positive negotiation of pastoral support. Omar's conclusion reaffirmed his identity as pursuing success, "I'll do my test again." The shift in tense sets this as future imagining, rather than a present experience. Here Omar challenged the school assessment structures, suggesting that failure in a test did not properly reflect his abilities. Through holding on to the disruption of others as the cause of his underachievement, resisted this construction of himself as underachieving and as having SEND.

However, Omar drew on disruptive and resistant identities himself in his negotiation of the school system. At times he constructed himself as unfairly disciplined when he had done his homework, and in reaction walked out of detentions. At other times he admitted to being late, although he insisted that the punishment of drawing triangles in detention for an hour, as a committed artist, was enjoyable. Telling me in the first interview that homework was sometimes hard, he confessed to not always doing it. I asked what stopped him:

> Omar: I just forget ... busy. Cos, I get homework like every single week then don't have chances to do all of them, so you have to get into trouble for one of them, that's it.
>
> Omar, third interview at home, 26/3/14

Here Omar drew on a different strategy around managing homework, citing time rather than difficulty or unfair discipline. What was interesting was his conscious decision to take the punishment rather than doing the work, and a suggestion that his time when he refused to do homework was not wasted, but employed in positive pursuits, very possibly Sport. Hinting at an anti-learning as well as an anti-school performance, Omar drew on readily available discourses around Black Somali boys as resistant to learning, his achievement in practical subjects and difficulties with literacy fitting with stereotypes of working class boys (Francis and Skelton, 2005). As Youdell (2011) argues for her sample, this provided a way for him to avoid the work that he found hard in a way that was perhaps more acceptable for him as it resisted stigma, but in doing so masked his need for "educational help".

The Year 7 "catch up" classes enabled Zaynab and Omar to resist subjectifications of inability as, once appropriate support was provided, they co-constructed themselves with me as making progress. In the five to six years they had been in school in the UK, through multiple transitions, they had not gained the skills needed to read, reflecting significant issues at the intersection of refugee, EAL and SEND learner identities. Through their more confident performances within non-traditional subjects, these young people insisted that they were not "anti-learning". Challenging to some extent stereotypes around Muslim beliefs about the appropriacy of certain subjects in the curriculum, the analysis of their narratives emphasised the importance of considering how family aspirations and notions of SEND can be implicated in these negotiations. Prevailing discourses around underachievement and inability were contested by these two young people. They negotiated their learner identities in complex ways, taking up, resisting and refuting Black, Muslim, working class, anti-school boys and passive, EAL, working class, Muslim girls to negotiate a sense of belonging. The discussion here has introduced the ways in which this sometimes masked their need for "educational help", where needed to resist stigma, but also painfully exposed their vulnerability as they insisted on being recognised as possible learners.

5.3 Underachievement: masking emotional needs around learning?

Within the analysis of the four narratives so far, I have briefly touched on how pre and post migration family circumstances, poverty, multiple mobility, bullying, racism and emotional needs all impacted on the young people's sense of themselves as possible learners. As discussed in Chapter 2, these issues are often found to be construed as reasons for

underachievement or pathologised within stereotypes of trauma, possibly concealing the need for "educational help". In this section I explore how two young people, Ruqiya and Mahmud, who had experienced migration in very different ways, gave accounts of emotional needs around their learning. I reflect on how refugee learner identities were negotiated as recently arrived and well established and for Ruqiya, consider their intersection with social, emotional and mental health needs (SEMH), now a recognised aspect of SEND support within the Code of Practice (DfE and DoH, 2015).

5.3.1 The importance of safety and emotional well-being

Ruqiya arrived in the UK aged eight and started school in Year 3, then due to family circumstances, she changed primary school in Year 6. At the time of the interviews, she was in Year 8 at Oak Academy. She and her two younger brothers were living with their Uncle Hassan and Aunt Safiya, who had arrived in the UK before them. They had one older daughter, Miski, who was in Year 11 at Oak Academy, and three younger girls who were in primary school. My work colleague suggested that she may require "educational help".

Ruqiya focused on friendships as a key tool in negotiating her learner identities through the multiple transitions she had experienced. In the river of life exercise, which we did in our sixth and last interview, she used my term "calm" to describe primary school and then introduced the term "crazy" when recollecting the transition to secondary school:

Ruqiya: My secondary school was good, umm wait, can, can, we make one of them crazy?

K: Yeah go for it which would be a crazy one?

Ruqiya: This one cos it looks [*inaudible*] (*chooses spikey flower that grows in Somalia*).

K: Yeah go for it go for it do whatever you like.

Ruqiya: Er it was crazy because I was crazy.

K: (*laughs*) Ok. Tell me more about that what do you mean by crazy?

Ruqiya: Like um when we started school yeah everyone's so calm like, they're so like shy and now just, I just used to make them laugh and I used to make like, used to joke and then after the we all started doing it and then we used and then we get into trouble by the teacher.

Ruqiya, sixth (last) interview at home, 12/6/14

Here, using transition from primary to secondary school as the marker of her change in behaviour, Ruqiya shifted from a quiet to disruptive role amongst her peers.   Constructing herself as the catalyst for others' bad behaviour, she drew on Black, working class, loud,

assertive and resistant performances. This was in contrast to Sporton and Valentine's (2007) findings in their study in Sheffield that Somali girls were modest and did not "act Black". It aligned more with performances of at risk urban girls as discussed by Archer, Hollingworth and Mendick (2010), pointing to highly situated identity practices being performed in different spaces and through different experiences. Although this identity work may have served to negotiate acceptance within the new class and school, it also conveyed a sense of Ruqiya's vulnerability at a significant point of transition in her education, when dealing with stressful family circumstances only three years after arriving in the UK.

A key aspect of Ruqiya's performance of a disruptive learner identity was talk. I asked about her need to chat:

> Ruqiya: Cos when you're just be quiet, you're just so bored and you're just like don't wanna you feel like you're stressed, and you don't wanna do any work but when you're talking, you're just like fun and you just write.
>
> Ruqiya, third interview at home 6/2/14

Ruqiya's link of "stress" with resisting learning, transformed by "talk" making it "fun", suggested that her emotional needs as well as potential academic language needs impacted on her learning. By using chat as a strategy, "you just write", her need for support was concealed and instead she came into conflict with the school rules.

Shifting between performances of victim and perpetrator in incidents of bad behaviour, Ruqiya constructed herself as taking control by resisting authority, at other times as being unfairly judged, in similar ways to Omar. Within this, she constructed teachers as "horrible" and "rude" or "nice" depending on their response to behaviour, rather than to difficulties with learning as in Naseem's account. By our fifth interview, she was telling me about the many "fights" she was involved in with both boys and girls. How she defended herself or others against racist abuse, particularly from boys, and teachers' ineffectual responses, was a prominent theme, with discussions about romantic interests in boys becoming more open as the interviews progressed. After telling me of a particularly violent incident when she was racially abused, physically attacked by a boy and fought back, I asked what happened afterwards:

> Ruqiya: I just, Sir took me out the lesson and he was like, "You're gonna get an hour," that's why I had that hour.
>
> K: Oh, that's right, yeah, ok.

Ruqiya: And then I was like, "Ok," and then he sent me duty, duty took me to my head of house, and my head of house said what happened and I told him and he was like, "Well I'm gonna talk to him," and he was like, "You should have ignored him because he don't, you don't look like ET," and I was like, "But still he called me."

Ruqiya, fifth interview at home, 9/5/14

Although in this instance she constructed the teacher as listening to her side of the story, which was not always the case in her account, his response was not sufficient for Ruqiya, suggested by her ending retort, "But still he called me." As Hart (2009) argues in his analysis of the effect on learning of child refugee experiences of trauma, Ruqiya expressed a need for implemented whole school anti-racist and anti-bullying policies to protect and set clear boundaries for her so that she felt safe. Considering her behaviour through a different lens as expressing unmet emotional need would also have opened up alternatives for her sense of self (Allan and Harwood, 2014).

Compared to this sense of school in general as an unsafe, difficult space, Ruqiya constructed herself as able to take up a more secure, positive learner identity in Maths lessons. Ruqiya was in the bottom set for Maths, taught by the SENDCo Ms Eaves. Her account of flexible boundaries around seating positions and talk, together with careful differentiation but also challenge, conveyed a sense of space to learn without the struggle that she seemed to have in other lessons of being constantly disciplined by teachers, not doing any work due to her chat or being targeted with abuse by peers. Maths was a subject that many of my participants constructed as providing opportunities for success, due to a combination of less literacy demands, their own Maths learning pre migration and families being more likely to be able to provide support or access tuition within the community. However, for Ruqiya her preference for this lesson seemed to be more about the caring, inclusive context and supportive teacher.

Home was also constructed by Ruqiya as a "calm" supportive environment for learning, her uncle helped her with Maths and her cousin with other subjects if she needed it. There was space to talk whilst she worked, and she helped her younger cousins with their learning too. Ruqiya invested in keeping her "crazy" learner identity hidden from home, telling me it was "school stuff" and that her aunt and uncle did not know when she was on report for her behaviour. However, after a parents' meeting when Ruqiya reported that her Uncle Hassan was shocked by the different behaviour she performed at school compared to home, her (male) History teacher agreed he would report home after every lesson. Quiet for most of the lesson the day after this agreement, Ruqyia told me:

Ruqiya: Yeah today he's putting me eight out of eight, I mean eight out of ten, nine out of ten and ten out of ten.

K: Mm and did you feel good about that?

Ruqiya: Mm.

K: Mm well done.

Ruqiya: Only for the behaviour he, because I talked, for the last few minutes I was un-behaviour.

Ruqiya, sixth (last) interview at home, 12/6/14

Ruqiya's embodiment of disruption reflected how far she had taken up a badly-behaved identity. In contrast to her earlier insistence that talk helped her learn, here she drew on school discourses to link talk with bad behaviour and amid this, a consideration of her learning needs was hidden. The involvement of her family had, in this instance, helped to guide her responses to her school learning in a positive way even though she had tried hard to keep school and home apart. Possibly the constructive way that her teacher addressed the issue, in contrast to the negative sanctions she normally received, had encouraged her.

A struggle to focus on learning was also suggested through Ruqiya's lack of concern about being in bottom sets and she particularly stood out from the rest of my participants as being unconcerned about her academic achievement. As Sporton, Valentine and Nielsen (2006) found in their exploration of Somali young people's post-conflict identities, her aspirations were for safety rather than examination grades, possibly accentuated by her vulnerable family situation. Her struggles to focus on the future were therefore linked to her post migration situation, not just to her identity as a recently arrived refugee.

The take up of Black, underachieving, disruptive identities in secondary school, when considered at the intersection with Ruqiya's identity as a refugee and privately fostered pointed to her need for "educational help", aligning with Benjamin's (2002) findings around Black, "big bad" girls' performances as child-as-danger and child-in-danger. This conflicted with stereotypes around refugee girls being overlooked due to perceptions of passivity (Rutter, 2001). Without the school knowing and understanding her present as well as past experiences, Ruqiya was struggling to negotiate any sense of herself as a possible learner. Her support needs as an EAL pupil who had disrupted formal education was further hidden by these strained performances.

5.3.2 Underachieving or unsure?

Emotional needs around learning were not just linked to trauma and stressful experiences for the young people in my study. As Iqra and Naseem's narratives showed, they were also linked to frustrations about their need for support to access the curriculum and achieve. Mahmud's experiences of learning and migration, together with his gender, age and family setting, were very different to Ruqiya's. He had arrived in the UK aged three and had attended one primary school, moving to Rowan Academy for his secondary school. His mother Qaali, a lone parent, knew some English but had missed out on formal education. At the time of the interviews, he was in Year 10, starting his GCSE courses, and had been placed in the middle stream which targeted pupils who were on the borderline of "pass" grades. Teachers considered that he was underachieving and could easily be distracted, particularly in English, and Qaali was worried about his progress compared with his younger sister Maryam who was in Year 7. His hobbies were to play football with his friends and football video games when the weather was poor.

English was the lesson Mahmud said was his best, despite it not being his most successful subject, because he said the teacher, Ms Tyler, who specialised in SEND, was the most "helpful". His need for support in English was highlighted when I asked how he remembered punctuation for a test, something that Ms Tyler had been focusing on in the lesson I observed:

Mahmud: Oh yeah usually I would use, I would go and get a thesaurus and write all the important words and I would take it with me and redraft it at home.

K: Ah good.

Mahmud: Sometimes cos Miss told us to take the drafts home and then work on it and you would use the words to do it with.

K: Yes, to do it yeah. Did you find you could write better at home, or in the class?

Mahmud: It will be better in class cos Miss is there to help you. When you are at home you can make mistakes and Miss, no one would know.

<div align="right">Mahmud, third (last) interview at home, 26/5/14</div>

Mahmud's slip here in referencing a thesaurus as his learning aid, when I had asked about punctuation, possibly conveyed something of the pressure he felt under to perform a "good" pupil identity with me. However, he then talked about his isolation as a learner at home, suggesting that homework not done was due to a lack of available support, not motivation,

thus challenging gendered, racialised, classed assumptions of underachievement. By referring to "no one" rather than his mother being unable to help, he both protected her and indicated his vulnerable position as the eldest child of a refugee family going through the education system. This reflected the issues reported in Somali and wider inclusion studies where if families do not understand the system or speak a high level of English, their children feel isolated, keen for parents to be engaged in their learning, but aware of embarrassing them (Ali and Jones, 2000; Crozier and Davies, 2007; Kahin and Wallace, 2017).

Whilst acknowledging his need for support in English, Mahmud was careful to refute any suggestion that he took up the SEND identity available to him through Ms Tyler's lessons. For instance, following his answer about making mistakes, my probing for further information was firmly refuted:

K: What do you think helps people to write in the lesson?

Mahmud: Umm no there's nothing, I don't really know because, because I don't find it hard to write.

K: No, you find it quite easy, yeah.

Mahmud: So, I wouldn't know about people.

Mahmud, third (last) interview at home, 26/5/14

Mahmud's rejection of finding writing "hard" constructed him as a confident learner, distancing himself from others, thus making a clear distinction between needing support to achieve and being a weak learner. These performances resisted subjectifications of inability or failure, insisting on his identity as a learner in process in English.

In contrast, Mahmud consistently performed a dominant role in his Maths class at school. In distinguishing between this lesson where he said he was "smartest" but English as his "favourite" class, he explained:

Mahmud: I don't really enjoy Maths cos I get Maths that I know already, and everyone's don't understand it, so I have to sit there and listen to Sir explain the work, but I already know it.

Mahmud, second interview at home, 19/2/14

Here Mahmud constructed himself as set apart from the rest of the Maths class, bored and unstimulated. His desire for more one-to-one attention, this time not the "help" that he got

from Ms Tyler, but to challenge him, was denied. When I asked at the end of our first interview which learning at home or at school he found most enjoyable in the week, he constructed his Maths tuition at the weekend as "exciting" and I asked why:

> Mahmud: Because he gives you like, sometime, he gives you books, booklets, he gives you booklets and then the next day he gives you on the computer, he gives you the same work but harder on the computer.
>
> Mahmud, first interview at school, 16/10/13

This construction of the tutor as stretching him, signified by the amount of work as well as the level that he was given, was drawn on to support his dominant performance in school, as "already know[ing] it." In comparing Mahmud's construction of the three teachers, his performance of an achieving learner identity was dependent for him on the amount of attention, the right level of work and challenge that he received, so that he could take up a "learner in process" identity. His construct of his tutor as enabling him to achieve highly pointed to discourses around community learning as spaces where gendered, racialised and classed low expectations within mainstream schools could be challenged.

This learner in process identity was drawn upon in Mahmud's future imaginings of GCSE examinations, sixth form and beyond. As we discussed his GCSE options, his choice of ICT reflected his ambitions:

> Mahmud: As I get older, I might improve more […] I know it's going to help me in the future […] usually computers are hard, so it will give you good pay when you're older.
>
> Mahmud, third (last) interview at home, 26/5/14

His aspirations, which conformed to family expectations, drew on his notion of "hard" to construct educational challenge as leading to success and social mobility, a route many migrant families aspire to for their children as a way out of poverty (Archer and Francis, 2007). However, although Mahmud continued to take up a determined learner identity, his acknowledgement of the risk of failure through "might" conveyed his awareness that this was not certain, and possibly drew on family, non-western discourses around time as the key driver in learning progress, particularly where there are concerns about ability. Constructing himself as a progressing, committed learner, like Naseem and Omar resisting suggestions of weakness, Mahmud's lack of confidence and sense of isolation in his home learning, as well as his determination to do well, reflected the ways in which his refugee learner identity was

drawn on. One-to-one support was key to his performances of possibility, either from attentive teacher-helpers or tutors, but there were hints of difficulties with literacy which raised questions for me about possible SEND.

Both Ruqiya and Mahmud's narratives suggested the need for recognition of their identities as refugee learners in very different ways and pointed to the emotional as well as structural impacts of this on their learning. This fitted with Rutter's (2011) findings that educational support for refugee young people should not ignore the present and longer term impact of a young person's refugee background and experiences on their education. Without this, Ruqiya's emotional needs were construed as bad behaviour and sanctioned, and Mahmud's lack of confidence was hidden through subjectifications of underachieving. Their appreciation of SEND teachers as the most helpful hinted that notions of SEND, although not identified through intervention as with Zaynab and Omar, might entwine with their learner identity performances.

5.4 Negotiating possibilities

What, then, worked for these young people as they negotiated a sense of themselves as possible learners with me in their narratives? For three of them, Year 7 "catch up" intervention was constructed as crucial in these processes. Accessing specific learning support for reading and writing skills was something they implied or stated had been denied to them in primary school, suggesting that their identities as refugees and EAL had not worked for them previously. The notion of "catch up" encouraged them that progress was indeed possible, and they could therefore reject deficit notions of inability and stigma around disability, although notions of SEND were implicated in this type of support. The fact that this intervention was done in a group helped them negotiate a sense of belonging as learners.

Naseem was the only participant in this group who constructed an EAL identity as working for him to some degree, depending on teachers' responses to his needs. However, his tenacity and at times frustration around his need for more support to understand the work, and his insistence like Iqra on the importance of recognising his multilingual, refugee learner identities was shown to be fairly fragile. The passing of time meant that he was now no longer eligible for much EAL support, and GCSE courses were fast approaching. The hidden but exposed, unacknowledged nature of his SEND learner identity seemed to be a crucial aspect to explore for him.

Underachieving and disruptive/d learner identities, whether passive or demonstrative, were shown to be negotiated by all the participants to some degree. A common theme that arose was the ways in which these gendered, racialised, classed discourses were drawn on to

negotiate the young people's difficulties with learning and school sanctions whilst at the same time resisting stigma. This ranged on a continuum from not doing homework, to covering up difficulties with writing in class, to struggling with communication and bullying, to painfully exposing their emotional needs. Although these learner identities were often constructed as being taken up with agency, there was also a clear sense of the vulnerability within the performances, which challenged how far they were really working for the young people. For them all, where SEND learner identities were accessible either through intervention or trained teachers, there were possibilities to manage these issues in different, although perhaps not always easier ways.

If notions of SEND within school were, then, shown to be (potentially) useful for these young people to negotiate a sense of themselves as possible learners, I wanted to know how this was understood within their families, where knowledge of school systems around SEND may have been constrained or foreclosed. I was interested in finding out how dimensions of EAL, refugee, underachievement and disruption were drawn on, overdetermined, hidden or resisted in these processes. Added to this, the young people had all suggested in their accounts that learning spaces and relationships at home or in the community helped them to be able to make progress. I therefore wanted to inquire into how their learner identities in these spaces were negotiated with family members and with what consequence for the young people's sense of themselves as learners. In particular, I wanted to find out what significance religious learning in the madrassah held, an aspect of their learning that was mostly unreported by the young people until specifically asked about. The next chapter seeks to consider these questions through an analysis of family members' narratives co constructed with me and Maha, my interpreter. In considering these negotiations before moving on to explore in more depth how SEND learner identities were drawn on in school, I position family narratives as holding great importance in my understandings of these young people's possible need for "educational help".

Chapter 6: Family negotiations- resisting stigma, pushing progress

In this chapter I analyse key family members' narratives to explore how they viewed their children's learner identity performances at school, within the home and in the community, considering to what extent notions of SEND were present at the intersection with gender and refugee. As discussed in Chapter 4, approaching notions of SEND through concepts of help and support was important within family interviews. Firstly, none of the children in these families were identified formally by the schools as having SEND. It was therefore crucial from an ethical perspective that I did not bring assumptions and introduce stigmatised concepts to the interviews. Secondly, family members may not have had opportunities to learn about school understandings of SEND and therefore to use this term would contribute to misunderstandings. Finally, using terms such as support and help opened up the possibility for discussions of the ways in which the young people were positioned as learners within family understandings of SEND, an area of great sensitivity due to stigma within religious and cultural discourses around notions of motivation and ability, as discussed in Chapter 1. My analysis interrogates the ways in which family, community and school understandings of achievement were constructed within the family members' narratives, how discourses might inform, converge or conflict with each other and how far notions of SEND were implied in their accounts of the young people's learning.

I position narratives alongside each other as an analytical tool to interrogate how gendered, generational roles within different families and between family members regarding education were shifting, marked and transformed in response to concerns about the young person's achievement. This approach also enables me to draw out commonalities and differences in how the boys' and girls' learner identities were constructed around notions of SEND. Starting with a focus on two lone parents' accounts of their sons who had arrived early on in their schooling, I explore family set ups often stereotyped as contributing to the underachievement of Somali boys (Harris, 2004; Harding, Clarke and Chappell, 2007; Sporton and Valentine, 2007; Demie, 2008). I then move on to consider how family members draw more strongly on EAL and refugee learner identities and analyse how this might intersect with notions of SEND. In this section, I look first at a father and mother's account of their two sons who were constructed as recent arrivals, and then consider an uncle's account of two of his nieces. This last narrative broadens my enquiry to consider the support roles taken up by wider family members who have had some schooling in the UK, and analyses how sibling negotiations around notions of SEND are perceived.

All family interviews apart from the one with Barre, Zaynab and Iqra's uncle, were conducted with Maha interpreting for me. As discussed in Chapter 4, her comments in Somali as she

encouraged the parents to share at times influenced the narrative as she drew on her own experiences: I therefore consider these aspects of the co-construction within the analysis. In this chapter, where I analyse quotes taken from interviews which were conducted in English and Somali, what is presented is translated from Somali.

6.1 Unconfident mothers, unmotivated boys?

The assumptions reflected in this subtitle around how Somali mothers and their sons negotiate learning at home, in the community and in relationships with school are the focus of this first section. Qaali, Mahmud's mother, had attended the madrassah as a child and had gone to ESOL in the UK for a short time. She, Mahmud and Maryam had arrived in the UK when Mahmud was three, and Qaali had one more son after they arrived. At the time of the interview, Mahmud was in Year 10. Qadra, Omar's mother had attended the madrassah and school in Somalia. She had six children, the three youngest born in the UK. Omar was five when he arrived and was in Year 8 at this point.

6.1.1 "Lazy and able" or "unable"?

In all family interviews, I began by asking which subjects the young people were successful at, and which they were concerned about. Answers all focused on core subjects: as Ali and Jones (2000) and Sporton, Valentine and Nielsen (2006) suggest, these were possibly constructed as the most important and were best known to family members. Both Qaali and Qadra identified Maths as a subject the boys were better at and English, more particularly reading, as a problem. When I asked Qaali about Mahmud's start at school in the UK and what help he had with reading, her answer focused on motivation:

> Qaali: He started school in this country from nursery and now he is year ten ... therefore. His education was better when he was little but as he grew older, he became lazy; I used to take him to tuition. At school, since year four up until now, whenever I take him to school there is always a complaint.
>
> Maha: Tuition?
>
> Qaali: No, the normal school, they always complain that even though he knows things, he does not want to do it.
>
> Maha: It is like peer pressure, he just follows others, he just does what the others are doing.
>
> Qaali: He likes to talk, a chatty boy.

Qaali's account of the teachers' reports, "even though he knows things he does not want to do it," drew on the ability discourses with which she was familiar. Through the convergence

of school and family ability discourses, Mahmud was subjectified as lazy but able, and alternative learner identities such as higher level EAL or SEND were not considered at this point. This was added to by Qaali's gendered subjectification of Mahmud as disruptive, "he likes to talk, a chatty boy," adding to Maha's suggestion that he was influenced by others. In response to the concerns raised by school, Qaali accessed tuition, seeing the solution to Mahmud's achievement as more study, thus hoping to address what she perceived as laziness which would probably, within her experiences of Somali Muslim approaches to learning, be considered unacceptable and stigmatised. As Archer and Francis (2007) highlight in their study of Black and minoritised parents' engagement with their children's education, buying in tuition was a clear strategy for her as a migrant parent, and was funded in this case through wider family support. However, Qaali did not report that she was offered any support for Mahmud within school at this point in his life.

Omar was similarly constructed as unmotivated in Qadra's account, but this shifted to notions of inability quite quickly from the start of the interview. When I asked what subjects Omar enjoyed, Qadra conveyed her anxiety about his English:

Qadra: He says he loves technology, but he is zero when it comes to English.

Maha: All children do not like English.

Qadra: He is not that bad at other things but when it comes to English, when he is asked if he has done his homework, he says I did it. Yesterday he had detention.

Here discourses of inability slipped into resistance and bad behaviour as Qadra reported Omar's dissembling over his homework.   However, what comes across strongly in this quote is that Qadra had highlighted an area of Omar's learning where she was concerned about his achievement, and to which she returned throughout the interview. Her use of the term "zero" underlines this, although it may also have been drawing on her experiences of passing or failing a subject, rather than using the levels system in the UK. There was also a suggestion of a hierarchy of subjects, that English was the most important for Omar's achievement, more marked for Qadra given the family's EAL, migrant background. Thus, enjoyment in non-traditional subjects such as technology was possibly not so highly valued: Qadra never alluded to Omar's skills in Art and Maha's attempt to counter stigma with the notion of preferences in subjects was unheeded. This approach resonated with the government focus on literacy and academic disciplines as vital to raising attainment.

Qadra had high aspirations for Omar alongside her concerns about his achievement. After discussing the learning support that he had received at school in Year 7, I asked if she felt Omar was still making progress:

Qadra: I think he still gets the support but still he is not one of the top students, because when there is a parent's evening, students have different teachers. Even though they go to the same class, children have different teachers; the top students have different teachers. There are students who are better than him, for example, there is a girl called Amira, a Somali girl, she is one of the top students. Maths, English, many things, she is better than him; she goes to her top English teacher.

Qadra's learning about the school setting system was drawn from her observations on parents' evening, being very aware of Omar's low position in the year group. Her comment "he is still not" also suggests that he can do well alongside her concerns about his levels. This implied that there were always successful learner identities available to him at home, although these may have seemed unattainable at the time. Her comments about parents' evenings resonate with Crafter's (2012b) findings about misunderstandings and miscommunication: Qadra knew about the support that Omar had, but interpreted this within ability discourses, rather than through notions of SEND. It is possible however that, as with Mahmud, Omar's need for support was conveyed to her by school through notions of "catch up" and underachievement, thus converging within her understandings.

When I asked her if there was anything more that could be done to help Omar achieve, Qadra focused on motivation:

Qadra: There is nothing that I could say except to get a teacher that supports them at home. He gets good teaching at school; it is up to him to learn. He is supposed to work hard but if the individual is not willing to work hard, however he is supported it would not help him. I tell them that they are getting education in this country; you can see what is going on in our country, so you must work harder. You are sent a teacher without paying; you have school. I tell them that I went to a school where teachers used to beat us up, so make sure you benefit from this opportunity. I say to them you are going to be grown up men and will have your own family and if you don't study – last night I said to them if you don't study you are going to beg others to buy tea for you.

Here Qadra's concern that Omar was lazy was emphasised, intertwined with her acknowledgement that he needed support. Her reference to the requirement to be a persistent, hardworking learner possibly drew on beliefs in Islam around the duty to learn, as well as concurring with findings about migrant families' aspirations for their children to be more successful than them (Archer and Francis, 2007; Shah and Iqbal, 2011; Goodall, 2013; Kahin and Wallace, 2017). In response to her concerns, Qadra focused on what she knew, both in seeking out volunteer tuition in the post migration context and drawing on her own experiences of education in Somalia to attempt to inspire the boys to work hard. Her gendered construct of them as needing to provide for their future families used a common Somali saying which again underlined their need to take responsibility and indicated her frustration that despite having many more resources than she had in Somalia, the boys were not taking full advantage of them. Reflecting on her own position as a parent, there was a disconnect for her: she was performing a consistently supportive role, but she constructed Omar in particular as not making enough progress in response to the school's sanctions, their intervention or her encouragement.

6.1.2 Parental responses: when "push" does not work

The parental role to encourage is termed "dhiirri" in Somali and is translated as "push" by Somali families in the UK (often using the English word within a conversation in Somali) although it has a less harsh meaning in Somali, which is to support and come alongside. As discussed in Chapter 3, this role was performed in family practices in Somalia through maternal care in the home, cooking, providing uniforms, ensuring attendance and punctuality. In the post migratory setting in the UK as lone parents, these two mothers took up all aspects of parental roles regarding education that they knew from their experiences in Somalia, whether traditionally performed by fathers or mothers, as well as engaging with school in new ways through phone calls, letters, regular meetings and monitoring homework, something which did not exist in the Somali education systems they knew about. It was in their take up of these roles and through their high aspirations for their sons that their concerns about the boys' learning became more apparent.

Qadra constructed a positive learning environment in the home. The family learnt together, the younger girls often "joining in" my interviews with Omar by doing drawing or workbooks, guided by Omar, to show me afterwards. They also knew the photos in autobiographies by Mo Farah and Ussain Bolt, books given to him through my workplace, and could tell me what their stories were. When I asked about Omar's learning at home, Qadra clearly performed her role to "push" by consistently reminding all three boys about their homework, however she identified specific issues for Omar:

> Qadra: Most of the time he's got Maths homework; sometimes he says he has done it in the library. He can do it, but he comes here, and they start playing and chatting. When I remind them more, they start rushing to do the homework. Most of the time, the older one thinks more about his homework, but I don't understand Omar.

The repetition here of her earlier comment, "he says he has done it," suggested that Qadra felt Omar often covered up about not completing the work, and in this comment she referenced Maths not just in English, suggesting that the issue of homework was wider than just for one subject. Qadra refuted suggestions of inability, "he can do it, but," constructing Omar as distracted and thus resisting stigma. Generational struggles over homework between parent and child were conveyed through the boys "playing and chatting" instead of doing homework. Then in her comparison with Ahmed, Omar's older brother, Qadra's concern about Omar's learning was expressed as confusion, "but I don't understand Omar." This opened up the possibility to consider other reasons for Omar's avoidance tactics: Qadra was identifying here that the role she performed was working for the others but not for him. Thus, a SEND identity was available but hidden within prevailing discourses around ability with which she was familiar and a seeming absence of school explanation of "educational help".

Qaali similarly constructed herself as "pushing" Mahmud, but with little success, conveying a sense of despair mingled with future hope that he might respond. Following her comment on Mahmud being chatty, quoted above, she told us:

> Qaali: I always push him, he is not pushing himself, I love him, I try my best I want him to reach his potential.

The commitment to her parental supportive role became more pronounced, "I try my best," as she compensated for what she constructed as Mahmud's lack of motivation and possibly reflecting a sense of the constraints around her due to her own lack of formal education and her situation as a lone parent. It is important to note here that these constraints did not mean that she withdrew from supporting Mahmud, as Rutter's (2004) study with newly arrived Somali families suggests. Discourses of ability provided possibilities of a successful learner identity, "I want him to reach his potential." As we will see in Chapter 8, this parental response was very similar to Mahmud's teachers' focus on attitude, with explorations of why he was not "pushing himself" confined to his behaviour rather than learning. For Qaali, it

seemed that lack of motivation was less stigmatised than inability and opened up opportunities for change in ways that notions of inability would not.

When I asked about the impact of tuition on Mahmud's learning, she attributed Mahmud's progress in Maths to his male tutor, but lack of progress in English to a lack of respect for women:

Qaali: Another time a girl from Rowan used to come to him, he refused to listen and respect her, and she said I cannot teach Mahmud. That is why I asked her [Kathryn] to get a male teacher because he does not listen to the female teachers.

As Manyak and Dantas (2010) discuss in their introduction to studies on home-school relationships, religious and family beliefs about the importance of respect for teachers may influence a family's understanding of learning and relationships with teachers. In this situation, interpreting Mahmud's responses to his teachers as about respect may have constrained opportunities to understand Mahmud's learning needs in alternative ways. Qaali's focus on possible gendered dimensions to the tutor relationship, maybe reflecting her own relationship with Mahmud around schoolwork, meant that questions about why he was struggling to make progress in English compared to Maths were avoided.

Qaali's take up of her role to "push" was also balanced with a need to shield Mahmud from danger in the inner-city estate where they lived. My question about what hobbies he enjoyed showed the careful line that she was treading:

Qaali: Sometimes, I say to myself, he does not like education, but he might push himself in the future, so don't give pressure to him given he is not going out and misbehaving. Sometimes, in the neighbourhood, children who are his age are in trouble and I do not have that problem.

Here she was very aware of the difficulties that other families in her community had with gangs and crime.   Thus, Qaali constructed a compromise for her aspirations for Mahmud, maintaining a supportive relationship with him, which in this case meant allowing video games and football with his friends in the court next to the block, even if it compromised her high aspirations. He was safe and she would not "lose" him, a fear that has been reported as central to Somali families' experiences of migration as they struggle with poverty, unemployment, lack of male role models and lack of education (Alitolppa-Niitamo, 2002; Sporton, Valentine and Nielsen, 2006; Sporton and Valentine, 2007; Mohamoud, 2011). The constraints around what she felt she could do to support Mahmud's learning were

therefore not just about Qaali's own level of English and education, but due to significant structural inequalities as a working class, refugee family. In response, she hoped that Mahmud would change and achieve in the future. As with Qadra's narrative, this very strong belief, drawn from Islamic teaching about the duty to be a lifelong learner, gave Qaali hope, but also enabled her to resist fears around the stigma of inability.

Contrasting Qaali's construct of sport as a necessary distraction for Mahmud (who told me himself that he was not particularly skilled), Qadra recognised that Omar was talented, and found a running club organised by a Somali athlete for him. She gave permission for him to play sports fixtures at school and attend training sessions in the holidays, and even allowed the boys to use the dining table for table tennis in their small flat, trying to balance this as we have seen above with their need to study. However, when I asked if Omar might be a successful sportsman in the future, she did not place importance on it within her own ambitions for him:

> Qaali: It is up to him, he loves it, it is up to him if he continues or if he gets bored with it.

Within family and religious discourses, sport could be seen as part of a strong masculine identity, but not as a route to achievement (Collet, 2007; Whitmarsh, 2011). However, Qadra's focus on out of school activities for Omar also addressed the struggles she saw him having with learning in a supportive way. Her openness about the possibility of a career in Sport was mitigated by a sense that she would not "push" him towards it, a contrast with her concerns about his academic learning. Here readily available school and peer learner identities as a Black, sporty "non-learner" were in some sense drawn on but also constrained within the home (Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman, 2002).

As the women reflected on the problems they could see with their sons' learning, their focus was not just on traditional subjects but on English in particular. This signified an EAL, refugee identity which in some senses was hidden by their focus on motivation and ability, constructing their sons as responsible for changing their behaviour to work hard. On the other hand, their deep concerns about their sons' learning drew strongly on their own identities as speaking English as an Additional Language and their experiences as refugees. Although both perceived their performances of encouragement to be ineffective, Qadra more readily turned to constructs of inability and the need for support, whereas Qaali maintained a stronger focus on motivation. The possibility of "educational help" was present but unknown and unacknowledged within these negotiations. Interactions between home and school therefore demanded more exploration: I was interested to know more about how they

understood the schools' construct of the boys as learners, and whether notions of SEND were suggested within these exchanges.

6.1.3 Structural inequalities in home-school relationships

For Qadra, her communication with school was slightly easier than for Qaali as the school would call home. For Qaali, it was harder as Rowan wrote letters, and she told us they did not call back when she left phone messages. Neither school used interpreters. Qaali's account of school constructed both her and Mahmud as isolated and marginalised. For example, when I asked whether she had known about Mahmud's GCSE options, she told me:

> Qaali: No. He would not even tell me. The most important thing is for him to tell me first. He is not like that; he's born with it. If asked about his choice, he wouldn't say. He would say I don't know. His answer is: I don't know!

Here her reliance on Mahmud to tell her what was happening at school indicated Qaali's lack of previous experience about the school system and emphasised, as Mahmud had done, his vulnerable position as the eldest in the family, therefore the first to experience the process. With no accessible way of communicating with teachers, Qaali constructed herself as powerless to intervene. Furthermore, her construct of Mahmud's refusal to talk as innate hinted at his fear, as discussed in Chapter 5, of exposing his mother as unable, alongside his own lack of knowledge about the system. He told me later that he had asked his cousin what he chose and put the same, resonating with research findings about the ways in which marginalised young people make key educational decisions through personal contacts (Archer and Francis, 2007; Archer, Hollingworth and Mendick, 2010). Both narratives concurred with Crozier and Davies' (2007, 2008) findings about the constraints of migrant families' relationships with schools, these inequalities having a significant impact at a key transition point in Mahmud's learning when he chose the subjects he would study for GCSE. This was particularly evident regarding their knowledge of the streaming system in the school which I will discuss in Chapter 8. Possibly there were gendered, generational dimensions as well: Reay, David and Ball (2005) found in their study of decisions about higher education within Black and other minoritised communities that boys resisted parental involvement, whilst lone mothers felt guilty, anxious and inadequate.

When these mothers approached schools with their concerns directly, their attempts were often frustrated. For example, Qadra told us she had confronted the primary school about the lack of homework for Omar, but this was robustly denied by the teacher in a meeting with her, who told her every pupil was set homework every week. Her comment to us was:

"When he said that I kept quiet, what else could I have said?" It is possible that having taken up a new position for her, given the discourses in Somalia around respecting and not challenging teachers, Qadra felt unconfident about how to continue or whether to at all.

Once Omar was in secondary school, Qadra's communication with teachers was conducted through phone calls and texts; from her account it appeared that these were mostly negative. She told us that she had learnt about the support he got with his learning from Omar's brother Ahmed:

K: And now in the secondary school what do you feel about the support he has now for his English in secondary school?

Qadra: Yes, very well, because when he was starting Year 7 he was in the class of low level students. My older boy told me that his class is the class of those who do not know that much. When the students have built their capacity, then they are taken out of that class; his capacity was improved, and he was taken out from that class. What they do is, when the child's understanding improves s/he is taken out from the class and in the end when the capacity of all the children is improved normally the class comes to an end or is terminated. That is how he was in Year 7.

For Qadra, having a child older than Omar meant that his experiences and explanations of secondary school were available, however her understanding of Omar's class was mediated through Ahmed's role as a language broker and was influenced by his construct of Omar and his own understandings of the school system. In Qadra's account of the class, as well as referring to school discourses around underachievement, "low level", she also drew on discourses of ability, constructing Omar's learning needs as about intelligence, "capacity", rather than literacy. Furthermore, through her pre-migratory understandings of the pass system, she constructed his move to a larger class at the start of Year 8 as proof that he was able. Here, family and school ability discourses converged. Without an appropriate discussion with a teacher and professional interpreter, the chance for Qadra to understand the system in the UK, potentially opening up possibilities of SEND, was foreclosed. As Lamb (2009) found in his enquiry into parental engagement with SEND systems, this apparent lack of clear communication was significant for both Qadra and Omar, foreclosing their rights to a review of his progress and to request further support if needed. Additionally, as Whitmarsh (2011) argues in her study of refugee parents' engagement with learning, teachers seem to have missed an opportunity to appreciate Qadra's own experience of education and gain from her valuable understanding of Omar's learning.

In these narratives, although they dealt with different aspects of the system around Year 7 catch up and GCSE choices, the apparent absence of interpreters and accessible ways of communicating with teachers or learning about important systems within the schools were constructed as having a significant effect on these mothers' abilities to support their sons' education, foreclosing opportunities to communicate their views. Language brokering roles, here taken up by siblings and the young person concerned, were seen to restrict rather than enhance understanding, highlighting the ways that migrant parents are marginalised within deficit school discourses (Blackledge, 2001; Crozier and Davies, 2007). The mothers' sense of agency was constrained, and the potential for discussions around notions of ability, motivation and SEND was lost. However, challenges around language and knowledge of educational systems were removed to a large extent in the mothers' constructions of learner identities in familiar learning spaces at the madrassah and within the family, which I now discuss.

6.1.4 Painful co-constructions of learner identities drawn from familiar settings

As discussed in Chapter 4, the parents I interviewed were much more prepared to talk about learning in the madrassah than their children. I asked Qaali about Mahmud's learning in the madrassah and how it compared to school at the end of the interview:

> Qaali: He goes to madrassah for two days and God knows the effort that I put in there. He is better at going to school because when I wake him up, I wake him up, I prepare breakfast for him and I make sure, before he goes out the door, that he has everything, things like bus pass. At madrassah, thank God, he goes with his younger sister, Maryam, a twelve-year-old girl. She has already memorised the first chapter (Juz Cammo) and she is in chapter two (Juz Tabarak). For him he is not even in a halfway of the first chapter (Juz Cammo). You know the Qur'an, yes? The Qur'an comprises chapters. It is worse than the school; the madrassah teacher always calls me and says keep your money, I don't want to take your money without doing a job for you because your child does not want to learn, push him.
>
> Maha: Everywhere they say push him.
>
> Qaali: His brain is busy because it is filled by games. He is busy with games.

At this point in the interview, Qaali constructed her involvement with Mahmud's learning at the madrassah as producing greater despair for her than at school, where she constructed her role as more traditional in ensuring his attendance. Through understanding the levels, through comparison with Maryam, and through direct communication with the teacher at the madrassah, Qaali was painfully aware of Maahmud's lack of progress. The Qu'ranic teacher

constructed Mahmud as unmotivated and rejected Qaali's performance of a committed parent, telling her to "keep your money" as he did not want to be unfair and be paid if there was no progress. However, Qaali refuted this subjectification, and rejected Maha's emphasis on Mahmud's need for encouragement, constructing Mahmud as a teenage boy obsessed with games, who had capability, "his brain is busy." She told us she still sent him to the madrassah, holding on to future hopes, despite how unsuccessful the present seemed to be, this resonating with her hopes for his future academic progress at school.

It was at this point in the interview that Qaali told Maha to tell me the reason for her commitment to her role:

Qaali: Tell her that I try to make sure that his attendance is good to compensate his poor knowledge, the reason why I push him every day to reach school on time is: if a child has poor learning capacity and his attendance is poor then that puts him in a difficult position.

Here Qaali's account shifted to construct Mahmud not as unmotivated but as being unable to focus. It was interesting that it had taken until the end of the interview, when maybe trust had developed between us, to say this. It is possible that through focusing on poor capacity, she continued to resist notions of disability, and did not have any knowledge of the concept of learning needs on which to draw. This also drew on notions of motivation, emphasising what she had told me earlier. Qaali told how her inexhaustible take up of her role to "push" was the only response she knew to assist Mahmud's learning and that attendance was paramount to giving him opportunities to make progress. This comment, following on from her account of learning in a more familiar learning environment, opened up a painful telling of her fears about his abilities.

Similarly, it was through a discussion about Omar's learning in the madrassah, that Qadra's construct of his learner identity as unable was more predominantly shown. This was in the context of my question about what support Omar had received for his learning in the past:

Qadra: He started school at the end of year one. And no one was helping him and I myself I did not know that such help existed because I was new to the country, I learned recently that such thing exists - taking tuition to the children. I did not take him somewhere to get support and at school no one helped him. And he himself he is not good at, you know children are different some can learn quickly; when we were in [Middle Eastern country] he used to go the madrassah and it was very difficult for him to appreciate learning the Arabic [Islamic] alphabet.

[interpretation by Maha]

Qadra: He was not quick, I don't know.

Maha: Some children are quicker than others.

Qadra: For example, Nasteho she is in reception, when she was nursery, she was not able to write her name; now she can read books that is given to her. Nimo is like that, she reads big books; even if a letter comes Nimo reads, she reads well. She says her older brother Omar, when he was in my age, he was not able to read.

Here Omar was subjectified by Qadra as unable, "he himself is not good at." It is important to note that she constructed the school and herself as failing to support him, giving a sense of how difficult it was for her as a new migrant and lone parent to navigate the education system. She did not lay the blame entirely on Omar. Instead, she seemed to understand his struggles, "it was very difficult for him." However, drawing on ability discourses, Qadra returned to concepts of innate intelligence, "he is not quick," before shifting again to a lack of understanding, "I don't know." Maha's response to reassure Qadra, "Some children are quicker than others," reinforced notions of ability, prompting Qadra to compare Omar with his younger sister. This constructed a hierarchy of learning within the family within which Omar was positioned as different, in similar ways to Qaali's comparison of Mahmud and Maryam. In both accounts of learning in more familiar settings, in languages that they knew well and drawing on comparisons with siblings, notions of inability were constructed, along with a painful awareness of stigma.

The mothers responded to their concerns about their sons' learning by continuing to care, protect and "push" within the constraints and inequalities that they experienced as refugee families, their gendered roles both shifting and marked as they negotiated additional aspects of their roles due to their migration and their status as lone parents. Notions of SEND, present within their concerns, were resisted through the mothers' fears of stigma, the women instead focusing on notions of laziness and lack of focus. Notions of SEND were hidden through school assumptions of underachievement but suggested through the ways that ability discourses were drawn on in school-home communication. For Omar, SEND was also suggested through the intervention he received, however through lack of clear communication, possibilities for Qadra to understand his needs were lost. The mothers reacted with anxiety to suggestions of laziness and inability, with relief when they saw some progress and with hope that the future might be better. Although notions of EAL were present in these narratives, they were not prominent, and therefore need further exploration. In the next section I consider how this dimension was drawn on in two other families at its intersection with SEND, refugee and gender.

6.2 Holding onto hopeful EAL identities in the home

This section first continues to focus on family members' constructions of boys as learners. Through placing the accounts of Naseem and Asad's parents here, as well as considering how EAL and refugee learner identities were drawn on in more depth, I highlight some of the differences in parental roles between the lone parents discussed above, and this particular married couple where gendered, traditional roles around education were prominent in the home. Naseem was one of the most recently arrived participants, he and his brother Asad having joined their parents, Abdul and Amira, and their much younger siblings after several years apart. Within the family members who I interviewed, Abdul had the most formal education pre-migration. He had been to school and the madrassah in Somalia; he spoke English and was literate in Qur'anic Arabic. Amira had no formal education and knew a little English. The boys had attended the madrassah in Somalia and knew no English when they arrived. Due to Abdul's work schedule the interviews were done in succession, with Abdul first, on his own as Amira was out, and then with Amira once Abdul left to go to work. We did not repeat the same questions with Amira due to time but used the time to gain further information about the boys' learning, asking about both boys to avoid stigma, and to gain valuable insights into the parents' comparisons of their learner identities.

6.2.1 Gendered parental roles around vulnerability

When I asked about Naseem's achievement at school, Abdul's concern was about Naseem's low levels in core subjects:

> Abdul: The most difficult is English Language and Science. For Mathematics, a teacher who used to come for him taught him a little bit; I cannot say he is good at it, but he knows some. The most important is Mathematics and Science.
>
> Maha: Science and…
>
> Abdul: He is zero in this two.
>
> Maha: English?
>
> Abdul: Yes. Not Maths, English and Science.

Abdul's assertion that Maths tuition had made a difference to Naseem's learning rather than school lessons reflected his concerns about how Naseem as a newly arrived refugee could "catch up", resonating with Matthews and Davila's (2012) studies around how these pupils are expected to fit into the mainstream curriculum (see Chapter 2, section 2.2.3). Furthermore, the fact that the boys had a Maths tutor rather than English or Science possibly

hinted at the relative ease with which tutors for this subject could be found in the local community.

Responding to my further question about help at school, Abdul expressed his concern about the level of support for Naseem:

Abdul: He used to get help from the school but now they are saying he is getting better, so they are not letting him attend the reading session he used to attend a couple months ago. They gave him a certificate saying that he made progress.

Although the school's report after the reading group was that Naseem was improving, Abdul's use of the phrase "they are not letting him attend" suggested that he would prefer more of this support.   He seemed to resist the school's construct of Naseem making progress: there was a disconnect between the school's "improving" learner identity and his concerns about how much Naseem needed to catch up. Even with his level of English which gave him more confidence than Qaali and Qadra in attending meetings at school, Abdul constructed his parental role as constrained as there was no suggestion here that he would challenge the school's decision. His comments resonated with Crafter's (2012b) assertion in her exploration of parental support for homework amongst minoritised communities that a teacher's report of progress is subjective. Here, power relations between Naseem's parents and teachers, together with their respect for a teacher's authority seemed to foreclose opportunities for the family to discuss their concerns about how Naseem could best make progress with the school.

These perceived problems with support allocation were raised again when I asked about Naseem's GCSE options:

Abdul: I went with him when he was choosing the subjects. He chose Computer Science, ICT and English language; that is the English language for those for whom English is their second language, but later they said that they are not doing this.

Naseem had taken up an EAL identity with his father's agreement by choosing an EAL GCSE option, however, through the school withdrawing this, he was placed within a mainstream English class that he and his father felt was less appropriate for his needs. This further emphasised the lack of influence that Abdul felt regarding the school's provision for Naseem and the ways that, as a recently arrived refugee learner, Naseem struggled to fit into the mainstream standards driven system, accentuated by lack of resources and

provision (Keddie, 2012; NASUWT, 2012; Strand, Malmberg and Hall, 2015). The family's response was to focus on what they could do at home.

Abdul drew on his own educational experience to support both boys with learning at home to a certain extent. However, although he did some English and Maths with them earlier on, over time he said he felt that the level was too hard to him. As Crafter (2012a) found in her study of parents' support for their children's Maths learning, lack of confidence, his level of English together with having had experience of very different systems of education constrained his role and he therefore found others to help through private and volunteer tuition. In comparison to school learning, Abdul constructed himself as more able to assist with Qur'anic studies when I asked him how Naseem was performing in the madrassah:

Abdul: To be honest, in learning the Qur'an, he hasn't reached where I want him to be, but he is trying to learn. For example, in the morning he wakes up, and listens to the teachers who are on the computer (internet). I did not want him to do this way; I wanted him to learn both reading and writing.

Maha: You have to memorise it, don't you? You have to learn by heart.

Abdul: No, it is better to learn the reading and the writing of it if you want to learn Qur'an, similar to the way that the Asians teach Qur'an.

Maha: To be able to read?

Abdul: Yes, if you do that way, you can learn when you want. For example, I learned twenty-five years ago and still I know it.

Here Abdul performed a strong learner identity, drawing on his cultural capital to provide educational support for his sons (Markose, Symes and Hellstén, 2011). Faced with Naseem's lack of progress, there is a suggestion in his comment, "he is trying to learn," that Naseem found it hard rather than that he was lacking motivation. However, Abdul cited migratory changes to the ways that the Qur'an was taught as the reason. Furthermore, generational dimensions were present through Abdul's resistance to new technologies, as he raised questions about what was considered to be "learning". Aural learning was not sufficient, written literacy was his preferred goal. Thus, he focused on the pedagogical approaches that he knew well and the potential for other considerations around Naseem's learning were avoided.

In contrast to Abdul's focus on achievement, literacy and core subjects, Amira did not comment on the curriculum or the madrassah in detail, possibly due to her lack of experience of formal education. However, she did state her concerns that the boys spent

too long on YouTube and not enough time studying, one of the few times where notions of disruption were drawn on in her and Abdul's narratives. Amira was also very appreciative of the volunteer tutors who came to the house, this possibly enabling her to engage more with the boys' schooling within the home. Mostly, she performed a more traditional caring role in her narrative. Drawing on this in her account of Naseem's recent arrival, she focused on the difficulties Naseem had faced in adjusting to life in the UK:

Maha: How was like it for him when he was starting secondary school, because it was so soon, he started in Year 6 and then soon after, Year 7?

Amira: Until now he hasn't recovered from it. You think about a foreign country; it is difficult, isn't it? If you start from the beginning, it takes ages for you to learn a foreign language.

Maha: I swear you are right; it takes you ages, you are right.

Amira: He still hasn't got used to it.

Here, Amira's use of "recovered" hinted at the trauma of migration, Naseem's struggles being constructed by her as due to language learning. Maha empathised about the need for time, and Amira's answer, "He still hasn't got used to it," suggested that concerns about his progress were due to adaptation: it was now four years since he had arrived. Her use of discourses around the time needed to learn were slightly different to Abdul's anxiety about academic "catch up", with a sense of Naseem's social and educational vulnerability and need for care reflected in their gendered roles. In both accounts, ability discourses were resisted within prevailing discourses around being a refugee learner as the parents explained the reasons for Naseem's difficulties. Notions of SEND began to be implicated at the intersection with EAL. Four years is considered in EAL/SEND best practice guidelines (Cline, 1998) as a significant amount of time to have adjusted, although this was unsettled by Naseem's transition to secondary school and his disrupted formal education.

Abdul also expressed concern to protect Naseem as a refugee learner in the decisions he made about his schooling. When discussing the boys' hobbies, the hour and a half journey each way to Oak Academy was mentioned as a reason for constraints on their time for relaxation. The family had been evicted by a private landlord and rehoused at the other end of the borough to the school. I asked how they coped with the travel.

Abdul: We moved away when Asad was about to start [secondary school], so I was forced to let them stay there [at Oak], because if I had taken them to another school it would have taken them time to know the teachers and the students. They are boys so let them do the journey.

Although through telling me, "I was forced," Abdul constructed his role as a protective parent being constrained by the eviction as well as the boys' recent migration, his decision to keep them at Oak protected Naseem from moving schools again, not Asad who was at a point of transition. Although through staying at Oak, Abdul kept to what he and the boys knew at a point of great upheaval for the family, he could have kept Naseem at Oak and enrolled Asad at a school closer by. Possibly he was concerned about Naseem's vulnerability as a learner and wanted his brother at the same school to support him. As Richardson and Powell (2011) discuss in their account of international SEND, the family's moral responsibility to protect a young person who had disabilities may have come into play here, a sibling as well as a parent taking up caring roles.   Through stressing masculine constructs of the boys as strong and resilient, Abdul may have concealed concerns about Naseem, not just as a refugee learner but also as needing "educational help".

These hints of concerns around Naseem's learning were also apparent in Abdul and Amira's comparisons of Naseem and Asad's progress as newly arrived EAL and refugee young people. When I asked Abdul what support Asad received, this prompted a comment about Naseem:

Abdul: I haven't been to the school yet; the parents' evening is soon, so during that time I am planning to ask what he [Asad] is good and not good at, I can find out then. He hasn't told me about any personal support that he has been getting. He is better than Naseem because he had better opportunities than him: he started from Year 3, and did Year 4, 5 and 6 and now is in Year 7.

Maha: Now he is Year 7?

Abdul: Yes, he is better than this one because this one started from Year 6, he started the other school without knowledge.

Abdul's focus on Naseem's significant gap in education due the age and therefore the school stage at which he arrived in the UK constructed his needs firmly as an EAL/ refugee learner. By contrast, Amira's answer to my question about how Naseem found the transition to secondary school instead focused on the boys' different social skills to account for individual abilities:

Amira: Asad was better than Naseem. You know, people are different, some can get on well with people, within five minutes, while others find it difficult.

Maha: Asad got on quickly?

> Amira: Yes, Asad got on quickly, this is what I think: I think Asad is doing better.

Her comment that Naseem found it "difficult" to communicate with others compared to Asad being "quick" drew discourses around characteristics rather than EAL, whilst later in the interview when I asked how Amira felt Naseem was performing now, she constructed Naseem as "better" and we asked her to elaborate on this:

> Maha: What has helped him to be confident?
>
> Amira: The teachers [volunteer tutors] that she sent to us and the longer he stayed the school, that is what I think has helped him.
>
> Maha: Staying after school to finish up his work?
>
> Amira: Yes, because as time goes by you don't stand in the same place.

Here time and more study were key resources for Amira, resonating with Qaali and Qadra's narratives. It is possible that Amira considered the length of time in the UK school as having an impact, rather than simply staying behind after school as Maha's comment suggested. Her mention of the volunteer tutor provided by my work may have been to show respect to my role as a project worker, but also indicated the learning she saw within the home, as she rarely attended school meetings. Throughout the interview, Amira insisted that despite his slowness, Naseem was making progress. Abdul's concerns about Naseem's learning were constructed through a masculinised lens around school structures, academic progress and the inaccessibility of the curriculum, even constructing his caring decision to keep Naseem with him through discourses about strength. Compared to this, Amira employed more feminine discourses around emotional wellbeing, relationships and communication.

The ways in which newly arrived EAL/refugee learner identities were co-constructed by both parents around notions of time and ability in the narratives meant that in some senses it was difficult to identify where SEND learner identities might be possible. This reflected the uncertainty around when to assess for SEND with EAL pupils, a question found in both literature, policy and practice as discussed in Chapters 1 and 2. However, as Naseem neared GCSE courses, at the same time as EAL support was being reduced, the EAL, newly arrived learner identity that worked for his parents, and as we have seen in Chapter 5 worked for him, was starting to become less effective. As Pinson, Arnot and Candappa (2011) suggest, SEND learner identities were potentially the only possibility for more support, although it was unclear within the parents' narratives whether this was available to Naseem within school at that point, or whether they knew about this possibility. In the final

section of this chapter, these possibilities for family understandings of SEND support are considered through an analysis of Barre's account of his two nieces, Zaynab and Iqra.

6.2.2 SEND masked and exposed

Zaynab and her family had lived with Barre in their Grandmother's house when they first arrived from Somalia, and when they moved to their own accommodation, he continued to help them with homework on an irregular basis. Nimo, the girls' mother, had faced a lot of family issues since arriving in the UK and knew little English. Barre told me that she often called him to help her understand communication from school and asked him for support in dealing with professionals: he thus took up a language broker and advocacy role. Zaynab performed a gendered, traditional, caring, supportive role for her mother and took a lot of responsibility for the care of her siblings. Barre's role in supporting Zaynab's learning was established through family traditions of maternal uncles being like a mother for the children, and in the absence of their father or the father's family, this role took on more significance. Migratory experiences had also positioned him in an educational support role, as he was the first member of the family to have completed GCSEs and A levels, having arrived in the UK aged 14. He was the only adult family member I talked to in the research who had personal experience of being a pupil in the English education system, however it is important to remember he was not the girls' main carer. The interview took place with me in English in a local café.

Unusually for my study, when I asked how Barre felt Zaynab was progressing in secondary school, he considered her achievement was improving in English not Maths:

Barre: But her English is actually improved. Last year there was a lot of things she couldn't write.

Now she can write, her spellings actually is really well.

His comment "now she can write" compared to "last year" drew on ability discourses that considered a pupil to be either unable or able, so that it was unclear from his account how much progress Zaynab had made. What was evident was that she had left primary school with low levels of literacy after seven years at school, and that in his view whatever intervention the school was providing for her in Year 7 was working very quickly.

In comparison, Barre constructed Zaynab as struggling in Maths:

Barre: So, in that way I, I tried to teach her and that she didn't know some of the Maths she was doing basic stuff it wasn't really there. But the basics that she's doing in Year 7 she

knows it so that bit it's missing, and the basic stuff comes back all the time. Even with A levels when you do something it will come back to you and that will haunt you if you don't know.

His comment that he "tried to teach her" possibly indicated that Barre felt more confident to take up a support role in this subject compared to English. However, it was not easy. The gaps that he identified in Zaynab's knowledge, "it wasn't really there," drew on his own painful experience of needing to know "the basics," emphasised through his repetition. Through powerful language, "that will haunt you if you don't know," he constructed Zaynab's learner identity through the lens of his own difficult educational experiences as a refugee in the UK, despite his relative success in taking A levels and going on to university. There was a sense that he hoped through his support to make these experiences easier for her. Time therefore was constructed as not always providing the gains that you needed: filling in the gaps was also key.

Through his migration Barre had experienced how much time was needed to learn and "catch up" with his peers. When I asked about what schools could do to help, he said more communication and a "different approach" was needed:

Barre: So, the schools when you go there, they just assume that you are one of the people and yeah you have to learn the way things like but it's not really now, it's not at all.

Here, by alluding to the school's assumptions around his identity, "you are one of the people," Barre challenged racialised preconceptions about refugee young people's educational backgrounds, his school not recognising the disruptions he had experienced due to migration and the consequent inequalities he faced. This was pertinent to Zaynab's case as she had missed early years' education and had moved primary schools three times and pointed to the inaccuracies of assumptions that someone who had been in the UK for many years had received all the opportunities they need to make progress. However, despite his concerns about these struggles, when I asked about Zaynab's future achievement, Barre did not seem to show anxiety:

Barre: Umm I'm a really positive person so I would say she will you know I anticipate most of the time that she will get better.

This hope that Zaynab would improve was possibly drawn from his own experiences of progress over time. However, as Barre and his brothers had arrived during secondary school, Zaynab was the eldest in the family to go through the primary system so there was no one with whom to compare her progress within the family. The lack of anxiety may have also been due to gendered, more traditional expectations in the family meaning that Zaynab was expected to attend school and perform as well as she could, but without the pressure to achieve highly for future economic security that was often placed on boys. However, as we will see in Chapter 7, many families had high aspirations for their daughters, as well as expecting them to take up care roles in the home.

When I asked directly about his support for Zaynab's homework, Barre was hesitant:

> Barre: The main sometimes yes, it's her homework she, she says to me that I don't know, and the teacher might put me in detention if I don't do it if I didn't do it and it's about to pass a deadline …. So that's the sort of time I would go there and even if I have something and she tells me that it's kind of like, it's kind of urgent for her, so even if I have something else to do I would go to her and say, "Ok, let's do it."

Barre's account suggested that Zaynab constructed herself as unable, "I don't know," and in danger of punishment in order to engage his help. Thus, Zaynab avoided detentions, conforming to the role of a good pupil, refusing an underachievement and unable identity at school. It seemed that her calls for help resonated with Barre's own experiences of having missed prior formal education, and he positioned himself in a saviour role here, to help Zaynab possibly avoid some of the negative experiences he had. There was also a sense of her mirroring her mother, Nimo's, calls to Barre for support, the urgency of time contributing to her construct of herself as vulnerable. The involvement of extended family members was constructed as important, as Crozier and Davies (2006) argue in their exploration of extended Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage families. However, this placed responsibilities on Barre and the pressure on this young man was also evident, and he was not consistently able to support Zaynab.

Barre's focus in his narrative on time at the intersection of EAL, refugee, generational migratory experiences, gender and stigma around notions of inability acted to close down possibilities that Zaynab might need more "educational help" to progress. It is important also to note here that as he was not her main carer, Barre was not in a position to reflect on Zaynab's overall development and this may have contributed to his lack of anxiety. Whilst taking up a role as a protective uncle who gave her support, he could resist suggestions that she was not able. In her account, Zaynab was careful to maintain her construct of herself as

an independent learner by specifying that Barre only came to help her "if" she needed him. The presence of an extended family member who could rescue her was key in this performance, despite his inconsistent availability. Within her core family unit, Zaynab drew on her negotiations with siblings to construct herself as an independent, progressing learner.

6.2.3 Sibling negotiations around notions of inability

Negotiations of learner identities in the different families were inflected with age, gender, the number of children in the family and the roles taken up by the eldest. Mahmud seemed quite isolated from his sister and much younger brother, his group of male football friends being his focus. Naseem spent a lot of time with Asad, they had experienced the separation from their parents and later migration together and took up roles as "good at" different subjects within their accounts in a supportive way: Naseem for example was reported by Abdul and Asad to be the family expert with ICT. Omar seemed to negotiate the family's comments about his level of reading with resilience whilst maintaining a good relationship with his siblings.   For Zaynab and Iqra, however, their relationships around learning, including with their younger sister Jawaahir, were more evidently problematic in Barre's narrative, and it was here that stigmatised notions of inability and possible SEND learner identities were explored in quite a stark way.

When I told Barre how I had seen Zaynab "help" Jawaahir, her youngest sister, with her homework by doing it for her while I was conducting an interview, this prompted a discussion about their and Iqra's relationships around learning. I have included quite a long section to show his and my hesitancy about discussing what he thought about how all three sisters interacted, both of us aware of the need for confidentiality and the stigmatised, taboo nature of the topic:

Barre: She's told me, yeah, she said, I said to her don't do it, but help her … understand. They… actually compete with each other […] And they make fun of Iqra sometimes. I was there, like, it kind of upsets me, not really but it just raises a bit of concern that's the kind of thing that will.

K: Are they making fun of her because she can't do it or?

Barre: You know put some kind of problem with.

K: Yes.

Barre: Yeah.

K: Yeah.

Barre: Yeah, and no one's perfect.

K: No.

Barre: Actually, sometimes it's, it's a learning curve so some people take a bit longer, some people so to Iqra it's like I know I saw it but I don't say to her you know sit down here you have to do it but you know actually you say you can do it, it's nothing.

K: You encourage her yeah.

Barre: Something like that.

In guiding Zaynab to "help" not "do" Jawaahir's homework, Barre indicated that what I had seen, with Zaynab confidently completing a piece of Year 2 work, was a common occurrence. This, along with the rivalry that Barre constructed here suggested that Zaynab was able to engage more confidently with Jawaahir's schoolwork, and thus take up a successful learner identity in ways that were often foreclosed in school. Although this concurred with Gregory (2001) and Markose, Symes and Hellestén's (2011) findings that older siblings helped teach younger ones, it also this suggested that there were complex learner identity negotiations taking place. This resonated with Volk and de Acosta's (2004) suggestions around the different dimensions in operation within migrant families. In this family, an older daughter's role as a carer opened up opportunities to perform a possible learner identity through teaching the younger one. Although this gave Zaynab an opportunity to feel successful, it also highlighted to me how far "behind" Zaynab was with her learning as I observed how she engaged with Jawaahir's work much more easily than with her own. This raised questions for me about how far notions of SEND were implied given the amount of time Zaynab had been in the UK, along with her disrupted education as a refugee and her need to acquire academic English. Barre, however, focused on Zaynab's completion of the work as reflecting competitive sibling relationships, fitting with his construct of her as able.

In this extract from Barre's interview, the contrast of Zaynab and Jawaahir's sibling relationship with the marginalisation of the middle daughter, Iqra, was constructed by Barre as due to "some kind of problem." His change of tone from emotion, "it kind of upsets me," to control, "it raises a bit of concern," attempted to minimise the extent of these needs. Barre's incomplete reply to my direct question about Iqra's abilities further showed his hesitancy to articulate his concerns. Instead he reframed the issue as universal, "no one's perfect," and used the notion of time drawn from ability discourses, "it's a learning curve so some people take a bit longer." To counter the stigma within the family, Barre instructed Zaynab to be responsible and to look after her sister, rather than bully her, possibly drawing on religious beliefs around the duty to care for those with disabilities. It is important to note

here that Iqra constructed Zaynab as an authority figure who told her and Jawaahir off when they played dangerous games, thus positioning Zaynab as isolated in a different way within the family, with Iqra resisting an academic learner identity and taking up a "play" one instead. Thus, the dynamics between the girls were portrayed as key to their sense of being a learner in all three of their narratives.

Barre's account of how he approached Iqra's homework reflected his construct of her as unable compared to Zaynab, seemingly making no allowance for EAL and refugee learner identities. Criticising an authoritarian response to the problems, "sit down here you have to do it," despite his encouragement, "you can do it, it's nothing," there was a sense of distance between him and Iqra suggesting that he was not actively involved in working with her. In this way he uneasily marked her learner identity as unable and different in comparison with his construct of Zaynab as EAL, refugee and making progress. Possibly he was unsure of how to help Iqra, perhaps as Zaynab was the eldest and in secondary school, she had more homework and detentions that she required help with and Iqra was not constructed as needing so much support.

Constructs of Iqra as unable converged with notions of SEND, whilst her identities as EAL and refugee on which she drew strongly in her own narrative, were hidden. By contrast, although notions of SEND were suggested through Zaynab's attendance at phonics lessons and hinted at in her negotiations of her learner identities within the home, Barre's prevailing construct of her was as a refugee young person who needed time and the right intervention to make progress.

6.3 Converging not just conflicting discourses

In all the narratives, the family members identified the young people's possible need for "educational help" more specifically through their involvement in and knowledge of learning spaces at home or at the madrassah. Through the build-up of trust in the interviews, Qadra and Qaali became noticeably more open about their painful concerns around inability as the interviews progressed, whereas Amira's narrative focussed on the need for more time to adjust and gratitude for the volunteer tutors' help. Abdul viewed structural and pedagogical processes as the barriers for Naseem, whereas Barre focused more on personal development: this may have been gendered responses to a boy and girl, but also could have been due to their different roles in the families and their educational experiences. Notions of the young people as "different" were constructed through drawing on discourses of time, motivation and inability, which sometimes converged with and at other times contested school understandings of progress in learning. Even where the young people were not new arrivals, time was a present hope in constructs of marked EAL and refugee learner identities.

In comparison, progress over time was constructed as a future aspiration within subjectifications of underachievement and inability. Where family, religious and school ability discourses around ability, motivation and underachievement converged, suggestions of SEND were constrained and even foreclosed, whilst notions of EAL and refugee were held onto and overdetermined in other accounts to resist stigma, thus similarly constraining possibilities of SEND.

As Kahin and Wallace (2017) assert, although pre-migratory, gendered parental roles around supporting learning prevailed to some extent there were examples of how these were shifting, but often constrained and even foreclosed through gendered, racialised, classed inequalities around school systems and communication. Considering these roles in the light of SEND, the family members discussed above all conveyed their concern that over and above the inequalities they faced, their roles at home to "push" these young people were not working to some degree. In response, they continued to rely on what they knew, performing a role to care and protect the young people as particularly vulnerable to stigma and recruiting others to help where they felt they could not.   Spaces for change and new understandings were indicated, where family members' desire for more support could engage with notions of "educational help". In similar ways to Allan and Harwood's (2014) exploration of how medicalised approaches to behaviour can be disrupted, possibilities were present. Drawing on a social model of disability and looking at need not behaviour, notions of innate inability could be resisted if this was approached with sensitivity, using non-medicalised language, clear communication, mutual respect and understanding.

Until this point, I have focused on the ways in which notions of SEND were for the most part hidden but possibly present in the young people's negotiations within the family and in their interviews with me, whilst refugee learner identities were more salient. In moving on to look at the ways in which they performed their learner identities with others in school, I focus first on how formalised, identified SEND identities were drawn on at their intersection with gender and refugee with peers and in communication between home and school. Within this, I consider in more depth how far the social model of disability proved a useful resource for these young people and their families.

Chapter 7: School negotiations - insisting on possibility

The next two chapters focus on my participants' performance of their learner identities within school in the context of SEND. In this chapter, I consider how my participants in Rowan Academy constructed the significance of formal SEND identifications with peers and family members. In Chapter 8 I analyse the effectiveness of a quality-first teaching approach to "educational help" for my main participants from both Rowan and those recruited through the charity where I worked where formal SEND identifications were mostly not available or recognised. Highlighting the ways in which the young people took up opportunities and negotiated difficulties, I consider how far their agentic responses worked to gain them recognition as possible learners.

In this chapter I analyse how formalised SEND identifications were negotiated between and amongst peers in the after-school homework club I ran at Rowan Academy once a week over two terms. I then present an analysis of Asha's narrative of her identification as dyslexic at Rowan, how she perceived this as opening up possibilities for her sense of belonging as a learner and her family's response to the concept of SEND. In both these "safer" settings for narrative co-construction (as discussed in Chapter 4), the young people negotiated notions of SEND more openly with me and others than in the classroom. Their narratives conveyed key insights into how they drew on SEND in order to perform possible learner identities, whilst dealing with significant stigma at school and at home. The material collected in the homework club and Asha's narrative complement each other through their focus on notions of possibility around formal SEND identifications in one particular school and offer insights into how a sense of belonging was negotiated around the complexity of their learner identities as Somali, refugee, multilingual boys and girls with SEND. Although there was no permission from these participants to interview family members, Asha's account provides a further piece of the "jigsaw" of data (referred to in Chapter 4, page 100) by exploring in some depth her impressions of how her mother reacted to her identification as SEND, and how she negotiated communication between home and school around this, thus addressing some of the key issues raised in the last chapter.

Chapter 8 then analyses my observations of the lessons to which my main participants from work and Rowan invited me and discussions with the teachers they chose for me to interview. I focus on how the young people negotiated their gendered, racialised, classed learner identities with teachers and peers within lessons where they felt best supported, and in some where they felt they faced significant difficulties. Exploring the ways in which they drew on different aspects of "educational help" within the mainstream school structures and curriculum, the analysis provides insights into how far these young people in four different

schools constructed themselves as possible learners in these specific settings. It considers the extent to which underachieving, EAL, refugee and SEND identities were hidden or available, useful or constraining within these performances, and highlights the ways in which the young people took up agency to negotiate opportunities for transformation and change.

To provide a context for the analysis in Chapters 7 and 8, I first give an overview of my impressions of how the schools I visited organised learning support around EAL, SEND, disadvantage and underachievement for my participants, and how they communicated with families regarding this intervention. There is more detail about Rowan Academy because I spent most time there, whereas I visited Oak Academy (the school where I had taught for seven years) four times, Birch School twice and Willow Academy once.

7.1 Support for learners in school

As discussed in Chapter 1, section 1.4, a focus on Year 7 "catch up" for all those who did not achieve the "expected level" in Year 6 government tests (SATs) was then one of the main strategies to improve standards for all. Furthermore, the pupil premium grant, allocated to all pupils considered to be "disadvantaged" through their receipt of free school meals or if they are looked-after children, was in its early stages (DfE, 2012; Education Skills and Funding Agency, 2018). Schools were able to make their own decisions about how to use funding allocated for this purpose by central government and the impact of this and "catch up" strategies was monitored through published reports and Ofsted (DfE, 2014). Funding for EAL pupils had reduced and was no longer ring-fenced, whilst refugee pupils arriving in the middle of the school year did not receive this funding until the new year started. Schools were newly responsible for the first £6,000 of funding for pupils who received an EHC plan (Council for Disabled Children, 2013; Arnot *et al.*, 2014). Academisation added to schools' control over their finances and decisions about how to manage inclusion and buy in support (Poet, 2012). This flexibility with funding was evident in how the schools I visited structured interventions. There were different ways in which the Year 7 "catch up" strategy and further support for disadvantaged pupils was implemented, as well as variations in how it was operationalised in relation to SEND and/or EAL identification and support allocation at the transition stage into secondary school. Transition was a key point at which many schools had already been providing intervention before the government strategy was introduced.

All the schools I visited used setting for core subjects, and this was reflected in the young people's comments about their aims to move up sets to enable them to achieve. However, Rowan also used a streaming system for Years 10 and 11, meaning that those in the middle stream would be expected to achieve C grades (the "pass" mark set by the government, now a level 5) but not be entered for higher papers where B grades (now level 6) and above were

possible. The bottom stream was categorised as not part of the "mainstream" curriculum and focused on supporting pupils to gain vocational qualifications alongside Maths and English. Oak Academy also had a "vocational" group at GCSE who were not entered for GCSEs and did vocational qualifications and Functional Skills in Maths and English, taught in a separate group.

The SEND department at Rowan Academy had a systematic process for identifying possible learning needs in Year 7 pupils who were not already identified by their primary schools. This involved screening siblings of older pupils who were considered to have SEND and analysing the whole cohort through nationwide SATs test results as well as borough verbal and non-verbal tests. Staff then conducted further tests with pupils who showed discrepancies in these results to identify those eligible for support. The pupils who were thus identified as needing support were given a programme of withdrawal lessons for an hour a week during Key Stage 3 about self-esteem, learning methods and styles, including touch typing. This system drew on the model of "dyslexia friendly" schools advocated by Riddick (2006). There were also specific reading programmes for those still needing this support after Year 7. In Key Stage 4, those pupils formally identified as SEND were mentored and given some in-class support by a designated specialist teacher. Possible limitations with the system used to identify SEND, as Cline (1998) had argued in relation to previous SEND systems, was that formalised testing and assessments were at risk of being monocultural and non-contextualised. There was therefore a risk of misidentifying which pupils were in need of support, particularly those who were from migrant backgrounds. Furthermore, there were issues around using SATs levels to assess need due to the practice of primary schools inflating levels in order to reach government targets (TES, 2014).

In Year 7, specialised SEND teachers taught those who needed more targeted support for Maths and English in small nurture groups: these would include anyone "below" the expected level, therefore not just those identified with possible SEND who needed to "catch up", but also concerns about underachievement. Regarding EAL support, new arrivals had some EAL withdrawal classes, as well as phonics lessons through the SEND department where needed, to help with language acquisition and literacy in English. Those who arrived new in Key Stage 4 were catered for in a separate unit, which in some instances also took on present Key Stage 3 pupils who were considered unable to manage the mainstream curriculum.

At Oak Academy, where I observed Naseem and Ruqiya, the EAL and SEND departments similarly provided different interventions depending on the pupil's level and length of time in the UK. Recently arrived EAL pupils were supported through EAL reading withdrawal groups and in class support. Comments by "Ms Eaves", the SENDCo, suggested that the

EAL staff were resistant to labelling newly arrived pupils as SEND, wanting to give them time to make progress through EAL support in the first instance.   All other Year 7 pupils were screened by the inclusion department through borough and SATs test results, in a similar way to Rowan. Those "below the expected level" were placed in small withdrawal classes two to three times a week for English and Maths, timetabled opposite mainstream lessons and led by SEND staff. As Arnot *et al.* (2014) explain in their study of school approaches to EAL, the prevailing system for EAL pupils in the UK, which Oak seemed to use as well as Rowan, draws on an integration model, where young people at a certain level of English are expected to "catch up" on their own without specific intervention.

The two other schools where I conducted observations addressed attainment concerns in Year 7 by placing all pupils, regardless of EAL stage, in "catch up" intervention if they were below the expected level. In Zaynab's school, Birch, Year 7 and Year 8 pupils who were "behind" had phonics intervention for an hour every day and missed different mainstream subjects to do this. In Omar's school, Willow Academy, Year 7 pupils below the expected level in Maths and English were placed in a small nurture class for the whole year. Following this, continued intervention in Year 8 through a 20-minute daily school reading programme was provided for those who still needed support, as well as some in-class support from learning support assistants.

Concerns around understanding the cause of low attainment and its relation to EAL and SEND were clear in teacher accounts. Even the necessity of designating categories of learner was questioned with labels such as SEND or EAL sometimes being rejected as unhelpful. Instead, different teachers in the four schools used phrases such as "needs", "learning opportunities", "difficulties", "needing support", an approach reflected in the new SEND Code's use of the term "educational help" (DfE and DoH, 2015).   However, at the same time, discrete categories were used to allocate or refuse resources within a school's structure, the application of labels having consequences that impacted power relations regarding the pupils' access to support. As Terzi (2007) argues in her debate about the allocation of SEND support, this raised questions about the fairness of distribution. I discuss this issue further in Chapters 8 and 9.

Although the schools I visited relied on standardised assessment results at transition to gauge achievement and identify possible learning needs, problem solving approaches were also evident in teachers' comments, drawing on their observations of a young person's learning over time to consider how best to teach them or provide support. This fits with recent research in the USA with Latino/a pupils which found that a mix of standard and problem solving approaches worked best in identifying individual learning needs with EAL pupils, thus resisting a "one size fits all" model (Ortiz *et al.*, 2011). However, the teacher

reflections captured in my data did not suggest that SEND assessments were seen to be necessary for several of my main participants. This reflected a disconnect between teacher constructions of learner identities and formal school processes around support, a lack of funding and training around EAL/SEND, and the dominance of deficit, underachievement discourses. Additionally, contrary to findings in refugee literature that teachers focus too much on mental health resulting from past trauma, and not enough on present barriers to wellbeing and learning (Matthews, 2008; Rutter, 2011), the need to understand both past and present refugee experiences and their impact on learning was often lost as teachers concentrated on the pressing need for pupils to achieve. Thus, as Ball, Macguire and Braun (2012) discuss in their exploration of policy enactment in schools, the demands on teachers as well as the way that policies were used around SEND/EAL/underachieving identifications acted to constrain appropriate or sufficient support for some pupils, whilst opening up opportunities for others.

My impression was that the way that family backgrounds and attitudes to education were constructed by the teachers impacted on the ways in which young people were identified as EAL, refugee, SEND or underachieving. EAL and refugee backgrounds were hidden for many of the young people until I specifically asked about this aspect of the young person's learner identity. Where these identities were visible, for instance through an account of meeting a mother who knew little English, this was constructed by some teachers through a deficit lens as disabling or constraining. At times families were pathologised as uncaring, unsupportive or even dangerous, concurring with much of the research into gendered, racialised, classed school discourses around minoritised families discussed in Chapter 3, although other teachers were committed to a non-judgemental, trusting approach which centred on the child's needs. All the teachers I talked with alluded to problems regarding communication with families about their child's learning, however some seemed unaware of strategies that could be used, whereas others were conscious of the need for better training, systems and shared understandings in order fully to support the young person concerned. In three of the four schools, interpreters were not employed, relying instead on family members or other pupils if the young person was not able or available to act as a language broker, even for important discussions about SEND support. This contravenes guidelines about best practice and the need to make reasonable adjustments, seeming to be driven by funding constraints (DfE and DoH, 2015; Frederickson and Cline, 2015).

Given these reflections from my visits to schools, it can be seen that the complexity of my participants' learner identities could be obscured within intervention strategies which relied on separate categories of need. On the other hand, within cohort-wide intervention strategies which catered for anyone considered to be "below" different aspects of a young

person's support needs, aspects such as refugee and EAL could be hidden as the programmes were not flexible enough to respond to individual needs. It must be noted that in my study none of the home-based participants and only four young people in Rowan were formally identified as SEND and therefore could be eligible for specific SEND support. Prevailing school deficit discourses around both the young people and their families, together with a unidimensional, subjective and often hesitant approach to assessment suggested that misidentification of the cause of low attainment for many of my participants was possible or had happened.

I now consider the young people's construction of their learner identities within these school support structures, with a particular focus on their gendered negotiations of formalised SEND identifications as Somali pupils.

7.2 Negotiating recognition with peers around notions of SEND

This section analyses focus group discussions and naturally occurring conversations within the club sessions between the homework club participants, myself and Maha my interpreter. It also refers to my field work diary accounts of sessions that were not recorded.

7.2.1 Introduction to club participants

Ahmed was in Year 7. He had been born in the UK but had spent some time in Kenya, his mother coming from a region on the border with Kenya and Somalia. She told me that Somalis from other regions did not consider her to be "Somali". Ahmed said that he felt that his primary school had held back his achievement by constructing him as unable. He had been identified with dyslexia through Rowan's Year 7 screening programme with the full support of his mother, whose older son also had SEND support in the school. Attending the club as he was very interested in the research, he chose not to do his homework there. Due to family reasons he returned to East Africa at the end of Year 7, so I was not able to interview him and his mother one-to-one or do class observations.

Amran was in Year 9. She had arrived in the UK within the past two years. Her family and the SEND teachers were concerned as she spoke very little, her family at first constructing this as due to her recent arrival, although as I got to know them better, her mother told me that she had been "born different" and had always been quiet. Amran had received some EAL withdrawal lessons in Year 7 but was now not receiving EAL support. She hardly ever had homework, although when she did, she was keen to get support.

Farah was Yusra's older brother. After Yusra came to the club, his mother wanted him to attend as well. He only came once but played a key part in one of the discussions.

Mahmud was the only one of my participants whom I recruited through school but also knew through work. His sister Maryam was invited by the EAL and SEND departments at the start of the field work to come to the club. His mother Qaali then asked if he could come too, and although at that point I was focusing on Years 7 and 8, I agreed. Interestingly, it was Mahmud rather than Maryam who appeared to need learning support, Maryam seeming to only be a point of concern to the school through the behaviour of her friendship group. Mahmud often used football as a reason not to come to club, but when he did, he enjoyed reading cartoon versions of novels, and brought writing homework for English twice. When working with him, I could see that he struggled to structure his ideas.

Said had arrived from Somalia two years before the club started. He was in Year 9 and making good progress. He had received some education in a private school in Somalia and his father was a well-known Qur'anic teacher in the local area. Said did not receive any EAL support in school at this point, but the staff were concerned about how he would access the GCSE curriculum in Year 10 and were considering placing him in the separate unit for new arrivals.

Saleem was in Year 8. He was the only boy and the youngest child in a large family. He was born in London and had been identified as having specific learning needs through the Year 7 screening programme. His father was very supportive of his education and had a good relationship with the SENDCo. He attended a reading programme in Year 8 and told me that he "hated" reading and tried to avoid it. Although he started off quite resistant to attending the club, in the end he turned up most weeks, and started to bring homework at times.

Yusra was in Year 7 and had also been born in London. She was identified as needing extra learning support in Year 7. She came along to the club through Ahmed's encouragement. Although it was not clear what her specific needs were from what she said in the club, Maths seemed to be an area with which she struggled, and Ahmed told the group that she went to "anger management" which she did not refute. Through the field work it became apparent that she and her brother were in fact looked after by relatives, although the family did not want the school to know this.

The Year 7 girls' group

Yusra was good friends with Maryam and two other Somali girls, Hibaaq and Naima, who also came to the club. All four had been born in London. None of them were listed as needing SEND support in terms of learning needs, but all were identified for behaviour intervention, an aspect still covered by the SEND code at that time. During the summer term

of Year 7 they were given a weekly withdrawal group session with a Black achievement mentor, to which they were strongly resistant.

7.2.2 "Being SEND"

As I discussed in Chapter 4, through the chance comment by Hamdi about dyslexia in the introductory meeting at Rowan, Ahmed shared with me and the group about his own identification. Furthermore, our club took place in the SEND room, with posters of famous dyslexic people around the walls and was overseen by the assistant SENDCo, Gill, who had good relationships with many of the parents and whose team's office was next door. Thus, although the focus of the club was on "doing well at school", the setting emphasised the possibility of SEND. A discussion about dyslexia took place in a focus group session several months after the club had started, where we talked about how the young people learned best. Ahmed was not present, and it was Yusra who initiated the topic:

Yusra: I'm not dyslexic.

Saleem: I am.

Farah: Who's dyslexic here?

Saleem: Me.

Maryam: Are you?

Yusra: No.

Farah: No, you're not.

Saleem: I am.

Farah: No, you're not.

Saleem: I am.

Yusra: You can ask them yeah…

Farah: You're in set four for everything.

Yusra: You can ask them, yeah, you can ask them.

Farah: You shouldn't be proud of it.

K: You should be proud of it.

Farah: Being dyslexic.

K: No, you should be proud of it.

Farah: Why?

Saleem: What do you mean why?

<div align="right">Transcript of club focus group, 5/6/13</div>

Yusra's comment about dyslexia here seemed to come out of the blue, possibly provoked by the setting of the club.   Interestingly, this was one of the few times that Saleem contributed to discussions. His assertion here of a dyslexic learner identity was maintained despite strong resistance from Farah, Yusra's brother, who was attending for the first time. This felt significant, as Farah had not been a part of the group previously and so had not been present when this concept was constructed as something more accepted within the homework sessions through Ahmed's self-advocacy. Instead, Farah conveyed an alternative response, that dyslexia was a stigmatised identity meaning low ability.   My intervention, "you should be proud of it," was an attempt to defend the identity work that Ahmed had performed over the preceding weeks, which had possibly also created the space for Saleem to openly identify his learning needs through constructing himself as dyslexic.

A week later, as Ahmed read my transcript of this discussion, he talked about his identity as dyslexic and fiercely resisted Yusra's own claim to dyslexia at this point, refuting her previous denial:

Yusra: Miss, I'm dyslexic I don't know how to write my numbers, I'm dyslexic.

Ahmed: No, don't lie, don't lie, Yusra, don't lie.

Yusra: I used to go with Ms Davies, I mean, yeah, I mean Ms Evans.

Ahmed: Yeah that doesn't count, that's just if you have anger management, if, if, you get angry really quickly and that.

Yusra: No, I'm dyslexic.

Ahmed: I'm dyslexic. … Kathryn, Kathryn, Kathryn I got, I got a level, umm I got a level, I got a level, I got a level, umm … umm I got a level 5.7 in my Science, 4.3 in my, in English and I got a level 6.7 in my Maths.

<div align="right">Transcript of club discussion, 12/6/13</div>

Here Yusra associated any difficulty with learning and her participation in a withdrawal group as meaning that she was dyslexic, in a similar way to Saleem. In response Ahmed subjectified her learning needs as emotional and therefore maybe less important, "that

doesn't count." However, possibly Ahmed was not concerned about Yusra's claim to dyslexia, as he did not challenge her resistance. Instead he may have reacted more to her suggestion that difficulty with Maths was an indication of dyslexia, as this challenged his performance of being an achieving learner as well as dyslexic, "I got a level 6.7 in Maths."

Along with linking withdrawal to dyslexia, the young people often discussed "dyslexic" pupils' achievements, being in high sets, and also having aptitude in non-traditional subjects. Here they aligned their understanding of dyslexia with Ahmed's strong performance of his abilities in Art and achievements in Maths and Science. Thus, they drew on a more positive notion of the term, countering negative subjectifications of weakness around SEND. "Dyslexia" became a contested, fluid term for any intervention that was not EAL, used in the negotiation with their peers to assert possible learner identities. This reflected a strategy that Elliott and Grigorenko (2014) argue can be used particularly by middle class families to engage with notions of dyslexia as a recognised need that is less stigmatised than other labels used for SEND and pointed to the dyslexia friendly strategies employed within the school (Riddick, 2006).

At the end of the club, in a boys' only discussion, I asked whether dyslexia was talked about in this way throughout the school or just in the club, and Ahmed replied:

Ahmed: It's because they like me ... no, it's cos they like me.

K: So why is that? Why, why, …

Ahmed: It's cos of me.

[…]

Ahmed: No because then again yeah what's it people like to say why, why, why are you like this, why are you like that and I said what's it once yeah, I said, "I'm dyslexic," and then people like still keep that in their mind and they bring it in from up a lot.

Boys' focus group 10/7/13

Ahmed's first comment about others liking him resisted a sense of marginalisation as "different." By using "like" to convey recognition, he placed himself at the centre of the others' discussion about dyslexia. However, "I said it … once," suggested that his peers focused heavily on this identity and persisted in constructing him as "other." Thus, he seemed to suggest that notions of SEND were not normalised, just brought into the open. Ahmed then constructed himself as negotiating his place within the group through his personality and friendship, his repetition of "they like me ... they like me" suggesting his

resistance to being stigmatised.   Here, SEND, despite Ahmed's self-advocacy, was constructed as disrupting his sense of belonging within the group, as he constantly had to work for acceptance from a position of being different. When I asked the young people in our last focus group sessions whether the conversations about dyslexia happened in general or just in the group, they said the latter, pointing to how much this identity was still hidden and probably stigmatised within school.

In the discussions within the homework club, Ahmed used the dyslexia label to take up a position as "other" but also "special", positioning himself above others with different needs such as anger management. Whilst Macdonald (2010) in his qualitative study of experiences of dyslexia identification finds that it is learning difficulties that create stigma, not a label, Riddick (2001) suggests that a label can help resist stigma and misconceptions where disability is not evident, and finds along with other researchers that a focus on self-esteem can help those who are identified (Humphrey, 2003; Riddick, 2006; Glazzard, 2010). However, Elliott and Gibbs (2008) suggest that the distinction between those with and without dyslexia creates a hierarchy around learning difficulties. By claiming a dyslexic identity, Saleem and Yusra drew on Ahmed's agentic strategies and sought a slightly less stigmatised position for themselves within the group, although this was resisted by others, leaving them vulnerable in comparison to Ahmed's confident claims. The question for my study was how these SEND learner identities were constructed in relation to their identities as Somali pupils with peers and in the wider school context.

7.2.3 "Being Somali"

As well as being instrumental in the negotiation of what dyslexia meant within the club, Ahmed also challenged what "being Somali" meant.   His family background, from the border of Somalia and Kenya, along with his mixed heritage, constructed him as "different" from the start of the project. In the initial meeting, Hamdi's comments highlighted this:

> One of the boys was singled out for attention [by Hamdi] though, "Are you Somali, you don't look Somali?" The boy shrugged, "My mum is from Somalia, she speaks four languages, but I am not from Somalia, I was born here."
>
> Rowan Academy, Fieldwork diary, 27/2/13

Here Hamdi's response to Ahmed's embodied ethnicity constructed him as not belonging. However, Ahmed's reply challenged this through asserting his mother's identity, her multilingualism proving both her migratory and her lived experiences at the borders of Somalia. His shrug and construct of himself as not "from" Somalia then conveyed the

complexity of migratory identities for second generation immigrants, as well as those from mixed heritage backgrounds. Thus as Ali (2003) discusses in her exploration of "new ethnicities" with young people from mixed heritage backgrounds, Ahmed took up agency by questioning what "being Somali" meant, challenging Hamdi's initial question.

At different points in the club, this aspect of Ahmed's identity was challenged, drawn upon or constructed differently by him as he negotiated his place within the group around notions of SEND and underachievement. A week after the discussion about dyslexia, Yusra initiated a discussion about which of the group attended the "Black club" (their term) where pupils were supported with homework:

Yusra: How come you go to that Black thing?

Saleem: What the Black club?

Yusra: Mm.

Hibaaq: How come you go to the Black club, thing that Black people have to go to?

Saleem: I'm Black.

Yusra: Yeah. *(To Ahmed)* I swear you're Asian.

Ahmed: I'm not Asian.

Yusra: Black people are scheming innit together?

Hibaaq: Da Muslim.

Yusra: Yeah then why are you going to the Black club?

Ahmed: I don't go Black club *(with a Northern accent).*

Hibaaq: If there was an Asian club you would go there too.

Ahmed: Nah, but I'm not Asian.

Transcript of club discussion, 12/6/13

The girls' responses to Saleem's identification as Black suggested that they did not identify as Black and Somali themselves, and pointed to possible gendered identifications of Somali boys as Black (Bigelow, 2008). Furthermore, when Saleem asserted "I'm Black", this seemed to highlight Ahmed's "difference" as Yusra then identified Ahmed as Asian. Yusra then constructed Somali pupils as identifying with other Black pupils, "Black people are scheming innit together?" emphasising racialised and possibly confrontational divisions in the school. The comment about being Muslim may have been a question about being Black

and Muslim, possibly linking back to "scheming", thus drawing on discourses of danger around Muslim pupils. It may have been to identify Ahmed as Asian and therefore Muslim, drawing on racialised discourses which conflated the two (Archer, 2003; Shain, 2011). Although Ahmed refuted suggestions that he went to the "Black club", Hibaaq's assertion that he would go to an Asian club "too" maintained the misidentification. Here the young people conveyed a mixture of discomfort, resistance, curiosity and stigma produced by the school putting on what was seen as a "Black club", raising questions later on in a further discussion about whether the school should target support in this way.

Following this discussion Ahmed then sighed, possibly reflecting how often he had to explain his ethnicity and recounted his family history. This discussion highlighted the complex, contested ways in which the young people took up aspects of their identities as they negotiated a sense of belonging within prevailing gendered, racialised discourses around underachievement (Bigelow, 2008; Phoenix, 2011). Ahmed's embodied identity as mixed heritage challenged what being Somali meant and opened up the debate about this in the club.

As the club was held after lessons in a quiet area of the building, there were not many opportunities to explore how the young people constructed their identity as Somali in relation to their wider group of peers. However, in the middle of one session, a white boy ("KC") came to the door and the girls' response to his question about why they were there conveyed how they negotiated their attendance at a learning intervention by drawing on cool London, Black identities:

Hibaaq: Was'up KC?

Yusra: Hi KC (*to boy who arrives at the door).*

Hibaaq: Somali t'ing here.

(knocking sound).

Yusra: What are you here for?

KC: What're you doing?

Yusra: What do you mean? What are you here for?

KC: You got a beef with me, bruv?

Yusra: Come on then!

Transcript of club discussion, 12/6/13

The girls' use of teenage Black colloquialisms, which they often modified when talking to me as a "teacher", constructed them as local London young people and were drawn on fiercely to resist stigma around notions of underachievement, and/or being labelled as "new" or in trouble due to being with a teacher after school (Phoenix, 2011). Possibly, as the "Black" club was well known, the explanation of a "Somali t'ing", constructing difference through drawing on multicultural discourses around intervention, was acceptable. Furthermore, they may have been drawing on family discourses around community self-help, so that a Somali group, set up in collaboration with parents and the young people, was an expression of positive aspiration, resisting negative subjectifications within school and wider society. Here, as Bigelow (2010a) found in her research amongst Somali youth in Minnesota, this sense of a strong Somali identity was claimed for those who were born in the UK and those who had migrated. So, although notions of being Somali were at times contested within the club, the young people drew on a sense of their common ethnicised identity to assert their position as different but recognised learners within the wider school community, even if this meant acknowledging their take up of support. Yusra's responses here reflected the ways in which she drew on disruptive, even aggressive performances to refute any suggestion of being a "good"/"bad" learner and/or pupil and therefore open to ridicule.

7.2.4 "Being good"

These notions of being good or bad were explored by the girls in the club. They took up very distinct learner identities in school, Amran who was in Year 9 as a quiet, Somali speaking, new arrival with SEND and the friendship group of four Year 7 girls as loud, disruptive, Black, London girls who were constructed as underachieving. When we discussed what it meant for them to be Somali in school these quite binaried, stereotyped positionalities were unsettled.

The Year 7 girls' account of the behaviour withdrawal group in their focus group (without Amran) was fiercely resistant to constructs of them as disruptive. I asked why they didn't like it:

Hibaaq: Because yeah really, we're all Somalis, yeah, we're confidential, yeah, we're confidential, we don't talk about any of our personal life no matter what, and out of all the people they picked the Somali people when they won't talk about nothing. I'm not being rude but they more like the white people and black people that are open about it and, you know, but they picked out the wrong group cos we're silent, you know, we're not gonna talk about my mum.

Maryam: They ask us, "What's the problem with your home life?" Is it any of your business? You're not, we're not gonna tell you.

The girls did not seem to challenge the school's multicultural approach to underachievement here, suggesting that the programme might work for other racialised groups that they constructed as "open". Instead their resistance to the intervention centred on their construct of Somalis as "different", and their role as one of protection and defence of home. This resonated with the gatekeeping roles highlighted by Crozier and Davies (2007), but in gendered ways around protecting family life rather than language and education level. Furthermore, Hibaaq's use of "confidential" exploited a professional term used to discuss safeguarding to refuse the support that the girls felt was inappropriately imposed on them. In Somali communities, difficult experiences of social services intervention have often led families to be deeply suspicious of any questioning regarding home life. Harding, Clarke and Chappell's (2007) research into intergenerational conflict found that maintenance of privacy also links into a strong ethos of discipline within the home and community help that resists outside involvement.

The girls' strong vocal resistance as, at times, the discussion became too heated for me to hear what they were saying, also challenged Valentine and Sporton's (2009) findings in their research in Sheffield that Somali girls performed "modest" identities. When I left the room, which was next to the SEND staff room, Gill, the SENDCo, commented, "Now you see what we are dealing with." This gave insights into the school's construct of this particular friendship group, drawing on racialised, gendered, classed notions of the girls as difficult and uncontrollable. It possibly reflected stereotyped assumptions that they were "going wild" at school in reaction to the religious environment at home (Shain, 2003). Through the discussion, I sensed how the girls resisted gendered school expectations of them as passive, quiet learners and questioned what sort of performances they took up at home.

Contrastingly, Amran's performance of a quiet learner identity did not always mean she was perceived as a "good" pupil. Those in the group who had been in the UK for a long time or who had been born there constructed Said and Amran, who were more recent arrivals, as "fresh" and therefore uneducable or unknowing in gendered ways. In one club session, Amran was singled out as "naughty" for playing a computer game that the others freely accessed. This countered the young people's assumptions about her as passive and innocent, whilst Said gained respect for breaking through the ICT defence system to watch YouTube. It was possible that these gendered constructs intersected with notions of SEND and ability. Said was doing well, had some prior formal education and had some standing amongst the group as his father was a well-known religious leader in the community, class

therefore also being inflected in his performances. By contrast, Gill, the SENDCo, told me that the school were worried about Amran's progress, considering that she may have speech and language difficulties. Her family were also anxious about her not speaking and thus not learning English.

Very quiet in the club, Amran often sat hunched over and whispered one-word answers. She did not engage with the other participants much and neither did they with her. However, as Maha worked with her using Somali, Amran's performance of her learner identity shifted, and the resources we used with her in turn stimulated the other participants to engage in different ways with their identities as Somali. I wrote up my observations of one instance of this in my field work diary:

Talking with Mahmud about stories reminded me that I had some traditional short stories in Somali on my laptop that I thought Amran might enjoy reading. She and Maha sat and took it in turns to read. I popped out of the room for something and when I came back, Amran was smiling broadly. I had never seen her like that before: it was something in one of the stories, Maha said, that had amused her.

[…]

Across the table from Amran and Maha reading Somali tales, the three Year 7 girls, Maryam, Naima and Yusra decided to read "From Somalia with Love" (Robert, 2008) together. Maryam stipulated that if it was "fresh"[6] she would not read it.

[…]

As the girls started, taking it in turn to read out loud, their exclamations were wonderful. "Man, my sister does that." "Oh, don't you know that's just like my mum!" etc. Saleem commented a bit from his long drawn out Spanish homework which he was doing in the corner and the sense of sharing in the group heightened.

Field work diary, homework club session, 1/5/13

In my account of this part of the session, different performances of resistance to learning both from Amran and from the other girls changed as space for them to explore alternative multilingual learner identities became available. For Amran, the recognition of her print literacy in Somali enabled her to perform a more confident, responsive learner identity and to be less marginalised within the group, supporting Bigelow and King's (2014) findings that print literacy is valued more highly than orality and challenging assumptions about her

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[6] "Fresh" is a negative term used to signify those who have recently arrived in the UK.

educational and possibly her classed background. Her learner identity as EAL and multilingual became more prominent and notions of SEND were troubled. For the other girls, disruptive learner identities were unsettled as their identities as Somali young people growing up in London were affirmed, their sense of belonging was heightened, and their families were constructed as normal rather than deviant. As much of the multilingual, multiliteracies literature argues, by exploring with the girls what it meant to "be Somali" not just in terms of language and literacy, but also through recognising their lived migratory experiences, quite marked learner identities shifted and were even transformed (Bourne, 2007; Cummins, 2009; Wallace, 2013). These performances fitted with EAL/SEND studies that find that different learning contexts and the use of the first language are important tools in understanding possible needs for "educational help", and that this also needs to be conducted in non-judgemental, inclusive ways which counter stigma and negative assumptions (Moll *et al.*, 1992; Cline and Shamsi, 2000; Ortiz *et al.*, 2011; López and Mendoza, 2013; Gonzalez, Tefera and Artiles, 2015).

The processes around how social and learner identities are negotiated within a hierarchical system amongst peers as well as in how pupils are seen by teachers are, as Chapter 2 discussed, well researched. Considering these processes from the perspective of refugee, gender and SEND, the analysis of the club data suggests that agency was taken up in different ways to resist positionings of those with SEND as lowest in the peer hierarchy. The dyslexia-friendly strategies employed by the SEND department provided tools for some who visibly received "educational help" to challenge stigma, whilst Ahmed's mixed heritage identity also possibly assisted his work to perform a different but special identity. The "lowest" position, although reserved by the majority of the group for newly arrived refugee pupils, in particular for those positioned at the intersection of gender, EAL, refugee and SEND, was also disrupted through the ways that Amran challenged school rules and her agentic take up of multilingual, literate learner identities. Being "good" and "bad" was therefore negotiated in robust, subversive and fluid ways around what it meant to be recognised amongst peers as a learner and fellow pupil.

If these complex negotiations around being Somali, EAL, refugee and SEND were possible within the safer space of the club, given my findings explored in Chapter 6 about the ways in which SEND learner identities were constrained and even foreclosed within the home, questions remained as to how a young person might take up a formalised SEND learner identity where their family were not experienced with regard to school SEND systems. My last recruit in Rowan, Asha, was willing to share her experiences with me of being identified as dyslexic. It is to her account that I now turn to explore this question.

7.3 Negotiating a dyslexic identity in the "space" between family and school

I recruited Asha to the research through discussions with Ms Squires, her dyslexia support teacher. She agreed to talk with me as long as I did not talk with her mother, as she was still anxious about her family's understanding of her learning needs. She did not come to the club, instead we did one-to-one interviews and she chose Ms Squires, her SEND teacher and Ms Tyler, her English teacher, for me to interview. In this section I present these teachers' accounts of Asha's and her family's response to the dyslexia identification alongside Asha's account in order to consider in depth how this formal process was constructed, what it meant for her sense of belonging as a learner in the school, with her family and within the teachers' communication with home.

Asha was in Year 10 at this point. She had arrived in the UK via a Middle Eastern country when she was in Year 3. Her mother had married again in the Middle East and she had three younger siblings. The family spoke Somali and Arabic at home, but she told me she always spoke English. She recollected a painful time of being subjectified as failing in primary school, particularly around the Year 6 SATs, responding by withdrawing and refusing to work. In contrast, in retrospect she constructed the identification of dyslexia when she got to Rowan Academy as a transformational point in her learning.

However, Asha said that she resisted the SEND support on offer until a parents' evening in Year 9, when her mother, Faisa, who she said did not understand the concept of dyslexia, advised her to accept the help. From this point on she constructed herself as taking up all the support she could. At the end of Year 9, Ms Tyler, her English teacher, had advocated for her to be placed in the middle stream, and Asha felt that this had further enabled her to make progress. At the time of the interviews she was seeing her grades rise, although she still struggled in some subjects where she felt the full support she needed was not available. The quotes analysed here come from one interview with Asha (18/3/14 at school) when I asked her to tell me her experiences of being identified as dyslexic.

7.3.1 Recollecting the painful past

Asha constructed her past learner identity within her family in negative terms. Recollecting being subjectified as lazy and behind her much younger siblings, she said she used various tactics to avoid reading aloud in the mosque and kept quiet about her struggles at primary school. When Rowan sent a letter home about her reading age, she said her mother, Faisa, thought she "had the mental ability of a six-year-old child." Thus, family discourses around disability, and within this, particularly stigmatised notions of learning disabilities, were constructed as dominant in her home and reinforced by the school's written communication, medicalised language converging with family understandings. As with parents' accounts

analysed in Chapter 5, Asha constructed her mother's response to her concerns about her achievement as supportive when she employed a tutor to help her at home, who she said she found helpful. This keenness from both parents and young people to access as much help as possible in order to achieve was a key finding in Harding, Clarke and Chappell's (2007) report into intergenerational conflict in Somali families. In my study this also seemed to be mostly seen as a point of mutual agreement between generations, despite the stigma around notions of inability. This was possibly as tuition is so widely accessed by families, although there were hints from some participants that they had too much tuition at times.

7.3.2 Advocating for a different learner identity

At the point of her identification as dyslexic, Asha constructed herself in retrospect as a self-advocate with her family:

> But then I went home, I told my mum, but my mum didn't really understand the word dyslexic, but then I figure out why didn't they tell me in primary school? Why did they tell me now? 'Cos now that I was shocked 'cos I am dyslexic.
>
> First one-to-one interview with Asha, 18/3/14, Rowan

At this point in her account, Asha's mother, Faisa, not understanding "the word dyslexia" was key in foreclosing the possibility of a different learner identity within the home, thus maintaining a subjectification of inability. At the age of fifteen, Asha's recollection of her struggles in primary school refuted an EAL, refugee identity and replaced it with unidentified SEND. There was a sense in her emotional response of shock that this new identity was difficult to negotiate: at school there were different, potentially more supportive notions around her learning to get used to, but the disconnect in the communication between school and home constrained her opportunity to explore this at home within a supportive environment.

Over time, Asha constructed these negotiations between home and school as becoming easier. She recollected that Faisa's response to her learning needs shifted once she attended a parents' meeting and learnt about Asha's resistance to help from the dyslexia support teacher, Ms Squires:

> Asha: But I used to hate it I used to complain to her [Ms Squires], I'd be like I don't want to be here, I don't want to do it, it's just too boring and I remember parents' evening she told my mum that I just don't, she told her I were embarrassed being there and my mum said, "You might just take the help people give you as in primary school they didn't do that." But then I started to think about it and start taking it and start doing it.

K: Ok so that that sort of helped you change your attitude a bit?

Asha: Yeah it did and the "type to learn", it did help me become a nice typer.

<div align="right">First one-to-one interview with Asha, 18/3/14, Rowan</div>

Asha constructed her mother and Ms Squires' meeting as pivotal in her acceptance of a SEND learner identity. As Ms Squires recognised Asha's struggles with stigma, her mother responded by performing a supportive, guiding role. Although Faisa may still have been constructing the issue as Asha's inability to learn, her encouragement of her to accept the SEND intervention meant that to some extent home and school were united in their support for her learning. Being a "nice typer", in an intervention that she previously fiercely resisted, signified Asha's acceptance of support.

Although Glazzard (2010) found in his research with young people with dyslexia that an identification helped pupils' self-esteem, Asha's account suggested that the negotiations around stigma at home, together with her role as a self-advocate and language broker with her family, had initially constructed significant barriers to her acceptance of this label, and more than that, the resources that accompanied it. The role as language broker was something difficult and constraining for her at that point, as she tried to manage different constructs of learner identities within conflicting discourses, and communication with the family was therefore not resolved through her attempts to explain the school system.

7.3.3 Deficit views of the family's response

The teachers' initial impressions of the family also suggested that communication around SEND was not easy. Ms Squires focused as Asha had done on terminology:

Ms Squires: And I think you know as the years have gone by and we've talked about it and having met Mum as well it has become apparent to me that there is, that they don't understand or not they don't understand but there is no word in Somali for dyslexia, so therefore it's not really something that's recognised as a, as a condition.

<div align="right">Interview with Ms Squires, Rowan Academy, 23/4/14</div>

Correcting her comment about the family "not understanding" possibly showed an awareness of how Ms Squires was considering the family's understanding through a cultural deficit lens, drawing on a binary of western, progressive, scientific knowledge versus non-western, unenlightened attitudes. Her account here also suggested that parents do not develop and change over years. In using the term "condition" and a label, Ms Squires

constructed dyslexia within a medicalised model of disability, conforming to prevailing understandings both in the UK and Somalia of SEND as a problem located within the person. Possibly her attempts at explaining dyslexia therefore corresponded with family worries about "mental abilities". Thus, family and school discourses around disability intersected to further position the young person as "other", conforming to findings in the analysis of family narratives in Chapter 6.

In Ms Squires' recollection of a more recent parents' meeting, she talked about her view of the continued difficulty over family understandings of SEND, and told me that a cousin who was in the sixth form had come to interpret for Faisa, continuing to draw on a deficit view of the family attitude to Asha's learning:

Ms Squires: Umm and he sort of helped translate a little bit which was interesting because it showed me that she didn't trust Asha to translate […] Umm and yeah, I mean umm yeah, I found that quite interesting because I think she feels that Mum doesn't really listen to her on that level. She's very protective of her mum. She wouldn't be you know she wouldn't want people to think badly of her mum. But I do think that she feels not very well supported in that area and I suppose that is potentially a cultural thing in that area as well. I've always thought and so I've always had that in mind working with that if you like the cultural differences.

Interview with Ms Squires, Rowan Academy, 23/4/14

Ms Squires' assumptions that Faisa bringing someone to interpret was a negative not a positive action constructed the mother-daughter relationship as distant or difficult. Here issues around the young person or family members acting as language brokers in discussions about SEND were hidden as she constructed the communication problem as generational. Furthermore, the family were constructed as untrusting and damaging to Asha's sense of herself as a learner. Ms Squires' drawing on a cultural lens at this point possibly pointed to a realisation of the complexity of the situation that she had initially judged as being only about language. As well as the school not using interpreters, this cultural lens foreclosed opportunities for staff at the school to engage with family understandings of Asha's learning needs, so that they constructed the problem of understanding dyslexia as located within a deficit view of the family. The work to gain understanding and recognition was instead performed by Asha.

7.3.4 Resisting ability discourses

Asha's recollection of the same parents' evening explored her performance of this role:

K: Mm and do you think she [Faisa] understands a bit more about what dyslexia is or does she still not really get that or…?

Asha: Well in parents' evening.

K: How have you dealt with that?

Asha: Like a couple of weeks ago Ms Squires told all my teachers told them I was dyslexic and now I try and explain they said that she needs help then more than everyone else but like she's capable of things and now she has to look them than before, like before she just thought I was lazy and I didn't want to do work.

K: Yeah. Oh good, so it's sort of, she's learning alongside of you really.

Asha: Yeah, she knows I get help and stuff.

First one-to-one interview with Asha, 18/3/14, Rowan

This time, in order to explain dyslexia, Asha constructed herself as performing a language broker and self-advocacy role not by interpreting the word, but through describing how it affected her. Interestingly, she talked about herself in the third person, distancing herself from the explanation she provided to her family. Her account of how her teachers presented her learner identity as needing help but also "capable" drew on a social model of disability and thus helped to challenge negative, stigmatised perceptions of her as unable. Here possibly the school's focus on self-esteem, as dyslexia scholars argue, along with her maturation as a learner may have assisted this effective negotiation (Riddick, 2001, 2006; Glazzard, 2010).

Furthermore, there was a shift inferred in Faisa's response to her learner identity, "now she has to look them than before", "has to" suggesting that Asha's confidence in performing an achieving SEND learner identity at school was helping to overcome her anxiety about how her family perceived her. Here then Asha's agentic self-advocacy was constructed as more effective once she and the teachers moved away from trying to interpret terminology. Together with this, Asha's understanding of family discourses around ability, "she just thought I was lazy," helped her to negotiate a more acceptable learner identity with her mother. Thus, it was not only the language broker and self-advocacy role that needed to be considered in order for home and school effectively to communicate Asha's needs, also the discourses that were drawn on could either mark or resist the stigma around notions of dis- and in- ability.

7.3.5 Recognising complexity

These roles that Asha performed with her family drew on her identities as Somali and multilingual, which seemed hidden in the teachers' accounts of her learning. I therefore asked Ms Squires how Asha's migration background impacted their decision about dyslexia:

> Ms Squires: Umm no I think we were a little bit unsure about her to start with and we knew that you know she didn't speak English at home […] I think she'd been here four years, so we felt …
>
> K: So, you felt that was enough, yeah?
>
> Ms Squires: And I mean the issue is whether or not they speak English at home […] I am not saying people should be speaking English at home but it's, it's, it does definitely have an impact.
>
> Interview with Ms Squires, Rowan Academy, 23/4/14

Being "unsure" about Asha's learning needs centred for Ms Squires on whether Asha had developed her English language skills sufficiently for this not to have been the reason for her low achievement. Living in a multilingual home was constructed as constraining Asha's progress in English, the "impact" being negative not positive, although, as above, Ms Squires did not want to appear to be judgemental. Furthermore, Ms Tyler, Asha's English teacher, told me that she had not known of Asha's EAL and refugee background when she first taught her: the complexity of her learning needs had been obscured at this point. These two accounts seemed to point to an either/or approach to SEND/EAL identifications by teachers, with lack of fluency and literacy being seen as a family centred problem, whereas SEND was something which could be separately identified, aligning with Elliott's (2014) arguments that dyslexia is separate from "poor literacy".

In contrast to this sense of an initial binaried response by the school to notions of EAL and SEND, once a SEND learner identity had been established, Asha's identity as EAL/multilingual with her peers was constructed by Ms Tyler, her English teacher, as instrumental to her progress. Our preceding discussion about the school's use of sixth formers as interpreters may have prompted Ms Tyler to recall Asha's role with the other Somali pupils in the class when I asked about her progress:

> Ms Tyler: Definitely like I think towards more into Year 9 her confidence grew and also she realised I think from her levels and from being a bit more self-aware that she was ahead of some of the others and some of the others were also in her tutor group and she, she, has a very kind nature about her anyway, but she's also incredibly gentle and, and, softly spoken

and so by the end of Year 9 she was helping a lot of the other students. Especially we had some new some children who joined us like some casual entrants in Year 9, some Somali[an] kids who didn't speak much English and she was very helpful with them, um and we praised her for that a lot as well because she made our jobs so much easier, by you know when you're dealing with one child and you know full well that you can leave another child with someone like Asha and she won't do it for them, she will talk them through it and she'll help them and she was yeah by the end of Year 9 she was a godsend to that class.

<div align="right">Interview with Ms Tyler, English teacher, Rowan Academy 12/6/14</div>

Due to the school's system of placing new arrivals with little prior formal education in the bottom set with SEND pupils, Asha could draw on her often hidden multilingual identity and her experiences as a newly arrived refugee pupil to perform a helper role.   Using characteristics such as "softly spoken", "kind", "gentle", Ms Tyler constructed Asha's role in the class as due to "feminine" characteristics not just her identity as Somali, this transformational performance being described through an almost angelic discourse, helping not just herself and other pupils, but the pressurised teachers as well. As I discussed regarding Amran in the homework club (section 7.2.4), where multilingual literacies were drawn on in class, fixed notions around inability and of being either SEND or EAL were unsettled. Furthermore, in similar ways to negotiations around hierarchies in the club, being SEND was constructed as less stigmatised than being a new arrival so that Asha was able to perform a more confident learner identity, using her more advanced level of EAL to negotiate this position.

By the end of the field work, when I interviewed Ms Tyler, Asha's grades had gone up due to the provision of a scribe for examinations (for which she was eligible due to her SEND identity), and when I asked Ms Tyler about home support for Asha, she felt that communication with Faisa had improved as a result of this achievement:

Ms Tyler: It's been better this year because Tania [Ms Squires] does scribe for her so her levels are far more reflective of what is going on in her head than what she would necessarily get if she wrote that for herself. So, I find I can say things like in her last controlled assessment she got a B and that makes Mum really happy and it makes Asha really proud.

<div align="right">Interview with Ms Tyler, English teacher, 12/6/14</div>

The positive responses from both Asha and Faisa in Ms Tyler's account suggested that, once SEND support enabled Asha to "fit" within the standards agenda and her family's expectations, negotiations over what dyslexia meant were not so important. However, when I asked Asha how her mother felt about her learning now, she was still anxious about the expectations placed on her:

> Asha: … cos if she wants me like to be getting As and Bs after all she knows I'm dyslexic. And then but then she if I made her sit in a class and take the exam, I don't think she would be it would hard to understand where I am coming from. But it's just that they want their child to be seen like oh yeah, my child got a B, and A.
>
> First one-to-one interview with Asha, 18/3/14, Rowan

Faisa's high aspirations for Asha were constructed by Asha as over-demanding, produced through her need to negotiate peer pressure and stigma within her community. Although Asha suggested that Faisa would understand her situation if she swapped places with her, this imagined scenario pointed to her mother's lack of formal education and lack of experience of difficulty in learning. Thus, despite some progress, family and wider community understandings of achievement and SEND continued to impact Asha's sense of herself as a possible learner. It is interesting to compare Asha's account with Zaynab, Iqra and Ruqiya, none of whom talked about this sense of pressure. As discussed in Chapter 3, research with the Somali community shows that varied family situations and experiences produced a range of attitudes to the girls' achievement, and the fact that Asha was older than the other girls in the study very possibly accentuated the pressure on her to succeed (Ali and Jones, 2000; Harding, Clarke and Chappell, 2007; Mohme, 2014).

7.4 Persisting with possibility

Asha's account and Ahmed's negotiations with his peers in the club reflected debates by special education, disability and inclusion scholars around how to conceptualise disability using the social model, as discussed in Chapter 1 (Shakespeare, 2006; Reindal, 2009). For Ahmed there was a keen sense of impairment, or natural variation, which he constructed as not hindering his achievement in core subjects once identified, and even contributing to his success in other areas. Asha focused on barriers, being as "good" as other learners, but needing more help, drawing on this understanding to try to bridge the gap between home and school understandings of her learning needs. Whatever their individual take-up of the social model, the result was a determined insistence that difference did not mean deficit. Through Ahmed's negotiations within the club around these understandings, the term dyslexia was taken up by other participants who received SEND support to refute peer as

well as school and societal notions that SEND corresponds to inability. However, this was not extended to Amran, suggesting the continued prevalence of gendered, classed, racialised, ableist hierarchies around SEND, particularly at its intersection with refugee. These performances highlighted the need for all pupils, whatever labels were attached to them whether SEND or others, to access ways of negotiating possible learner identities at a point of multiple intersectionalities where difference is valued and not derided. It also emphasised the importance of peer negotiations around learner identities, and the need to create spaces for discussion and positive recognition around the complexities inherent in notions of difference.

Asha's narrative adds significantly to findings in Chapter 6 around how possible learner identities for Somali young people with SEND can be constrained when positioned at the convergence of school and family ability discourses. The analysis moves the argument on to show that where a social model of disability is appropriately explained and employed, there are spaces for more productive mutual understanding between home and school. Despite this, at home and at school the young people had to work hard at insisting on their identities as SEND but not unable within prevailing deficit discourses around dis- and in-ability. From the teachers' perspectives presented here, the ways that SEND and being newly arrived intersected were still a point of deliberation. This meant that the potential for SEND identifications was heavily constrained around deficit views of family language practices. Asha's complex identities were more readily embraced by these teachers after her identification as dyslexic, rather than before, only then broadening the ways in which she could negotiate a sense of fitting in.

In the next chapter, I consider spaces which were in some senses less "safe" for negotiations of SEND learner identities than in the club and the supportive teacher-pupil relationships analysed above. Analysing co-constructions of their learner identities with teachers and peers within mainstream lessons where SEND was mostly not formally identified and/or recognised, and where refugee identities were either hidden or exposed, I consider the ways in which these young people worked hard within these spaces to insist on a sense of belonging, and suggest how far their performance as Somali boy and girl learners around notions of "educational help" were successful.

Chapter 8: Not disregarded but misregarded?

The young people's accounts of their learner identities, collected both at home and at school, conveyed that they wanted to be recognised as belonging, as being "possible" learners within the curriculum and standards agenda, to be challenged and enabled to make progress. Where there were difficulties, they wanted the teachers to help them access the work without being exposed, to understand their educational backgrounds and encompass the complexity of their learner identities. There was a suggestion that disorganisation was sometimes used strategically to negotiate difficulties with learning as well as to "fit in" with peers. Often the young people took up prevailing gendered, classed, racialised underachieving learner identities to hide their struggles in ways that refuted stigma. SEND learner identities, whether or not these were formalised, were drawn on by many of my participants within supportive environments to increase their sense of achievement. Where these learner identities were not available, or where specific needs were not addressed through an intervention or a teaching approach, difficulties were evident. The young people's accounts also reflected the need for clear, fair strategies to address the causes of disruptive behaviour and protect them from stigma, bullying and racism so that they could learn effectively. Within this, they wanted their peer learning to be recognised as potentially constructive and not always distracting. There was a sense of determination but also vulnerability in these accounts.

It was with these understandings of learner identity negotiations already partially formed in interviews with my main participants and through my initial analysis of the homework club data that I approached observations of the lessons to which I was invited and discussions with teachers whom the young people nominated. The following analysis of my written recordings of these observations, field work diary extracts and discussions with teachers considers how far my participants were constructed within these narratives as negotiating a sense of possibility within the mainstream curriculum at the intersection of refugee, gender and notions of SEND.

8.1 Negotiating recognition at the margins

I start with Zaynab's choice of a Humanities class at Birch School that she felt was a positive lesson, to consider how far the reading to learn that was employed through many schools' Year 7 catch up strategies, and that she reported to be successful for her, played out in the mainstream context.

Out of a class of 25, 14 boys and 11 girls, there were two white boys, one with a white learning support teacher focusing on him. There were one white and two Somali girls, the latter being the only ones wearing hijabs. The rest of the class were from African Caribbean,

African or Asian backgrounds. Zaynab was sitting on a table with a white boy called Stuart, a black boy called Karl who had a young black woman assigned to him as a teaching assistant, and Muna, a Somali girl. Muna's work showed that she was more able to engage in the level of literacy needed in the class than Zaynab but was still working at a fairly low level. Mr Lowe, the teacher, was a young black man with an encouraging, firm but jokey manner that engaged the class well with the task.

Zaynab wrote hunched over her book so that no one could see, suggesting an attempt to hide which was in marked contrast to her brightly multi-coloured hijab, compared to Muna's plain blue one. After a starter focusing on a brainstorm of key words (but with no check on meaning), the learning objectives were read out, one of which Mr Lowe asked Zaynab to do. Then the task was to create a group leaflet about the topic they had just completed. At this point, Zaynab did not take part until the teacher intervened:

Mr Lowe came over to our table and asked if everyone knew what they were doing. Zaynab said she didn't, whereas the others all did. Stuart had sorted things out with Muna, Karl had been directed between the teaching assistant and Stuart, but Zaynab had been left out of the discussion and had also not seemed to have the confidence to ask what she should do. It was noticeable that the teaching assistant focused on Karl not Zaynab. Mr Lowe agreed with Zaynab that she should write about climate change, but she explained that she had not been in the class the week before. This was due to her extra reading classes and could have been due to absence through illness as well - it was not clear. Mr Lowe looked back through her book and found a chart on renewable, non-renewable and sustainable resources and suggested she copy that out for the magazine. He asked her to read out the table and prompted her to sound out words when she struggled, then praised her. Mr Lowe then agreed with the rest of the group that writing this up was Zaynab's contribution. Zaynab pointed to the stuck in images in her book and asked how to do those, and Mr Lowe suggested she could draw them herself.

Zaynab, Humanities observation notes, Birch School, 12/3/14

Zaynab's rejection of Mr Lowe's initial suggestion to write about climate change used absence to explain her lack of understanding and/or literacy. My notes at the time suggested that this marked her as a weak learner, either through SEND or illness. However, this tactic also reaffirmed her construct of herself as able to learn and that it was only attendance which was hindering her. By performing the act of reading, then copying or drawing, even though with limited understanding, she was constructed as some sort of learner by the teacher and her peers. It was not clear whether she understood the

vocabulary needed for the task or the concepts within the topic, however her struggle to read words recorded in her own book suggested that the learning in that lesson had not been completely successful: her learner identity as EAL and refugee around disrupted formal education and lack of print literacy was thus implied but not addressed specifically at this point.

Although Zaynab's Somali identity was recognised through the seating plan by placing her next to Muna, this pairing did not seem to be productive. Zaynab also told me later that they spoke in English not Somali, thus avoiding the stigma around a newly arrived EAL learner identity.   Wallace's (2013) warning that buddying can narrow not open up opportunities for learning is useful here, as the two girls did not help each other and were possibly further subjectified as unable to learn through their pairing. Despite her body language conveying unease, Zaynab's choice of a multi-coloured hijab appeared to suggest that she resisted notions of EAL, Somali, Muslim girls' passivity highlighted by both refugee and Muslim scholars, drawing attention to her individuality and femininity in contrast to the more plainly dressed Muna (Rutter, 2003a; Shain, 2003). Constructing herself as an urban, London, Muslim young woman, it is possible that, as Archer, Hollingworth and Mendick (2010) discuss, Zaynab used the scarf to negotiate a sense of recognition as attractive within a context where her identity as a possible learner was highly constrained and even foreclosed. Zaynab's choice of hijab therefore held many significances as she performed both visibility and invisibility in her negotiations of belonging within the class.

It was notable that boys who were at risk of disengagement were fully focused on in this lesson compared with Zaynab: a white boy and an African boy had one-to-one learning support, and one African Caribbean boy was carefully managed by the teacher to ensure that he was engaged and not disruptive. Boys also performed gendered, classed, racialised identities as leaders. Zaynab told me in a later interview that Stuart was "like the one who helps everyone on the table all the time." However, even he did not interact with Zaynab until Mr Lowe intervened. Here the hierarchies around learner identities both as successful and SEND were constructed as highly gendered, classed and racialised. As Archer, Hollingworth and Mendick (2010) found, boys attracted the focus whilst girls were to a large extent ignored, possibly assuming that quietness meant that they were learning. In retrospect, I wondered if the rest of the group were expecting me to support Zaynab, even though I had sat a little way from the table and had studiously written notes, performing my role as an observer.

The focus on reading to learn skills was seen in this lesson to conceal Zaynab's complex learner identities, fitting with research by both multilingual and EAL/SEND scholars about the problems with this approach for these groups of learners (García and Tyler, 2010; Wallace,

2013; González and Artiles, 2015). In fact Zaynab's attendance at a reading programme possibly obscured these needs for the mainstream teacher as well as meaning she missed lessons and therefore the intervention potentially acted both to include and also to exclude her from learning (López and Mendoza, 2013). Furthermore, the teacher being "kind and approachable", although important as much of the literature on refugee pupils asserts, did not open up opportunities for Zaynab to take up a possible learner identity (Ferfolja, 2009; Oikonomidoy, 2010; Hastings, 2012). As Keddie and Mills (2012) discuss, the "saviour" role on which the teacher drew, and was almost forced into due to the narrow pedagogical focus on reading to learn, reinforced gendered, racialised constructs of Zaynab as a weak, passive, EAL, Muslim girl. This finding contradicted Zaynab and her uncle's assertion that the reading programme had made a substantial difference to her progress, that she did not need more support than that at school and emphasised her marginalised positionality within school.

8.2 Negotiating standards

This finding called into question how far my wider participants were able to negotiate the mainstream curriculum, particularly within literacy heavy subjects, where reading was identified as a cause for concern. The fact that most of them said they preferred practical subjects and Maths suggested that subjects with less print literacy demands were more accessible. The two lessons that Naseem chose for me to observe, ICT as his favourite where he felt he could do well with a helpful teacher, and English where he liked the teacher, but the lesson was hard, challenged these assumptions.

In ICT, although performing a willing learner, Naseem was constrained in similar ways to that suggested with regard to Zaynab's Humanities class through not understanding vocabulary, low literacy and isolation from his peers. He negotiated these constraints in similar ways to Zaynab through his relationship with the teacher, his ability to copy others and slowly type up text written for him by the teacher and through his interaction with the computer. Within a mostly male, mixed ability class, the minority group of white and Asian heritage boys were set a challenging extension task, whilst the "disruptive" black boys went quickly onto games once they had finished, and the girls were not given any attention. This suggested gendered, classed, racialised constructs of what it meant to be an achieving learner in ICT which possibly further constrained Naseem's learner identity. I wrote in my field work diary:

I shuddered to think how Naseem copes in a more literacy-based lesson. The teacher was kind and approachable, though, and I could see why Naseem felt it was a safe lesson for me to observe.

Naseem, ICT observation field work diary, Oak Academy, 6/2/14

My reflection on Naseem's learner identity focused on the problem as within the young person. As Tangen and Spooner (2008) found in their exploration of misidentification of SEND in EAL pupils, I had looked through a deficit lens for a moment, ignoring the context of the lesson I had just watched and the teaching methods that were employed.

By contrast, in his English lesson a month later, I observed Naseem perform a concentrating, engaged learner, thus exposing my misjudgement, however there was still a huge gap between his stage of literacy and the demands of the curriculum. The class was a bottom set, made up of ten boys and five girls; there were only two white pupils and the rest were Black and Asian heritage. The task was to read a section of "Blood Brothers" and analyse how social class was presented. My field work diary captured my impressions of his performance:

> … how well Naseem studied during the lesson, reading along on his own when they read the text of "Blood Brothers" out loud, offering to give an answer on the board, not being distracted by the boys chatting and swapping hand cream behind him ... However, Naseem's answer on the board was the one that had been heavily discussed as a group, and he had not tried to find more than that one, so no sense of development and challenge to do something on his own. I felt the independent reading was probably too much for him and wondered how much he just picked up verbally.
>
> Naseem observation of English, Oak Academy, fieldwork diary, 20/3/14

The shift in my account from Naseem's engagement with the lesson to how far his work was constrained reflected how difficult I felt it was for him to make progress, even within a class with careful differentiation, a focus on discussion and teacher support. His struggles with pronunciation, something I missed out in my observation notes due to my concerns around labelling his needs, heightened the unease I felt, as this further subjectified him as unable within the class. Added to this, my use of the term "just picked up verbally" highlighted how vital I felt Naseem's print literacy skills were for his possible achievement. However, when I asked Naseem in the next interview what he was enjoying about English at that point, his focus on talk resisted this construct of him as constrained through his reading level and possible speech and language needs:

> Naseem: Reading books and talking about it. We don't know the lines which part like we talk about the words and that phrases and how the author writes and […] I wrote about how um the author presents Mr Johnson. Yes, you had to use a lot of PQ [point, quote], five of them.
>
> Naseem (with Asad), third interview at home, 26/4/14

Naseem conveyed how important talk was for him in engaging with the text, "we don't know the lines which part," indicating that he and his peers could not discuss what they did not understand. The class's identity as having low literacy, producing the need for discussion about meaning, opened up opportunities for Naseem to explore language, drawing on his mostly hidden identity as an EAL, multilingual learner. Furthermore, in using English examination terms such as "how the author writes", "the author presents" and "PQ" (point quote), Naseem constructed himself as an able learner engaging with the demands of the standards agenda. However, this comment also showed that the class were not asked to write "explanations" of the point and quote, which was required for a "pass" at grade C. In fact, in my observation notes I recorded how some of the pupils verbally analysed the text to a very high level but were sometimes silenced by the teacher's insistence on keeping to the task, gendered, racialised, classed low expectations of this bottom set constraining recognition of their abilities (Gillborn and Mirza, 2000). Thus, despite his performance of a progressing learner being made possible through the talk to learn strategies employed by the teacher, which Wallace (2013) argues multilingual and refugee pupils need, Naseem's achievement was also constrained through school setting systems which were constructed in response to the demands of the standards agenda.

In the interview after this observation, Naseem went on to tell me the whole story of Blood Brothers, including some quotes learnt by heart, again challenging my assumptions about his learning in the class. However, in his account he missed out the point that the two main characters were brothers. Possibly, the teacher, in not recognising Naseem's (and others') learner identities as Muslim had not ensured that the meaning of "brother" in the play was recognised as biological.

The comparison of these two different lessons suggested that it was not just print literacy, but pedagogical strategies around talking to learn and a recognition of diversity with whole class differentiation which could open up opportunities for Naseem to perform a possible learner identity. However, it was Naseem's development in his behaviour as a learner that was constructed by Ms Andrews and Naseem as the cause of his progress. In my field work diary, I recorded my conversation about Naseem with Ms Andrews at the end of the lesson:

Ms Andrews commented that he had been very proud about me coming to the class and had told her, "Kathryn's not coming to watch you teach, she's coming to watch me." Ms Andrews told me that she had been teaching Naseem since he had come to the school at the start of Year 7 and she said she felt that this year he had really changed his way of studying and was getting on well. She said when he first came, he did not know how to behave in school or how to study. She was really pleased with the change she had seen this year.

Naseem's pride at the observation reflected his keenness to be constructed as a possible learner, by me as researcher and project worker as well as by his teacher. Although Ms Andrews' comment constructed him as making progress as he got older, there was an inference that time spent in a formal school in the UK had shown him how to be a learner. I felt this possibly negated his past learning experiences and the post migratory stressors he experienced around fitting in. An understanding of these at their intersection with SEND may have highlighted more complex reasons for his struggles (Matthews, 2008; Mills and Keddie, 2012).

However, when I asked Naseem in the next interview what he thought had helped him make progress in English, he referred straightaway to his behaviour, concurring with Ms Andrews' comment:

Naseem: More concentrating in class.

K: What's helped you concentrate?

Naseem: Before like I never used to like concentrate … talking in the classroom.

K: What's made you concentrate now do you think?

Naseem: I said to myself.

Naseem (with Asad), third interview at home, 26/4/14

Naseem's strong assertion of himself as an independent, maturing learner here refuted notions of inability or weakness. There was a sense that he had made a conscious decision to change, his ability to concentrate having never been in question. "Fitting in" through his behaviour which then, he said, enabled him to make progress, Naseem insisted on his identity as a possible learner.

Even with teaching and learning strategies that he constructed as helpful, this analysis highlighted that there were significant difficulties for Naseem. Ms Eaves, the SENDCo, alluded to this concern when discussing with me his GCSE options in Year 10 and speech and language needs, at this point not formally catered for by the school. Telling me that she didn't know what they would do with him, as he neither "fit in" to the "mainstream" choices, nor to the group for those who would pursue vocational qualifications, she drew on "othering" discourses which marginalised him as a learner. Thus, however far Naseem contested the constraints around him, school structures around the standards agenda and support

constrained and even foreclosed opportunities for him to achieve: "fitting in" seemed out of his control from this perspective. With little EAL support and no official SEND identification he was not eligible for resources that could support his progress at Key Stage 4 (Pinson, Arnot and Candappa, 2011). This appraisal of the situation resonated with the analysis of his and his father's accounts in Chapters 5 and 6, where they were conscious of his need for English classes which would support his EAL learning and wanted him to access mainstream GSCE classes in core subjects. However, moves to assess him for formal SEND support were not as yet initiated.

8.3 Negotiating alternative successful learner identities

My observation of Naseem's ICT lesson suggested that possibilities within non-traditional subjects for success perhaps were more constrained than the young people had claimed in their accounts. Furthermore, my participants mostly chose for me to observe traditional subjects, suggesting that the former were for the most part not valued by the young people and the school as possible avenues for recognised achievement. Omar was the exception. He first suggested I observe Physical Education, but when I did not hear back from his teachers, chose either Design and Technology or Art, and the Art teacher agreed. In these subjects, his levels reflected a high level of attainment at the time.

The Art class was a mix of boys and girls from diverse backgrounds. They were seated in groups of four to five around tables, and entered in quietly, hanging up their blazers and collecting their pots from the front. Omar was on a table in the corner at the back with two black boys, one white girl, one black girl and two mixed heritage girls. The teacher, Ms Walker, was a young, white woman who performed a calm, caring control over the class. The task was to finish making the clay pots, and there were success criteria on the board, which the pupils had to use to critique their partner's pot, and then continue with their design. My observation notes recorded how I constructed Omar's learner identity in the class in relation to his peers and his teacher:

> The table on the other side was talking about football. A girl asked Omar for advice, he told her to go out a bit more and then in. Omar asked for more clay, he was focused on his work and talked to the other girl on his table.
>
> At this point the teacher talked with me a bit out of hearing, telling me that Omar refuses to do his homework, he is more focused on football. She said he "struggles" with writing and he has support with this but is "very good with anything practical." "You can see it, he's really taken to this," she said.
>
> Omar's vase was much bigger than anyone else's.

Omar's performance of an achieving learner identity, his confidence emphasised through the size of his pot, was also recognised by his peers asking him for advice as he took up a guiding role. Ms Walker, by her comparison of his writing difficulties with his "practical" skills constructed Omar's academic learner identity as weak: the "'but' is very good with anything practical" in my notes reflects how I felt Omar's aptitude for Art was constructed as compensation for SEND, rather than being recognised as a skill in its own right. Her comment about Omar refusing to do homework further subjectified him as a resistant learner, constructing him as a lazy, sport addicted boy, rather than linking the lack of work with his "struggles" with writing. Hence possible SEND learner identities were intersected with ability and underachievement in constraining ways. Furthermore, I noted at the end of the lesson that it was the white prefect who had discussed with us how many books she was reading on her Kindle who was praised in front of the class for her work. SEND was implicated in these processes.

When I asked Omar what happened with his Art homework in our next interview, he told me Ms Walker gave him support:

K: So, what happens about that, do you get away with not doing your homework?

Omar: Sometimes.

K: Sometimes so some, some, bits she'll let you off or what happens?

Omar: No 'cos some lessons yeah, I'm basically not in, like I go reading with other people. Then that's the time she gives out the homework. Then I tell her she says ok then she gives me some letter that talks about the homework. Then she makes me do it at break or lunch.

K: Oh, so she does make you do it.

Omar, fourth interview in temporary housing, 26/5/14

My comment about "getting away with" not doing homework reflected accounts from Omar, his mother Qadra and Ms Young his Head of Year about homework and detentions. I realised this subjectified Omar as badly behaved, and shifted to a construct of him as not being able to do it, "some bits she'll let you off?" Drawing, as Zaynab did in Humanities, on his reading lessons as the reason for his lack of work, Omar contested this, positioning himself as a good learner, and ensuring a lack of stigma through the group aspect of this withdrawal. As in his accounts of not doing other homework he constructed himself as only

breaking school rules with good reason, although his comment that she "makes me do it" alluded to his possible resistance to homework even with assistance. Underlying this was an inference that Ms Walker recognised his need for "educational help" and provided positive support away from the gaze of the class, enabling him to take up a possible learner identity in the Art class through minimising the stigma associated with literacy difficulties, although his recognition as gifted was constrained through this intervention.

8.4 Negotiating care, not sanctions with teachers

All my main participants were constructed by the caring, helpful teachers they chose for me to meet as performing disruptive/d behaviour to some extent. The only exception was Zaynab, whose withdrawn performance, I have argued, highlighted constraints around her learning and how she negotiated interactions with peers. Compared to the discussion about Omar above, it was rare in teacher comments for negative behaviour to be linked to the young people's learning and pastoral needs as EAL, refugee and/or SEND, or when, as with Naseem, it was through a deficit, othering lens. In this section, analysis of narratives co-constructed with Omar's Head of Year at Willow School, with Ruqiya and with her Maths teacher, who was also the SENDCo at Oak Academy, explores the ways that disruptive/d learner identities were played out at the intersection with SEND and refugee in teacher-pupil relationships.

Omar was the only participant recruited through my work to choose for me to interview a teacher, nominating his Head of Year, Ms Young, who was also his Music teacher. As discussed in Chapter 5, Omar constructed Ms Young as someone who would address the bullying he experienced regarding his learning needs, and someone he would have official meetings with that explained his absence from detentions. At the start of the interview, Ms Young constructed Omar as making progress in English through targeted support and constructing his achievements in non-traditional subjects as due to his "passion" rather than skill or aptitude. When I asked her what would help him succeed more, Ms Young said Omar needed to "look at" his behaviour. Telling me that he often "skipped the minor bit" when upset by something and reacted in a "major" way, she discussed the discipline system, contact with home and the possibility that Omar had a behaviour mentor. I then asked if anything was a catalyst for Omar's "negative behaviour":

> Ms Young: Yeah, I think he can be easily distracted to things. And I think um … again, he shares probably a mentality along with some that if something happens, you retaliate, and you've got to stick up for yourself. So, I think you know … there's again a small number of them who just genuinely believe that, and they won't ignore things and they won't walk away they'll have got to deal with this head on so and I think he's in that category.

Drawing on school discourses around being "distracted," Ms Young subjectified Omar as aggressive, "them" suggesting that this performance was part of a group or gang (and from a previous comment, male). Her account suggested that "sticking up for yourself" was wrong and instead promoted passive responses to issues, thus constructing the problem of disruptive behaviour as centred within the young person. Furthermore, her homogenising construct of Omar as in a "category" foreclosed consideration of his individual life experiences and how he might negotiate stigma around being a refugee and SEND to fit into an urban, multi-ethnic, working class school. Subjectifying him as a badly-behaved Black, working class boy concealed his learner identities as a refugee in need of "educational help", meaning that questions around his well-being and his learning were constrained.

These responses were not just found in relation to the boys in my study, as the discussion about the girls' group in Rowan has already shown. Ruqiya was one of the most open about her take-up of disruptive behaviour in school and chose which lessons I observed carefully so that they were not at the time of day that she would "mess up the class." Maths, the first lesson I observed, was her best subject, as she said she felt able to perform a successful learner identity in the class, liking Ms Eaves, the SENDCo as a "nice" teacher who let her chat with friends. Positioned at one vertex of a triangle of chatty girls, I watched her focus, get distracted and then focus again, contributing to class discussions and moving on to a sheet of extension exercises, although Ms Eaves did challenge her about guessing some answers in the first task. Ruqiya waved the new sheet around to ask for help, and, once encouraged by Ms Eaves, continued working on this until the end of the lesson. The only evidence of disruptive behaviour were the gum wrappers around Ruqiya's chair, Ms Eaves asking her to spit out the gum halfway through the lesson as she told me that rather than challenging her at the start, this delay helped to keep her settled. Due to the gum, Ruqiya did not get a "good" postcard home although her peers felt she should.

After the Maths observation whilst walking back to the inclusion office, Ms Eaves commented on how quiet Ruqiya had been for the whole lesson, putting this down to my presence. She constructed her as normally chatty and disruptive and gave an account of an incident the day before where Ruqiya had performed what she termed "nasty" racist and abusive behaviour, although Ruqiya's (unelicited) account of this incident with me constructed herself as the victim of racist comments. This was one example of several incidents that Ruqiya talked about where I could see that there was a discrepancy between what she felt and experienced and what the teachers saw happen and how they interpreted

her behaviour. Interestingly, Ms Eaves reacted in a similar way to my report of Naseem's "good" behaviour in ICT, telling me that he often fought with others and pupils would complain to her that they could not work with him, whilst Naseem's account suggested that he experienced bullying and stigma in the past, although he claimed not to be the victim or perpetrator of these incidents at the time of the interviews.

An account by Ruqiya later on in the field work of her reaction to learning graphs explored further how Ruqiya responded to Ms Eaves' construct of her behaviour as "nasty":

> Ruqiya: No, I told her last week I was like I don't like I don't like this stupid work. I said I don't wanna do it and she that's why I'm being called like nasty. And she's like, she's like, "Well it's not your choice so you have to have um you just have to get through with it." … and I was just like, "Oh my gosh!" It's like, "Come on then now let's call home." I was like, "No, Miss, I know you love me, bye!" and just went.
>
> Ruqiya, fourth interview at home, 13/3/14

Ruqiya constructed herself as pathologised by Ms Eaves when she refused to do the work, "that's why I'm being called like nasty." Considering her negative response of not "liking" the work, the topic may have been something for which she had missed prior learning or did not understand the vocabulary, she may have had a specific difficulty with graphs, or her reaction may have been due to other stresses outside the lesson. However, as Archer, Hollingworth and Mendick (2010) found in their explorations of "at risk" girls' learner identities in urban schools, her assertive and emotional responses were drawn on by the teacher to construct her as a problematic learner.

Ms Eaves was constructed as under pressure to get through the curriculum, her lack of time possibly producing a more disciplinary response and constraining her normal pastoral role: Ruqiya's exclamation, "Oh my gosh!" gave a sense of shock that her usual negotiations to be constructed as a "good" learner with Ms Eaves were not working. In response, Ruqiya drew on feminine notions of caring to try to escape sanctions, "You know you love me!" Ms Eaves mentioned to me that Ruqiya often left classes to go to find her (female) form tutor when in trouble, suggesting that she continued to resist subjectifications of bad behaviour and advocate for herself as in need of support. These negotiations resonated with my research into the shifting, gendered ways that teachers respond to vulnerable children and young people around the need for care and sanctions and highlighted Ruqiya's vulnerability (Wiggins, 2007). Furthermore, considering Ruqiya's social, emotional and mental health needs within SEND positioned Ruqiya as in need of support rather than sanctions, resisting the ways in which she reported being blamed for her behaviour and underachievement.

There was a sense in the different accounts of these boys and girls being constructed as "other," with negative, disruptive responses to school, teachers and pupils being seen as the cause of underachievement. Oikonomody (2010) argues that these responses are in fact related to the difficulties of learning in the mainstream curriculum as refugees, whilst Hart's (2009) case study of misrecognition of SEND found that refugee young people need safe, secure policies around racism and bullying in order for their learning needs to be appropriately supported. My participants' performances of disruptive/d behaviour pointed to the ways in which they struggled to negotiate possible learner identities not just as refugee learners but at the intersection with their need for "educational help" within a context where anti-school and anti-learning performances were readily available, and could be taken up to hide their difficulties as well as to resist stigma as unable.

8.5 Negotiating support not stigma with peers

Both positive and negative relationships with peers have been highlighted throughout this analysis as key in the young people's learner identity performances. As we have seen in my observations of Zaynab's, Naseem's and Omar's lessons, and in Ms Tyler's account of Asha in Chapter 7, the young people who were my participants constructed themselves and were constructed as a helper or helped, being included in or isolated from peer work. Also, teacher strategies using peer learning were evident in many of the seating plans that I observed, including "buddying" Somali pupils. Although this was positive in some instances, as with Asha, it was also in danger of homogenizing Somali pupils and assuming they would work well together, as noted in Zaynab's class. On the other hand, some friendships, including with other Somali young people, were constructed by staff as disruptive, a struggle often ensuing as teachers allowed and even encouraged friends to work together, but then changed tactics as behaviour appeared to hinder learning. On the other hand, the young people were constructed and constructed themselves as vulnerable to racism and stigma from peers around learning needs. In these situations, as discussed above regarding Ruqiya and Omar, problems with peer relationships were often constructed by teachers as due to poor behaviour, with the young person sometimes being positioned as the instigator of distraction or disruption.

To explore how notions around peer helper roles opened up, constrained or foreclosed opportunities to perform possible learner identities, I focus in this section on observations of Asha and Mahmud in the English Year 10 GCSE class to which they both belonged. Due to her excellent progress through accepting SEND support, Ms Tyler had advocated for Asha to be put in the middle stream for GCSEs. She told me she felt that Asha could "cope" with what she termed the "mainstream" with support. By contrast, Mahmud was constructed by Ms Tyler as underachieving through lack of interest and a tendency to be distracted. He was

in the middle stream because, although he had obtained good levels at the end of primary school, this had not transposed into achievement in Rowan. Hence these two young people were placed in the same stream, but due to two opposite categorisations, one as a succeeding SEND Somali girl, the other as an underachieving Somali boy.

A vignette of the first English lesson I observed conveys how the teacher, Ms Tyler, was preparing the class for an English writing examination, in which they all had to gain C grades (now level 5). The last attempt had been discarded, as Ms Tyler said their stories were "fantastical" but too full of spelling, grammar and structural inaccuracies to pass. Asha was not in school that day, but I observed Mahmud working with two other Somali boys at the front of the class.

The lesson was in the old building, a dark, cramped and decaying room only brightened by Ms Tyler's beautiful displays. The sign on the door said "English/S.E.N." giving a sense that anyone who entered might be labelled as having Special Educational Needs. The class of twenty was two-thirds boys and quite evenly split between Black, Asian heritage and White pupils. The three Somali boys made up half the number of black pupils. They were seated at the front, with a teaching assistant in between Mahmud and Abdi, on whom she focused almost exclusively, and Gedi to their left by the wall. Another teaching assistant monitored pupils at the back of the room. Ms Tyler told me before the lesson started that Mahmud's target was a B grade, predicted from his primary level, showing that he had "potential" but that he "got distracted easily."

In the lesson, I observed Mahmud as a boy who was disorganised, having lost his work at home (kindly dealt with by Ms Tyler) and forgotten his glasses. However, he was keen to answer questions and discuss his story plan with the teaching assistant, Ms Tyler and his friend Gedi, although there were also times when he chatted. Gedi commented throughout the lesson, at times asking pertinent questions, at others acting as a joker in response to Ms Tyler's attempts to get him to write. Ms Tyler told me that he had lots of avoidance tactics as he found it hard to write, although he was good verbally. When given a punctuation task to write from the board, Mahmud's move to sit at the teacher's table reflected his need for glasses. However, his focused manner at this point also suggested the ease of a correction task compared to the challenge of having ideas for a story, his plan being considered too "complicated" by Ms Tyler. The more the pupils struggled to have ideas, and the more Ms Tyler told them she was not allowed to help, the harder it seemed to become for the pupils to be creative.

Vignette, observation of Mahmud in Year 10 English, Rowan, 29/1/14

The dominant construct of Mahmud's learner identity in this lesson was of an underachieving Somali boy. His lost work, struggles with the planning task and chattiness with Gedi, along with his target grade compared to the "SEND" set he was in, all combined to subjectify him as failing to achieve his "potential." The seating arrangement with Gedi and Abdi at the front drew attention to Mahmud's identity as a Somali boy, but more than this, that as a Somali boy, positioned next to Gedi who was "disruptive" and struggled to write, Abdi who appeared to need constant one-to-one support, and close to both the teacher and the teaching assistant, that he needed "educational help".

In our next interview, Mahmud told me that there were "lots of us" (meaning Somali) in the group and that the three boys had chosen to sit next to each other when first in the class, suggesting that their identification as Somali played a part in their friendships. I asked about his learning relationship with Gedi:

K: How do you find that helpful, you guys working together?

Mahmud: Sometimes yeah when I make mistake, he will tell me. But sometimes we talk a lot, so. And Miss is like either, "You have your whole break time to talk together," and things like that.

Mahmud, second interview at home, 19/2/14

Through the repetition of "sometimes" Mahmud constructed his lack of confidence and desire for peer support in his learning as in tension with the social aspect of this relationship. His comment here conveyed how Ms Tyler attempted to separate these different aspects, her frustration about his distracted behaviour evident in his quote.

Ms Tyler's response to the boys' chattiness was to move Mahmud away from Gedi. In my second English observation, three months later, Gedi was seated next to Asha on the back table and Mahmud was on a front table with three other boys. They were in the new building, in a light airy room with tables rather than rows, arranged so that Ms Tyler could easily walk between them. The task was to peer assess plans for a creative writing assessment. Mahmud worked alone for the whole lesson and Asha seemed to be reluctant to share her work. However, on showing Gedi her plan, she strongly rebuffed his criticisms, my notes recording the comments I could hear:

Asha started to comment on Gedi's plan now, and when he complained about something she said, replied, "That's what you get for pointing out capital letters and stuff." I looked across to Mahmud at this point and he had stopped writing and was staring at the wall.

Asha continued to challenge Gedi, "Are you blind? Do you need glasses?"

Ms Tyler came over at this point and said to Gedi, "We are not criticising someone's spelling." Asha continued to reply to Gedi's questions and comments,

"This is the plan, when I write my story, I can do that but with the plan I don't need to go into detail."

Asha/Mahmud observation notes, English, Rowan Academy, 30/4/14

Asha's defence of her work drew on an identity as an achieving learner who knew how to learn, thus managing her difficulties with writing and refuting deficit discourses around SEND. As the task was a plan, her focus on creativity meant that she could reject Gedi's comments on spelling, grammar and punctuation. In criticising his work, she may have used his own techniques to prove her point. Ms Tyler's intervention through a protective role was possibly not needed, as Asha continued to perform a strong, literate learner identity, asserting her ability to fulfil the requirements of the task.

I asked Asha, Mahmud and Ms Tyler about the seating plan in interviews. Asha explained how she managed peer work:

Asha: I get along with everyone in English class. It's that I remember back in the start of Year 10, I was scared to read things out in class, swap books with partners, but now I just realised we are all the same so there's no point. I just, he was pointing out my mistakes and I was like good, I'll just say things back to him. Fine!

K: *(laughs)* There was there was one phrase I have I've got it written down somewhere you say something like have you got glasses can you read or something like that to him when he was being really rude.

Asha: Yes, cos he was just joking about and stuff. I was just like furious.

K: Yeah, yeah, so is he is he ever helpful to work with or is he always a bit just sort of critical?

Asha: Well he's the one who gave me half of the ideas about my how my story would be.

Asha, third interview at Rowan, 12/5/14

Asha reflected on how she negotiated a sense of belonging in the middle stream through constructing others as "the same" as her. This countered her concerns about stigma, enabling her to take up a more self-assured and even combative learner identity with her peers. Her construct of Gedi as performing a jokey, disruptive "boy" learner was balanced

through her recognition of his creative verbal strengths, confirming Mahmud's view, that he both helped and hindered their learning. They responded by drawing on his strengths, negotiating the disruptive aspects of his chat in different ways when I observed them, Mahmud through colluding, Asha by resisting him.

Mahmud's response to Gedi's chat was constructed by him as the reason for his new seating position. After firstly being able to "choose" where he sat (next to Gedi), he told me he was moved to the back as a "good" pupil once he remembered his glasses and finally to the front away from Gedi. Here, he did not engage at all with the other pupils on his table, the tendency to be disruptive/d under control, his withdrawn performance possibly suggesting his fear of stigma if he shared his work. When I asked about this new place, he told me:

> Mahmud: But now Miss puts me at the front so every time I try to talk to someone Miss would tell me off. So, and I'm right at the front cos I don't really see good from the back.
>
> Mahmud, third (last) interview at home, 26/5/14

Although he took responsibility here for his chat, Mahmud drew on his need for glasses to explain his very exposed position "right at the front," thus maintaining his performance of a distracted, disorganised but not badly-behaved boy. However, this position also seemed to have silenced opportunities to engage with supportive peers, and in his lack of work, now that disruptive influences were removed, his difficulties with writing became very clear.

Ms Tyler told me that she placed Asha in the middle of the class as a role model for others who also found literacy difficult, constructing her as a "wave of magic" as she drew on all the strategies she had been taught as a SEND pupil. Gedi was possibly a key target of this positioning. It is possible that Mahmud was not supported in this way as he was quieter in class than Gedi, maybe as he was considered to have "potential" whereas Ms Tyler may have felt Gedi needed to learn from Asha's SEND/literacy strategies to make progress. It is important to note that Asha challenged class rules, countering notions of perfection. She entered the class carrying a can of coke which was then taken by Ms Tyler with a firm rebuke about the health effects of such drink. Furthermore, she chewed gum throughout the lesson without being seen by Ms Tyler, who made several other pupils empty their gum into the bin. This subtle performance of an anti-school pupil maybe helped her navigate stigma amongst her peers either as unable or as a perfect pupil. Possibly dominant anti-school performances that she had drawn on in the past in response to her difficulties with learning were hard to "leave", as Archer and Yamashita (2003) suggest with regard to racialised, classed "boy" performances.

These processes were played out within a system of resource allocation which awarded support to those with formalised SEND identifications. Ms Tyler told me that Asha had responded well to this, whereas a different male pupil in the class had not, pointing to possible gendered take up of learning support, "good" learner identities being more available for girls within the context of a multi ethnic, urban school (Jones and Myhill, 2004). Within this particular lesson, the young people who were my participants negotiated stigma and acceptance from peers, friendship and distraction, in fluid ways, resisting binaried constructs as either "good" or "bad" learners and pupils (Youdell, 2006b).

Notions of peers as helpers and hinderers were constructed within gendered, racialised discourses about who was recognised as a possible learner and resisted to some degree stigma around dis- and in- ability. Although Gedi and Mahmud played football with a diverse group of boys in the break times, their strong friendship suggested a sense of the importance of shared experiences as Somali, London, boy learners, which Oikonomody (2007, 2009) points to in relation to the Somali girls with whom she conducted research in the USA. However, the two Somali boys were constructed as less able to negotiate peer learning relationships than Asha through dominant constructs of them as disruptive/d, although in the young people's accounts there were suggestions that the take up of these identities possibly concealed a degree of productive work. This resonates with Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman's (2002) findings about the ways in which young people negotiate peer accepted anti-school performances whilst also studying. It also fits with Vincent, Neal and Iqbal's (2018) analysis of teachers' use of seating plans to manage behaviour, which showed that this did not, in the end, constrain friendships. My study suggested that these decisions affected possibilities for supportive peer learning, although this positive aspect of some friendships was not evident to the teacher. Allan's (1999) study of how pupils with SEND negotiate inclusion highlights these tensions between teachers and pupils around friendship and accessing peer support. Overall, my analysis suggests that notions of SEND intersected with under/achievement and disruption in these young people's performances in diverse, complex, gendered and at times contradictory ways.

8.6 Negotiating disorganisation: dyslexic, deviant or distracted?

Along with subjectifications of disruption, another main concern of the teachers with whom I talked was the young people's ability to organise themselves for their learning. Ms Squires said regarding Asha that this was an aspect of a dyslexic learner identity, but that it intersected in shifting ways with her identity as a teenager, commenting, "They are all like that really, aren't they?" On the other hand, Ms Tyler dismissed Mahmud's disorganisation as lack of interest, assuring me that he never forgot his sports kit, and by comparison said that Asha never forgot anything. In the young people's accounts, some like Asha and Omar

resisted notions of disorganisation, instead telling me that they chose which subjects they saw as important and therefore focused on for homework, getting support where needed, although Omar also cited his "busyness" as a reason for non-completion. Others like Mahmud and Ruqiya assured me that they completed everything, Ruqiya helping her friend Khadra with Maths at Ms Eaves' request. Regarding his glasses Mahmud shifted between forgetting, protecting and breaking them. The notion of disorganisation seemed both contingent and planned. The following analysis of my observation of Asha and Mahmud in a Maths lesson affords an interesting example of how disorganisation was drawn on in the young people's negotiation of possible learner identities around notions of SEND. It is important to note that Mahmud had chosen for me to observe this lesson, whereas Asha gave me permission in retrospect to use my notes and did not know at the time that I was observing her in particular.

The Maths teacher, Mr King, was a young black man who created a firm but fun atmosphere in the class, managing the pupils through jokey comments as well as strict rules. The class was made up of two thirds boys. Half of the class were black, with half again of that number being Somali, although Mahmud was the only Somali boy. It was a middle set in the middle stream: the two boys who entered first wrote "2+2=4" on the board possibly reflecting how they felt about the level of the class. The topic was three-dimensional shapes. There were several comments and actions throughout the lesson which established a sense of male superiority in the classroom.

The account in my field work diary of the start of the lesson conveys how quickly Asha and Mahmud's disorganisation was used to construct them in very different ways as achieving or disruptive:

Both Asha and Mahmud did not have their books. Mahmud unsuccessfully asked Mr King quietly for some paper, finally getting some from Faisal, the Asian heritage boy he worked with studiously at the back of the room, his glasses on all lesson. When told by Mr King that he would need to repeat the last lesson's work as he did not have his book, Mahmud transformed this disorganisation into being part of his keen, achieving performance telling the teacher, "I don't mind, sir." […]

Asha came in late, chatted across the class, and was identified out loud as not having done her homework, although many had not done this. She tried to find some paper on Mr King's desk, reaching across from her isolated seating position in the corner at the front and was told off for "taking stuff", thus being positioned as badly behaved rather than disorganised.

Asha and Mahmud, Maths observation field work diary, Rowan Academy, 5/3/14

In contrast to his disorganisation contributing to subjectifications as underachieving in English, by using his strong peer relationship with Faisal to get some paper, Mahmud could quickly resist negative responses from the teacher. In his first interview he told me that he and Faisal shared "easy" tasks, swapping answers so that they could move on to harder tasks which they did on their own. This peer learning agreement meant that redoing the work that he had forgotten became a challenge rather than a chore, thus further transforming his disorganised learner identity into an achieving one. As discussed in Chapter 5, he told me in our interviews that he drew heavily on the confidence developed in out of school Maths tuition to take up a dominant position in the class. It was therefore questionable how far not bringing his book was disorganisation, or if it was possibly even confidence that he could "catch up" in class and so did not need previous work (in a lesson where he said he felt unchallenged) or part of a gendered male pupil performance around studying but being anti-school (Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman, 2002; Phoenix, 2004).

My field work diary recorded that Mahmud finished the set work even before Faisal, taking over to draw diagrams for him freehand, his lack of a ruler still further providing an opportunity to show his aptitude. Mr King recognised this, commenting that his drawings were "spot on." The one thing Mahmud had not forgotten was his glasses, unlike in English. There was a moment when one of the white boys near him was laughed at by the teacher and the pupils for having new glasses however, wearing his seemed to add to Mahmud's "studious" performance instead of attracting stigma. Thus, Mahmud performed the dominant, achieving learner identity he had told me about in his interviews. However, this was within a middle stream, in a set that was possibly only entered for foundation GCSE papers which awarded up to C grades (level 4 to 5). Mahmud was not sure about this when I asked him, reflecting a lack of understanding of the school's systems which was also apparent in his mother's interview (see Chapter 6, section 6.1.3)

By comparison, Asha's late entrance and isolated position constructed her as a disengaged, uninterested pupil. Mr King's comments about her forgotten book and homework further subjectified her as a bad pupil and learner, as deviant rather than disorganised. Although she engaged in the starter discussion, the lesson soon seemed inaccessible for her:

Asha was sitting at her table and held up the worksheets in a signal of confusion or hopelessness, and at the same time talked across the class to the boy at the front. Mr King explained the next bit to the two Somali girls sitting together and one asked him again what to do, she was still not sure how to record her answers. Asha shouted out, "Sir, can I ask you a question." One of the other girls replied, "I'm talking to him."

Asha/Mahmud, Maths observation field work diary, Rowan Academy, 5/3/14

This mixture of calls for help and distraction techniques conveyed Asha's sense of frustration at not being able to make progress. Gendered discourses around helplessness were possibly drawn on here as the girls vied for the teacher's support: as a "bad" pupil maybe Asha was not deserving of that support, the other girl's reply emphasizing her marginalisation. Waving the worksheets was an indication of her need for "educational help", and without this from peers or the teacher she was subjectified as unable. Asha's response was to continue to take up a disruptive identity, my diary notes recording her going to the toilet and flirting with the boy at the front on her way back. It was only when Mr King produced cubes to practise the shapes at the end of the lesson that she reengaged, even though he told her with a shrug that she was wrong. By contrast, Mahmud played with the cubes, making a gun out of them and waving it at others, constructing this part of the lesson as unimportant, compared to his focused work for the rest of the time.

Mahmud's strategic, confident responses could mask a range of possible reasons for a lack of equipment, whilst a subjectification of Asha as a "bad" pupil produced a negative teacher-pupil relationship, followed by a disruptive response to lack of support which then further marginalised her as a learner. Disorganisation was thus negotiated within the lesson in ways that allowed them to "fit in" to dominant constructs of achieving and underachieving learners, highlighting, concealing and rejecting notions of SEND within this subject. Successful learner identities were taken up through accessing support outside the lesson. Mahmud increased his knowledge and his confidence through his family paying for tuition, whereas Asha's need for a reader due to her identity as dyslexic was unacknowledged in class. This was possibly through the teacher not recognising her as SEND but also through constraints on school resources, Ms Squires only being able to support Asha in a few lessons. In her last interview, Asha told me that she and Ms Squires had negotiated a reader for her in class Maths examination. She achieved a C (level 4 to 5) instead of the E she had previously gained, thus finally feeling she had proved to her teacher that she was capable. In both cases, although disorganisation was an issue, there were more significant issues around what resources were available to them within their performances.

8.7 Need for recognition

This analysis demonstrates the need to recognise the complexity and the highly contextualised nature of these young people's learner identity performances. It showed that negotiations around fitting in, including working with peers, and accessing support needed to be understood in relation to SEND. There are four main points that the analyses suggest. First, the young people "fit in" to their mainstream lessons often through drawing on

gendered, racialised expectations about what a learner looks like, within a working class, multi-ethnic context. Although these performances gained recognition, it did not mean that productive learning always took place. These negotiations were shown sometimes to conceal the need for "educational help", at other times to demonstrate it although this was not always recognised by teachers. Second, the ways in which peers performed helper and hinderer roles was demonstrated to be nuanced, not binary, suggesting that these negotiations required careful understanding and management rather than to be ignored, dismissed or discarded. Third, partial recognition as SEND or EAL or underachieving also seemed to constrain opportunities to make progress, as pedagogical approaches did not appropriately support the complexity of their learner identities. This was despite teachers taking up helpful and approachable roles. Finally, where learning support was provided through targeted intervention, peer support, appropriate pedagogical strategies and/or through developing skills and confidence, possibilities for success were often constrained through school structures. These structures were driven by the demands of the standards agenda and were established within prevailing gendered, racialised, classed, ableist hierarchies around who is recognised as a possible learner.

Where young people were seen by teachers to be taking up disruptive, disorganised and resistant learner identities, in some instances they were supported appropriately in their learning through formal processes, and for others they gained support in more informal ways. However, they could also be constructed by teachers as fitting into prevailing anti-school and anti-learning discourses, or "othered" as not fitting in at all. The impression was that these young people were constructed as innately problematic, underachieving learners within homogenising and pathologising gendered and racialised assumptions. This foreclosed considerations of the reasons for their behaviour. I have argued for the need to recognise the young people's learner identities as agentic, and to view them as determined boy and girl refugee young people with possible SEND. Chapter 9 outlines my three main findings around these processes, and around how families may be positively engaged with schools in considerations of SEND. It ends by suggesting some productive ways forward within research, in policy and in practice.

Chapter 9: Opportunities for Possibility

The catalyst for this PhD was my feeling that as a teacher with specialisms in teaching EAL and refugee young people I had little understanding of what SEND meant. I was concerned that, consequently, I had not thoroughly pursued the right support for some of the most vulnerable pupils for whom I was responsible, which at the time included a group of newly arrived Somali young people. I recognised these young people's desire to belong within the EAL and refugee learning support groups that were mobilised by our department within the school, as well as within their strong friendship networks. I noted the ways in which families engaged positively with the EAL and refugee aspects of the young people's learner identities. I was aware of the young people's and families' possible resistance to suggestions that they had SEND and the difficulties of working out how refugee, EAL, underachievement and SEND were played out within their learner identity performances. These experiences informed my research question. When starting the study, I changed jobs to work for a charity which, as a growing part of its work, advocated for refugee young people who required "educational help". Through this, I learnt about the ways in which notions of SEND at their intersection with gender and refugee were struggled over within the families, at school and through home-school relationships. My research informed this learning process, and in turn was informed by my experiences at work and reflections on my own, families' and professionals' approaches to these issues.

My review of the literature around this issue found that there are theories around learning and inclusion, pedagogical strategies and policy approaches that are already well researched within a range of disciplines. When I brought these together at the intersection of refugee, SEND and gender they pointed to ways in which young people could be appropriately taught and supported and their families involved and valued within educational processes. However, my study was not focused on the nature of educational strategies and structures, but rather took a post-structuralist theoretical approach to try to understand in some depth how Somali young people and their families negotiate the realities of the present educational system around mis/recognition of SEND. Lived experiences around the intersection of refugee and SEND were, I found, hardly focused on in any depth within present literature. Therefore, I set out to consider the ways in which a group of Somali young people were positioned and positioned themselves within a context fraught with gendered, racialised, classed, ableist inequalities around how learner categories are assigned, resourced and taken up. I explored how my participants negotiated a sense of belonging as learners both at home and at school, with teachers, peers, family members and others in the community, interrogating the ways in which they drew on gendered, racialised, classed learner identities as refugee and SEND both at home and at school. Tracing

performances of the possible intertwined with the impossible (Youdell, 2006b) produced a messy and complex picture that I seek to address in this conclusion. My overall argument is that the intersection of notions of SEND with refugee, aspects which can often be stigmatised, pathologised or hidden, and which are rarely considered together, need to be focused upon. It is with in-depth understandings of the complexity of refugee young people's learner identity performances that opportunities for possibility in learner identities that have been previously constrained or even foreclosed, are opened up. My thesis is presented as a small but important piece in an ever-enlarging puzzle as scholars from different disciplines and through varied theoretical approaches interrogate how Black and other minoritised young people's sense of belonging as learners is negotiated, and adds to our understandings of the inequalities which these young people experience.

Choosing intersectionalities as an ontological and epistemological tool for the study was both productive and at times problematic within the constraints of a thesis. There were substantial challenges as the range of intersectionalities broadened: not only did a Somali identity encompass a long list of social categories, but by interrogating SEND, I also had to consider how this intersected with other learner categories not just of EAL and refugee, but also underachievement, disadvantage and notions of disruption. These in turn intertwined with each other within dis- and inability discourses. Furthermore, generation became more salient than I had expected. I did not address social class in enough depth, in retrospect due to the complexity of holding so many aspects of identities in mind through the analysis.   Out of the dimensions I was considering, class was perhaps the most difficult to interrogate for me as this notion is contested and blurred, as well as a stark material reality for many refugee families in post-migratory settings. There were also ethical sensitivities about asking family members for personal details about their background, and this information may have informed a better analysis of classed negotiations at the intersection with refugee.

To conceptualise the ways in which multiple aspects were drawn on and caught up in the young people's learner identity performances, I adopted in my mind an image of swirling. I imagined the young people who were my participants surrounded by social and learner identity resources within a specific context, some closer and thus more available, others further away and even out of reach, in both stable, fragile and shifting ways. The fluidity of this image helped to emphasise that it was impossible to take up one aspect without others, as Phoenix and Bauer (2012) usefully describe. It allowed the possibility, however faint, of different, agentic, resistant or even transformational learner identity negotiations, whilst highlighting the ways in which some aspects were more readily available, and enabling a sense of the momentary complexity of the young people's performances.

Narrative as a methodology was for me a crucial tool in conducting this study. I found through my professional practice both at school and in the community that discussing with young people the "story" of their experiences behind a learning issue opened up understandings around inequalities and assumptions, so I wanted to pursue this in more detail within an academic research context. The learning process through which I journeyed as I took this up was challenging. Holding in tension the ways in which I tried to place the young people at the centre of the process whilst being invested in the project working and trying to manage the stigma around SEND, I discovered the intricate and complex ways in which the young people and their families managed notions of assent, consent and dissent. There were significant possibilities in choosing to try to understand learner identity performances through being "led" to a certain extent by the young people, but also constraints. Although initially this produced anxieties for me around how the study could progress, I learnt over time to allow for the flow of consent and dissent and to recognise how this informed my understandings.

During interviews, my concerns around collecting the narratives meant that at times I imposed questions on participants, was tempted to discard data as insignificant, or did not risk sharing my observation write up with the young person. Within the narrative co-constructions, I had to learn to analyse and reflect critically on the ways in which unequal power relations were negotiated, often simultaneously, as teacher-pupil, project-worker-parent-child and researcher-participant. I came to realise that analysing these processes within a reflexive approach was in fact the crucial aspect of my study about how professionals, refugee young people and their families might usefully negotiate learner identities around notions of SEND (Fox and Allan, 2014). Thus, although I continued to make changes to my method and reflect on my positionalities within it as the study progressed, I learnt not to reject previous data, but to build on it. Finally, using narrative as performance drew together the rich range of data I collected in different contexts and with different interviewees. Contributing to the rich ways in which narrative can be conceptualised (Tamboukou, Andrews and Squire, 2013), my study captured the sense of how a complex, although always incomplete, fragmented and partial story of learning can be co-constructed over time, whilst encompassing the theoretical concept of learner identities as performed not fixed or innate.

My study generated new findings in three areas: the complex ways in which gendered learner identities intertwined around notions of SEND and refugee (section 9.1.1); the convergence of home and school discourses around notions of inability (section 9.1.2) and the concept of im/possible learning spaces (section 9.1.3).

9.1 Findings

9.1.1 Intertwining learner identities around refugee and SEND

The notion of intertwining learner identities can be a useful way to frame the intersection of categories of refugee, EAL, underachievement and SEND, along with notions of disadvantage, disruption and ability. My analysis demonstrated how the young people negotiated these aspects in shifting, marked, momentary, highly situated ways. The concept of intertwining captured the sense of fluidity and multiplicity in their performances. As the different learner categories intersected with, informed and implicated each other, ways in which refugee was almost hidden at school but often more salient at home were clearly shown. Notions of SEND, however, were struggled over in both spaces within gendered ability and motivation discourses. The discussion below seeks to capture some of the patterns that emerged, whilst being mindful of the heterogeneity of the data.

Refugee learner identities were to a large extent ignored or pathologised by teachers but were negotiated in complex ways by the young people within school as they identified as Black, working class, Somali, London teenagers, whilst resisting notions of being "new" in school. At the same time, they drew on their families' experiences as refugees in their narratives to construct reasons for being categorised as "behind", including family learning, poverty and mobility. They also forcefully resisted notions of deficit through performances as determined, migrant, multilingual, multiliterate, experienced learners. These assertions were particularly salient where they felt that the teaching they received did not fully recognise and address their needs. Arguments within refugee literature suggest that post as well as pre migration contexts need to be considered in order to understand young people's learner identities (Rutter, 2006; Matthews, 2008). Building on this, these findings suggest that at the intersection with SEND, recognition of the ways in which lived experiences as refugees are drawn on in young people's performances is crucial, however long young people have been resident in a receiving country.

This need to recognise refugee learner identities was also found to be important in relation to language acquisition and print literacy skills at their intersection with SEND. Most of the young people who were my participants valued their largely hidden learner identities as multilingual and multiliterate. In Naseem's case, where an EAL learner identity was available and taken up readily, this was held onto firmly to resist notions of SEND, underachievement or inability. However, EAL learner identities were constructed retrospectively in many of the narratives as failing to work for the young people, not sufficiently resourced and, where available, were often rejected due to stigma. By contrast, learning support through catch up intervention, setting and/or SEND identifications at

transition to secondary school was mostly taken up as a useful tool to help resist prevailing notions of underachievement and inability. This was despite indications that it did not draw on their multilingual and multiliterate learner identities. Although within these systems of support the young people still had to negotiate a lack of full recognition, the pressures of the standards agenda and peer stigma, these learner identities as disadvantaged or SEND were constructed for the most part as opening up a sense of possibility, even if initially rejected. This was particularly so in "catch up" intervention as disadvantaged where cohort-wide strategies enabled the young people to feel that it was not just them who were "behind".

For some of my participants, retrospective accounts of the unavailability of SEND learner identities at school constructed this as significantly constraining their "possible" performances. Agentic negotiations around SEND were evident for those identified as dyslexic at Rowan school. Here, despite its continued stigma, this label was used forcefully to contest subjectifications of failure. The power that the young people drew from this identification revolved around the dyslexia-friendly strategies employed within the school and the resources that accompanied it. In this context this highlighted the ways in which other categories of refugee, EAL, catch up and underachievement were operationalised in more negative ways. These findings point to the highly situated ways in which the young people responded to learner categories and the extent of their usefulness in negotiating a sense of belonging. It also highlighted the ways in which prevailing racialised, classed, gendered deficit discourses around what it means to be underachieving or EAL or disadvantaged needed to be challenged in similar ways to that used to negotiate dyslexia, in order to counter stigma and open up more positive ways of offering appropriate support. The absence of the implementation of well-researched, multilingual approaches to learning was very clear (Conteh, Martin and Helavaara Robertson, 2007b; Cummins and Swain, 2014).

Within these negotiations, the young people's social identities of race, religion, ethnicity, class, generation and gender were drawn on in fluid, shifting and marked ways as they worked to fit in with peers and to hide, deny and/or defend a need for "educational help". At times, these negotiations drew on prevailing school and family discourses of the young people as disorganised, disruptive or unwilling to learn. At other points, school-orientated performances, interpreted by teachers to some extent through a gendered, racialised, classed lens around inability or passivity, also acted to conceal young people's difficulties with learning. Alternatively, in some instances where SEND was identified, negative aspects of the young people's performances were minimised or overlooked (ignored), as the teachers focused on their need for "educational help". This was particularly the case where young people engaged with strong, supportive teacher-pupil relationships for their learning, emphasising the subjective nature of co-constructions of disruption and underachievement.

Shifting or even dichotomous gendered, racialised, classed aspects of these negotiations were found in constructs of girls as helpers or needing help, but also as out of control and beyond support. Boys were constructed as disengaged, uninterested in literacy and fixated with sport, but also as both conforming to, and resisting, school rules and expected learning behaviours. Thus, norms and assumptions were to some extent disrupted, but were also often drawn on to mark the young people as certain types of (non) learner.

Here my study adds to knowledge through considering those who are not formally designated as SEND. This is a key area of racialised, gendered and classed inequality, but one little researched. It has important implications for the wellbeing, progress and attainment of vulnerable young people. My work builds on Benjamin's (2002) and Youdell's (2006b) conclusions in their studies of Black and other minoritised young people designated as SEND that, despite transformational moments, these pupils were subject to prevailing marginalising, deficit discourses about who and what an ideal learner is. My findings therefore raise important questions about the ways in which resources are allocated and challenge the ways in which prevailing assumptions are drawn upon within schools about learners, whatever category is assigned to them. The study emphasises the need to understand the specific ways that refugee, notions of SEND and gender intersect in order to challenge constructs of the young people as unable or unwilling to learn within broader concepts of the need for support. Where "educational help" is assigned, whether through withdrawal or through whole class teaching, it shows that teachers must interrogate how far these resources appropriately support the young people's complex learner identities, rather than focusing on a single aspect. Narrow, fixed uses of learner categories can constrain, hide or pathologise rather than illuminate the need for "educational help". Instead, complexity should be encompassed, not denying or foreclosing aspects which might need to be considered, but remembering that just because young people conform to, or draw on, certain aspects of learner identities, or are positioned in certain ways, does not mean that other aspects are not relevant or significant. Here my study showed that consideration of SEND and refugee learner identities is always important, not rejecting either out of hand or ignoring them.

9.1.2 Converging home and school discourses of notions of ability

My use of a post-colonial approach to interrogate "western" and "non-western" discourses around notions of SEND found that they are not completely disparate, as is often assumed in practice (Richardson and Powell, 2011). Instead, two aspects came together in constraining ways. First, school underachievement discourses converged with family and religious discourses in the home and community around lack of motivation and the responsibility to work hard. Second, schools often drew on outmoded medicalised discourses of innate

conditions and intersected these with racialised, classed, gendered deficit discourses around ability. These converged with family and ability discourses, drawn from religious and cultural beliefs about learning, within which young people were constructed as lacking in ability or lazy. Therefore, binaried notions of western and non-western understandings of SEND were challenged. Instead I found that the ways in which home and school discourses intersected and informed each other, as well as conflicted with each other, needed to be interrogated. Understanding this through the concept of diaspora space, the sense of entanglement that Brah (1996) suggests was helpful. The ways in which this entanglement was not equal did not detract from Brah's notion but helped to expose inequalities. The convergence positioned both the young people and their families in more marginalised ways, whilst schools continued to powerfully position them as responsible for the failure to achieve.

More time and study were seen by families as the key to improvement for both those seen as unable and unmotivated. EAL and refugee learner identities at home intersected with these constructs to further emphasise families' hope of future progress. This meant that at home space was created within which a young person could negotiate recognition as a possible, if vulnerable, learner, encouraged by their families that they had potential. However, where family members saw continued lack of progress at school, the convergence of home and school discourses about lack of motivation and underachievement were drawn upon by the young people and the family to resist or refute stigmatised notions of inability. This process served to construct the young people as responsible for their failure, to subjectify them as abject learners at school and to compare their learner identities negatively with those of their siblings. Where EAL, refugee learner identities were more prevalent in the home but not seen as sufficiently catered for at school, these were constructed as the key reason for lack of progress. Thus, the young people were marked in similar ways to school as still "behind" but resisting notions of inability.

This did not mean that the family members inevitably rejected or resisted understandings about the young person as needing support. Analysis of their narratives demonstrated that within spaces with which they were familiar, through learning at the madrassah and through sibling comparisons, they identified difference, and they framed it through the ability discourses which were available to them and which corresponded to their perceptions and understandings of school underachievement and ability discourses. Responding to their anxieties about the young person's learning through shifting but also constrained and marked roles to protect, encourage and "push" them, the family members' narratives showed how family discourses around care for those considered different were operationalised in gendered ways. They were also intertwined with their concerns around achievement and a sense of powerlessness to negotiate school support for their child within a post migratory

context. Mothers who were lone parents performed feminised care roles for their children with regard to education, and also took up what were often seen in Somali families as masculinised roles in terms of financial provision, arranging activities and attending school meetings. Although more traditional roles were performed between married couples who took part in the research around care in the home and engagement with school, the father I interviewed constructed himself as constrained around language, poverty and power in similar ways to the mothers I interviewed, despite his higher level of English and formal education in Somalia.

At the convergence of school and home discourses about underachievement and inability, mutual understandings of "educational help" were foreclosed. This was heightened by the significant constraints experienced by family members in engaging with schools. However, where medicalised terminology around SEND as a condition was resisted by the school, and possibilities for help to achieve was the focus through drawing on a social model of disability, chances for different understandings for all concerned were opened up. Specific support offered through "educational help" converged with migrant, religious, family discourses around the need for more study and time and therefore could be framed within less stigmatising discourses, particularly where the help then resulted in progress. This finding challenged teacher assumptions that Somali families do not "have a word for" SEND as the main stumbling block in engaging young people and families in accepting "educational help". Rather, spaces needed to be opened up for mutual dialogue about how difference is framed and to challenge notions of innate inability constructed at school. My study thus contributes to Vincent's (2017) call for more research into the ways in which migrant families negotiate relationships with schools, challenging assumptions about a binaried view of families not understanding their children's learning whilst schools do. It showed that not only must we consider and value how learning takes place in the home, we also need to engage with, rather than reject, the ways in which being a learner is constructed in that space.

Another significant aspect of my findings in this area is the ways in which the young people's take up of language broker roles was heavily implicated in home-school communication around the need for "educational help". Where there was no home-school liaison about SEND, the young people maintained silence. This enabled them to hide the lack of confidence, anger and/or confusion they felt over their struggles to be recognised as possible learners at school, thus resisting potential stigma and sanctions at home. Where there was some home-school communication, it was mostly in English. In these instances, adult family members were mostly positioned as marginalised and unable to intervene in or help with their schooling. Some of the young people took up language broker roles to disrupt and resist notions of failure, although this was not wholly successful. Others

constructed themselves in painful ways as weaving between submitting to and resisting negative constructs of inability and laziness within the family. Where notions of SEND were formally communicated to one family by a school, this was constructed by Asha, the young person concerned, as highly problematic due to misunderstandings, the school's reliance on medicalised terminology and a lack of independent interpreters. Asha told how she took up agency to negotiate the discourses around SEND that circulated in this instance between home and school. Although she performed agentically a strong self-advocacy and language broker role to persuade her mother that she was not unable, this was an ongoing, tense and fragile process. In whatever way they negotiated home-school relationships around understandings of "educational help", the young people were positioned in vulnerable ways as "gatekeepers".

In this small study, it was not possible to draw specific conclusions on the gendered nature of family aspirations and how this intersected with the need for "educational help". However, there were indications that all the boys were expected to do well and progress into recognised careers, and parents were concerned and anxious where this was in doubt. With the girls, there was a sense that education was a matter of personal development and recognition within the community, without so much pressure regarding future careers. However, the girls who took part in interviews were all in quite vulnerable family situations due to post migration stressors compared to the boys and this had an impact on who I interviewed in the family and their priorities for them. Age was also possibly a factor as Asha, the only girl I interviewed at GCSE stage (aged fifteen), conveyed a much more acute sense of her mother's expectations for her attainment than the other girls who were aged eleven to thirteen. Further exploration into this aspect around notions of SEND would be valuable.

Whatever their age or gender, negotiations within the home highlighted the ways that families placed value on core subjects, and how this intersected with schools' focus on an academic curriculum, so that potentially successful learner identity performances in non-traditional subjects and in the community were ignored, constrained or elided. It is to considerations of how the young people negotiated possibility within this convergence of school and family understandings of achievement, and how far they drew on notions of SEND to do this, that I now turn.

9.1.3 Im/possible learning spaces

The young-person-centred design of my methodology meant that I was guided by my participants to enquire into their sense of themselves as im/possible learners in particular contexts and with particular people. I found that by co-constructing narratives over several

months, initial understandings of these spaces as stable, for example with a volunteer tutor, in an intervention class or in a particular subject, were challenged. Instead, these opportunities were often constructed as momentary, shifting and fragile. Notions of possibility and impossibility entwined within these spaces in fluid and shifting ways and were often contingent on how far the complexities of their learner identities were recognised by both teachers and other learners. This demonstrated the importance of conducting the study over time, and the significance of conceptualising narrative as non-linear, partial and contradictory. The notion of im/possible spaces is an important contribution to knowledge, as I discuss below.

These processes around im/possibility were particularly noted in school with regard to catch up intervention, which was predominantly constructed by the young people as a "possible space". Although reading levels were reported by the young people who attended these classes as going up, giving them a sense of achievement, through its focus on print literacy skills, other aspects of learning such as vocabulary, cultural knowledge or speech and language needs were not constructed as being addressed in depth. This was also reflected in whole class teaching which, even where valued by the young people, often drew on monolingual, monocultural and/or "reading to learn" approaches which are critiqued by multilingual, refugee and inclusion scholars as not addressing complex learner identities (Cummins, 2009; Wallace, 2013; Gonzalez, Tefera and Artiles, 2015). Furthermore, although some of my participants constructed non-traditional subjects as possible spaces, they were still constrained by print literacy demands, deficit discourses around them as non-ideal learners, and the government's focus on academic subjects which converged with families' aspirations. In core subjects, streaming and setting systems potentially constrained the young people's attainment despite their desire to construct themselves as succeeding in these disciplines. The analysis emphasised that "teacher-helpers", a notion explored in refugee literature, need to be not just compassionate and supportive (Oikonomidoy, 2010; Pinson, Arnot and Candappa, 2011). If they are to help at the intersection of refugee, gender and SEND, they need to use appropriate inclusive, pedagogical approaches, recognising the complexity and intersectionality of the young people's learner identities (Wallace, 2013; Gonzalez, Tefera and Artiles, 2015). Without this, both from teachers and within wider school systems and approaches, the ways in which these young people could successfully negotiate "educational help" were constrained: what were constructed as possible spaces were in fact never completely possible.

In response to these constraints, some of the young people took up a fragmented learner identity that worked for them, whether in conforming, abject or partial ways, thus "passing" as some sort of learner, the complexities present but hidden. Ways of addressing these

issues, although still flawed and partial, were suggested through the homework club that I ran. This became a space where understandings about how refugee learner identities and a need for "educational help" might intersect were positively explored. The young people's negotiations within the club demonstrated the ways in which, within a supportive, affirming context, notions of "failure" can be interrogated and challenged, thus helping to counter stigma and build self-esteem.

In the community, volunteer or paid tuition along with family members' help was taken up within migratory discourses about social mobility. This meant that these spaces were constructed as sites of possibility for the young people, where to a certain extent they could resist stigma around SEND, EAL, disadvantage and underachievement. However, the success of their performances seemed to be contingent on the young person's learning needs and the subject studied. These intersected with generational, gendered negotiations with those who were tutoring them and with their parents. This highlighted the need for notions of "educational help" to be recognised and explored in these spaces. More informal learning activities at home and at school were often constructed as a way of deflecting from, resisting or refuting subjectifications of failure by the young people, these negotiations being significantly gendered, racialised and classed. Notions of sport as a boys' activity, resisted by or denied to girls, were inflected with poverty in terms of the scope of opportunities and safety concerns within the family. The girls accessed more structured activities such as cookery and sport through after school and community clubs. In parent narratives, although sport was constructed as distracting boys from studying, it was also used to channel their interests, protect them and mitigate a sense of failure in their formal education, whereas the girls were not constructed as requiring this same management. Here and at school, SEND was potentially masked and hidden by the ways in which informal learning opportunities were drawn upon within prevailing ability discourses, whilst a focus on academic subjects foreclosed opportunities for purposeful recognition of success in these areas. Furthermore, in the madrassah, the ways in which the young people were constructed by family members or themselves as failing to make progress highlighted this space as constrained and even impossible as a learning environment.

Finally, caring for and guiding younger brothers and sisters was an expected role for both boys and girls in the home. Although in some instances this afforded a chance to be recognised as possible learners, it also had the potential to expose vulnerabilities and the need for "educational help", which could attract stigma as well as supportive responses. Intersections of gender and age were particularly implicated in these negotiations. Expectations that only girls, particularly the eldest, are expected to take up caring roles was challenged in some of the families where boys performed this role but conformed to in

others. There were indications that the more traditional, gendered take up of these roles by the girls could serve to mask their need for "educational help", and/or put added pressure on them as they struggled to succeed at school as well as look after siblings. Once more, a space that was constructed as possible was in fact inflected with significant stress around impossibility.

My study thus develops further work with migrant young people and their families (Frederickson and Cline 2015; Gonzáles and Artiles 2015) to demonstrate that understanding how refugee young people learn in the community both in formal and informal ways can not only challenge deficit views of multilingual learners in school, but also inform understandings of the need for "educational help".   It also builds on findings in sociological research into how working class, migrant families negotiate learning opportunities for their children through indicating the ways in which SEND is implicated in these processes (Vincent, Neal and Iqbal, 2018). These findings challenge present multilingual and syncretic literature studies into the ways in which migrant young people negotiate "safe" learning spaces in the community and in the family through highlighting the need to reflect on how SEND intersects with young people's performances and to consider its gendered dimensions. It demonstrates the importance of interrogating gendered, generational sibling relationships around notions of SEND within refugee and other migrant families, challenging assumptions and gaining insights around the "helper" role that many siblings perform. Thus, spaces considered in these other bodies of literature as potentially "safe" for refugee learners were shown in my study to be not necessarily so, or to be so in partial and problematic ways.

Interrogating these learning spaces through my research through the lens of im/possibility demonstrated that this concept can be an effective tool in understanding how refugee young people negotiate a sense of belonging as learners. Although this draws on the social model of disability around contextualised barriers to learning and follows guidance within the Code around young-person-centred approaches, it could be used for all learners, not just those with SEND, thus resisting the limitations of categories and the accompanying stigma. The notion of im/possible spaces can be used to explore what is happening in particular situations or even moments to close down or open up learning opportunities, and to consider what might need to change or be built upon. It can also challenge teachers and senior leaders to analyse how spaces which they, families or young people assume to be possible are in fact not so, particularly around the constraints of withdrawal, monolingual and monocultural approaches, setting and streaming. Crucially, it creates opportunities for the complexity and individuality of a young person's learner identities to be appreciated within wider understandings of intersectionalities, focusing on why a particular performance is

being co-constructed rather than what type of learner they are. However, this can only be effective if employed by those who are fully committed to challenging racialised, gendered, classed assumptions, resisting innate, deficit models and seeing all young people as full of potential. Otherwise this notion could, as many have been before, be used to marginalise and confirm attitudes to those who are seen as not fitting in, as unable and unwanted.

9.2 Implications for Policy and Practice

The intention of this thesis was not to focus on the formal procedures around SEND identifications for Somali young people, but rather to explore their lived experiences at this point of inequalities. However, through the young people's narratives key issues have been raised around how policy and practice played out in their lived experiences, with some common themes emerging.   These findings initially point to the ways in which policy makers need to emphasise, and educators need to follow, known good practice more thoroughly for refugee young people in order appropriately to support them with issues raised by SEND. The study has particularly indicated the importance of welcoming strategies which find out about and appropriately share with staff a young person's and their family's pre- and post-migration experiences as learners, and a commitment to creating trusting relationships with families. It demonstrates the need to value and understand young people's multilingual, multiliterate learner identities in school as well as at home, and consistently challenge racialised, gendered, classed assumptions about their performances. However, inequalities at the intersection of gender, refugee and SEND have, as I have argued in Chapters 1 to 3, been present over the decades within which these systems were focused on in policy and in practice more than they were at the time of the field work. This suggests that these systems are not, in themselves, sufficient and demonstrates the need for more in-depth scrutiny into what might work.

At a wider policy level, my findings about the intertwining nature of learner identities within racialised, gendered, classed discourses point to the need for this to be recognised in the ways in which policies are framed and nuanced. Where the focus is on one particular aspect of learner identities, other dimensions should be referenced in detail, setting out clear guidance around the complexities that exist in understanding a young person's performance. Without this, the hidden nature of some dimensions can be further marked, whilst others may be fixed and pathologised, resulting in increased misunderstandings and marginalisation. Within all educational policies, racialised, gendered, classed assumptions around inability and disengagement should be firmly refuted.

Drawing on these findings, I argue that refugee learner identities are central to young people's schooling at the intersection with SEND, and that therefore all teachers need to

recognise and understand the complexity of these identities, whilst treating this information with sensitivity and mitigating any stigma and alienation. In order to ensure this happens, the silence around EAL and refugee categories in government policy urgently needs to be addressed. There should be a much stronger policy focus by the government and Ofsted on the importance of understanding and addressing language learning and belonging within all mainstream teaching. Without EAL and refugee pupils being prioritised at this level, expertise and a focus on their particular needs is at risk.   Given the current political approach to migrancy, organisations such as the Bell Foundation, NALDIC[7] and the EAL Academy advocate for EAL best practice within schools across the UK and push back against the "hostile environment" (Travis, 2013). Multi Academy Trusts, teaching schools and local authorities also have a vital role to play in upholding and developing best practice, resisting political decisions which threaten to further marginalise migrant young people. Here there also needs to be much more discussion about how practitioners, organisations and scholars concerned with SEND, EAL and refugee pupils' experiences of inequalities can inform each other around wider notions of inclusion and support each other's responses to political decisions. The knowledge and expertise within migrant and refugee communities around these experiences could also be shared more effectively with the very active SEND parent, community and charity sector. This is often led by white middle-class parents and professionals who similarly face uphill battles to be heard and included in SEND systems, albeit for different reasons.

The silence around EAL and refugee within other policies also needs to be addressed. Along with its emphasis on early intervention for those born in the UK, the Code of Practice (DfE and DoH, 2015) should highlight the need for EAL and refugee young people to receive prompt but not too hasty, careful, sensitive considerations around SEND where there are concerns about their learning. Furthermore, within policies about catch up and disadvantage, the commonalities and differences for EAL and refugee learners should be clearly set out and training focused on these pupils' distinct needs, including clear guidance around the need to learn in mainstream, language rich environments. Within this, SEND must always be considered as a possible aspect of intertwining learner identities, the policies signposting how "educational help" may be considered for those who could otherwise be misrecognised as simply "behind" or "underachieving".

At an inter-school and/or borough level, detailed information about a refugee young person's educational background, the intervention they received, and any concern staff have about their progress including considerations of SEND must be exchanged when young people

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[7] National Subject Association for English as an Additional Language

move schools. Furthermore, accountability structures should be set up, so that SEND assessments are completed at the two-year stage unless there are clear reasons why this is not appropriate, especially where a young person is soon due to transition to a new school. Due to the lack of local accountability within the diverse schooling system which now exists in England, this would need to be established through local networks, and would be reliant on good relationships between schools.

Within schools, following on from the removal of ring-fenced funding for EAL and refugee pupils, the mainstreaming of their support and teaching could be a positive move, as it should mean that all teachers take responsibility for these pupils' progress. However, for this to be appropriately in place, systematic, regular training needs to be provided for all staff in how sensitively to identify a possible refugee background, the inequalities that all refugee young people and their families face around education in the post migratory as well as pre-migratory context, and how to frame this difference in positive rather than deficit ways. The need for training is constantly stated by those who work in this field (Andrews, 2009; Foley, Sangster and Anderson, 2013; Gladwell and Chetwynd, 2018). My study demonstrates that it must not just look at good practice, but also focus on a critical reflexive approach, challenging negative assumptions and recognising and respecting families' knowledge. It is here that racialised, classed, gendered assumptions around ability and underachievement can be interrogated, and possibilities for SEND explored where appropriate.

Within their work to building trusting relationships with families, schools not only need to adopt the positive, affirming approach to multilingualism and migrancy referenced above, they also should ensure that staff consistently refute notions of inability and use language carefully to convey notions of progress and attainment, not deficiency. Training in this area regarding all pupils, not just those identified as SEND, is important so that converging school-home deficit discourses around inability are disrupted and resisted. Schools should ensure that parents and carers are clear about the expected progress in English fluency over time, know the different support strategies in the UK compared with their home countries, and their rights to negotiate these for their child. To inform this process, in formal reporting systems to families, schools could consider developing bespoke systems for EAL and refugee learners which encompass progress in English fluency. This would ensure that parents and young people know what level of fluency they are at, what areas they need to develop what their expected rate of progress should be, and inform expectations in curriculum subjects. This work needs to be carried out with professional interpreters and multilingual staff acting as advocates to ensure clear communication and to establish good, trusting relationships between school staff and families.

Where SEND support is being considered, my study has indicated that the term "educational help" is a vital tool for staff to use with young people and their families whilst drawing on a social model of disability approach. This helps to resist medicalised discourses around SEND and therefore better engages rather than alienates young people and their families. Furthermore, my findings have shown that staff need clear training and information on how to explain UK SEND systems to families who have very different experiences of what SEND means, or little knowledge of what learning difficulties mean. If staff had known about Somali families' commitment to caring for and protecting children with disabilities and understood the families' anxiety that their children were being categorised as unable, mutual understandings about how learner identities are conceptualised could have been constructed. Stories of learning and the possibility of "educational help" should be the main initial focus, not assessments and medicalised language which can alienate those pupils and their families whom teachers wish to support. Furthermore, when discussing SEND support, my study has pointed to the vital resource that advocates and interpreters can be for families and schools within SEND systems. To protect the young person and ensure full understanding for all involved, the Code of Practice should stipulate that interpreters must be employed for all meetings, and young people, siblings or other family members not used as language brokers. Although the Code states that information must be "accessible" (DfE and DoH, 2015, p. 21), the lack of reference to interpreters leaves this directive open to compromise, and thus jeopardises understanding and places the young person at risk. Case studies proving the social and economic value gained by spending money on an interpreter, which then helps ensure the right support is put in place, could help to persuade schools to spend some of their limited budgets in this way. The role of advocates should similarly be emphasised to persuade schools that this can facilitate mutual understandings and ensure that family members from refugee backgrounds are fully included, their concerns heard, and their confidence increased in discussing what they know about their children's learning.

From young people's perspectives, this study has proved the rich insights which can be gained when trust is built through discussions where they can explore their awareness of the ways in which they learn best, their agency in negotiating the support they feel they need, building their self-esteem and managing the accompanying stigma. Providing training for all teachers in how to create and sustain these relationships and approaches should be a key aspect of a school's approach to all learners, but particularly those who may feel marginalised.

9.3 Opportunities for further research

My study has demonstrated the importance of educational research focusing on equalities not just for those who have SEND identifications but also for those who do not have, but may require "educational help". Research around SEND, although increasingly approached from an intersectional perspective on social identities, generally does not encompass the complexities of intertwining learner identities in any detail. Now that pupil premium programmes are more established than when the fieldwork was conducted for this study, explorations of how refugee young people's learning needs are supported within these approaches would be useful, particularly at the intersection with notions of disruption and SEND, including mental health. Furthermore, it would be beneficial to conduct a more wide-ranging study on the impact of the removal of ring-fenced EAL funding on EAL and refugee pupils' allocation to catch up classes at significant points in their schooling, the consequence for their achievement and how far this process interacts with SEND considerations.

With regard to families, this study has demonstrated the importance of understanding the ways in which refugee parents and other family members negotiate notions of SEND with their children, schools and within their communities. A cross-cultural study with families could investigate commonalities and differences in the ways in which these processes are played out within a wider range of families from different backgrounds. Furthermore, an exploration into the impact of using interpreters and advocates within SEND processes is urgently needed to inform present policy and practice. In community settings, my findings point to the need to explore in more depth the impact of learning in out-of-school settings for refugee young people who require "educational help". This study only touched briefly on the significance of paid tuition, and this demands further attention, particularly as the rise of "home education" for young people who have been excluded from school means that some families pay for their children who may have unidentified SEND to attend private tutoring organisations. Although some are monitored by Ofsted, these often offer limited teaching in hours and subjects, with little accountability of how SEND is catered for or what examination results are achieved (Longfield, 2017; Daulby, 2018; House of Commons Education Committee, 2018a).

Finally, building on the ways in which my study traced learner identity performances over time, it would be very informative to follow through young people's experiences of learning success and failure over a longer period, comparing those who have limited SEND support and those who have formal identifications. As I write this conclusion, I am mindful of the difficulties that the young people who were my participants continued to face in their education. Out of the ones with whom I was still in touch through work, four had readers and/or writers for their GCSEs, but the three who did not have formal SEND identifications

then struggled to access sixth form courses and were at risk of dropping out. One young person had made enough progress in the bottom stream to not be considered for an EHC plan but was struggling with engaging with school. Another was finally being put through the EHC process, but only when threatened with exclusion, whilst a further young person was excluded and ended up in private tuition, and one was moved outside London at a point when they were at risk of child exploitation, and were not engaging with school. This quite depressing summary demonstrates the need for research across education and employment sectors to understand how SEND interventions and identifications can help schools not only with short-term goals for young people to gain specific grades, but create possibilities for long term wellbeing, achievement and employment.

9.4 Final Reflections

The overwhelming sense I have had through conducting this research is one of vulnerability. I was anxious about how to use power ethically whilst feeling powerless and struggled with the ways that professional as well as personal positionalities could be instrumental as well as constraining. My change of job from teacher to project worker was instrumental in how the methodology for this research developed. My initial planning drew on my fairly powerful position within a school. Once I moved to work for the charity, in what I felt from a professional perspective was a far less powerful position, it was only when the school-based field work faltered, that I turned to work out of desperation. However, in hindsight it was here that the study started to develop in depth. At Rowan I had access to young people with SEND identifications, and data from the homework club and some interviews that, although I was unsure of their purpose, became in the end a central part of the analysis. Then through work I had the opportunity to recruit a vital group of participants whose learning families and my colleagues were concerned about, but who had not been formally assessed for SEND, and who, due to their trusting relationships with me and my colleagues, were happy for their families to take part. I learnt not to be guided by a past position in relation to research, but always to reflect on the present and what opportunities that affords, whilst not making assumptions about how to gain access to participants and who they should necessarily be. Finally, I realised I needed to keep going on the journey, being open about what the data might look like, not discounting anything and accepting my positionality, however troubled, as a key part of the process.

My quite unique positionalities as researcher, teacher and project worker enabled me to bring young people's, parents' and teachers' viewpoints together about an aspect of learner identities that is stigmatised, often hidden and misunderstood, and to explore this at home and in the community as well as at school. I hope my findings will serve to emphasise that to understand whether refugee young people need "educational help", rather than ignoring

other aspects of their learner identities, these need to be focused on in more depth and with increased insistence. In particular, the study hopefully demonstrates that engaging purposefully and thoroughly with refugee families and communities in considerations of "educational help" is fundamental to schools' understandings of a young person's learner identities, whatever assumptions they may have about family members' knowledge of education.

I also hope that this study will stimulate more consideration in research and in practice of how "educational help" intersects with other aspects of minoritised and marginalised young people's learner identities, particularly at this crucial time where there are serious concerns around educational inequalities for these young people (Demie and McLean, 2017; Longfield, 2017; Gladwell and Chetwynd, 2018; House of Commons Education Committee, 2018a; NALDIC, 2019). My findings about the need to question assumptions about how learner identities are negotiated may act against prevailing educational discourses through which pupils are labelled in singular ways to meet stringent targets, or to negate them as impossible learners. I hope I have shown that it is only through interrogating what works for young people positioned at the margins, seeking to understand the complexity of their learner identity performances in different spaces at home and at school that we can discover what impossibility means for them and engage with ways of co-constructing possibility.

Whilst for refugee young people who need "educational help", opportunities for their learner identities to be appropriately recognised and supported seem to be constrained within the present educational policy context, within these limitations there are possibilities. This study has suggested that whether through community groups, charities and tutoring, individual schools or within classes and one-to-one teacher-pupil-family relationships, opportunities for change and transformation exist. Wherever spaces are opened up for young people to be able to explore who they are as learners, even if these experiences are partial, they still offer a way forward: it starts with asking the young person about their lived experiences of education within a safer context, whilst being open that our version of the story may not be an informed, useful or productive one on which to rely.

Completing this thesis has given me a greater understanding of the questions to ask and a greater knowledge of who I am as a teacher, researcher and advocate. Thus, hopefully I can contribute more robustly to theoretical debates, practical discussions and decisions around how we at school, in the community and in families educate and care for this group of young people. It has challenged how I construct disability with regard to myself and those around me and increased my awareness around how I perceive others as needing help and support. As a learner myself, I have experienced through this thesis what it means to be studying within stressful conditions, through illness and dealing with lack of confidence. The

"process of unbecoming and becoming" that Fox and Allan (2014, p. 111) suggest makes up the doctoral journey has felt very raw at times. It has even made me face my own disability: listening back to recordings of interviews, I realised how much my hearing loss affected my receptive understanding and finally got a hearing aid, which has significantly enhanced my ability to lead and be involved in groups at work and in my personal life.

To the teacher who felt she had failed to answer the question about SEND, I would say, do not stop what you are doing, find out what SEND assessments and support can offer and implement it within your systems and structures where refugee young people and families have built trust in you. To the young people who took part in the research, I would say keep finding your teacher-helpers and possible spaces, whoever and wherever they are, drawing on all the help you can get, however flawed it is. At the same time do not stop believing in who you are as learners, and your determination to be recognised as that learner, however much the world around you seems to be silencing you. To parents and teachers, I would say, whatever the complexities and difficulties that seem to face us, we must be determined to leave no stone unturned both in the structures that exist and in our self-reflexivity as we seek to understand how our young people can learn best and achieve.

Appendices

Appendix A: Example of information leaflet

TAKING PART

You decide if you want to take part in this project and, even if you say 'yes', you can drop out at any time or say that you don't want to answer some questions.

You can tell me that you want to take part and we will record this on a form that you keep.

THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

I will show you a report and I will also ask you to look at what I find and tell me what you think.

The project will be written up for my PhD, which will be examined by my university. I will also write a report for the ESRC (Economic and Social Research Council) which is funding the research.

CONTACT DETAILS

Please contact me for more details:

Kathryn Kashyap
Research student

phone: 07792 240074
Email: kkashyap@ioe.ac.uk

If you have any concerns about the project please contact:

Dr. Jenny Parkes
Research supervisor
phone: 020 7612 6557
email: j.parkes@ioe.ac.uk

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E·S·R·C
ECONOMIC & SOCIAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

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University of London

DOING WELL IN SCHOOL
A RESEARCH PROJECT

INFORMATION

This leaflet tells you about my research. I hope it will help you to decide if you want to take part in the project and answer any questions you have.

Kathryn Kashyap,
PhD research student,
Institute of Education,
London

Why is this research being done?

I want to find out how Somali young people who moved to the UK learn best in school and who they find helps them most in their learning.

I am interested in talking with you because I want to know what you think and to learn from your experiences.

Who will be in the project?

I am looking for a few boys and girls to talk with me about learning at school and at home. The young people who take part will choose who else I talk to about their learning, maybe a family member or a teacher or a friend.

What will happen during the research?

I will talk with you on your own or in a small group two to three times over a year. I will agree with you when and where is the best place to talk. I will ask you which lessons you would like me to watch at school, or other things you would like me to watch e.g. a homework club.

DETAILS ABOUT THE PROJECT

What questions will be asked?

- how you learn best;
- what you find hard in your learning;
- how you find support to make progress;
- what you succeed in and why.

For each question I will ask about learning at home as well as at school.

What will happen to you if you take part?

I will tape record the discussions and type them up later. I am not looking for right or wrong answers, only for what you really think. I and the interpreter (if used) will be the only person who listens to this recording.

Could there be problems for you if you take part?

I hope you will enjoy talking to me. If the you feel uncomfortable or don't want to answer, we can stop. **If you have any problems with the project, please tell me or Dr. Jenny Parkes at the Institute of Education.**

Will doing the research help you?

I hope you will enjoy helping me. The research will mainly collect ideas to help Somali children and their families in the future to learn well in school and at home and to help teachers to know best how to support their learning. I hope the activities will be enjoyable for you.

Who will know that you have been in the research?

Only your family and the people you choose for me to talk to will know that you have been in my research.

If you need help with anything about school I will ask someone from Love to Learn to talk with you about it.

I will change all the names of people and places. Everyone who takes part in the research will agree not to talk about it with other people. I will keep tapes and notes in a safe place. Only me, my tutor and my research assistant will read them.

Appendix B: Example of consent form

Kathryn Kashyap

PhD Research Student

Institute of Education

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London

WC1H 0AL

07792 240074

kkashyap@ioe.ac.uk

DOING WELL IN SCHOOL

A RESEARCH PROJECT

Parent/ Carer Consent form- Focus Group

Date: ....

Name of child: ....

Name of parent/ carer...

Present at information meeting:

.... (researcher)

.... (interpreter)

.... (parent/ carer)

Agreement to take part in research:

I understand the information leaflet about the research.   ☐ (please tick)

I agree for my child to take part in the focus group   ☐ (please tick)

I agree for my child to come to homework club   ☐ (please tick)

I understand that my child can stop taking part at any point ☐ (please tick)

If you have any concerns about this project, please contact me (details above) or Dr Jenny Parkes, phone: 020 7612 6557, email: j.parkes@ioe.ac.uk.
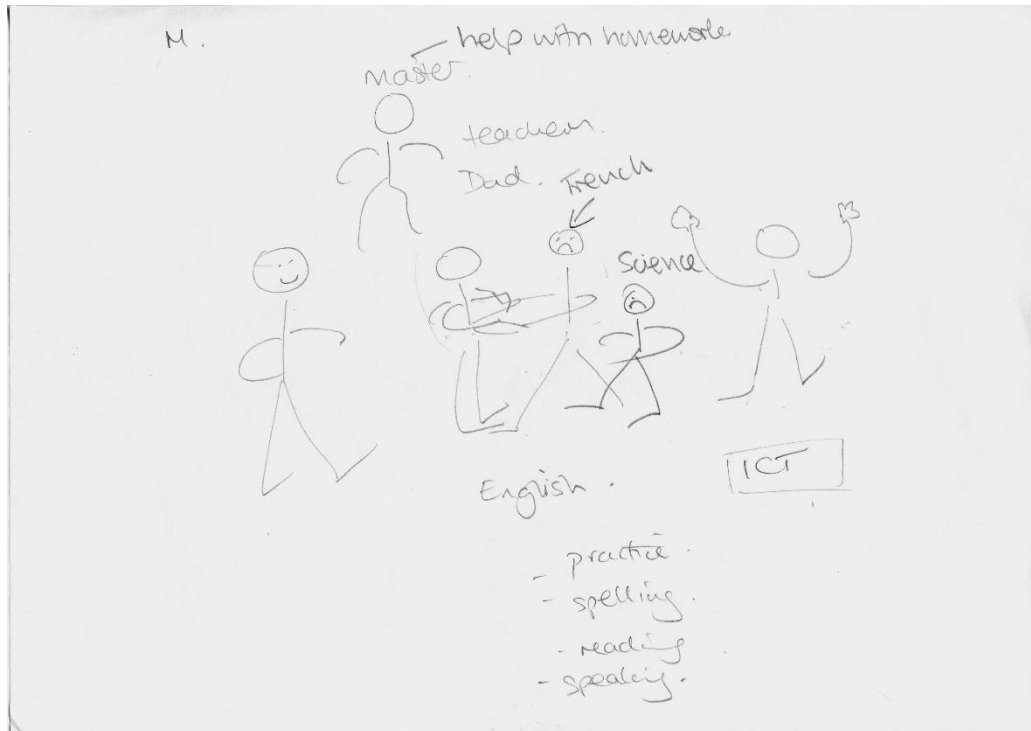
Appendix C: Examples of diagrams used in interviews

   a) **Ruqiya's river of life exercise**

b)

Naseem's diagram of learning based on a Jackie Chan fight

(drawn by Kathryn)

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