Excluded from school: An exploration of the experiences of young people who have been permanently excluded

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Abstract

To date, little research has focused on the perspectives of young people who have been permanently excluded from school. Given the well documented short-term and long-term consequences for both the individual and society as a whole, which includes reduced life chances and wider social exclusion, this issue remains a government priority.

The present study was carried out to develop a better understanding of the experiences and needs of young people who have been permanently excluded from school, a group seldom consulted about their views. A qualitative methodology was chosen to address the exploratory nature of the research. The study is based on an interpretative phenomenological analysis of the accounts of 6 adolescent boys. Semi-structured interviews were conducted and analysed using this methodology.

Three superordinate themes emerged from the data analysis. These included the need to belong, to survive and adjust positively in the face of adversity. The discussion considers how young people can be supported with reference to psychological theory. The implications of the findings for school staff and other professionals working with young people, as well as for educational psychology practice, are discussed.

Declaration

I hereby declare that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own.

Signed: *Kelly Moore*

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In the mid 1990s when permanent exclusion rates reached their highest peak, at 12, 458, government officials responded by stating that any democracy could not afford to write off over 12, 000 of its young people. Since this time, reducing school exclusions has become the focus of a range of government initiatives. In addition to this, there has been a plethora of research which addresses rates, causes and the impact of exclusion. Relevant literature in relation to these areas will be given consideration in Chapter 2. It has become increasingly clear there are a range of negative outcomes associated with permanent exclusion from school. These include occupying lower status jobs, greater unemployment when compared with those with similar backgrounds (Hallam et al, 2007) and having a propensity to offend. The Audit Commission (1996), found that 42% of offenders, who were of school age, had been excluded from school. It is therefore in the interests of the individual and society as a whole to reduce exclusions.

Eliciting the views of young people who have been excluded from school has largely been neglected until recently. The voice of adult professionals continues to permeate the literature base on this topic and formulate decisions for dealing with pupils with special educational needs and problem behaviour in schools. The present study aims to go some way toward addressing the lack of quality research conducted with young people through exploring the perspectives and subjective experiences of those directly impacted upon. In order to come to a better understanding of this phenomenon, it seems important to listen to what the young people have to say, thus providing a fresh perspective. Seeking young people's views reflects the timely national context (Every Child Matters, 2003; Removing Barriers to Achievement, 2004), which calls for the involvement of children and young people in matters affecting them.

This research study was commissioned within the local authority where I am employed as an Educational Psychologist in Training (EPiT). It was envisaged that in my capacity as an EPiT, I could contribute directly to addressing a local authority priority and indeed a national priority i.e. high exclusionary rates, through evidence based practice. Evidence based practice is reflective of the dominant ideology reflected in government policy in the last decade. This aims to address a perceived lack of consistency in quality and inequality of service provision with the aim, within education, as with other professional groups of basing practice on the best possible evidence of what works (Fox, 2003; Cameron, 2006). The local picture is reflective of the national picture in terms of characteristics of those excluded. The majority of exclusions occur at secondary level. Boys are four times more likely to be excluded than girls, over half of permanent exclusions take place across National Curriculum years 9 and 10 and the most common reason cited as 'persistent disruptive behaviour.' In negotiating this research study with the local authority, it was hoped that the findings would provide a greater understanding of a complex phenomenon which may influence the ethos and practices of schools within the borough.

My commitment to undertaking this research from both a professional and personal level stems from a desire to challenge practices which might serve to discriminate against the young people with whom I work.
As an EPiT, part of my role is to support potentially vulnerable groups. For example, children with special educational needs, with communication disorders, with emotional and behavioural difficulties and with impairments of a physical or sensory nature. Looking at the problem of exclusion from the perspective of young people is an opportunity to enhance their participation in their education and subsequently other decision-making processes which affect their lives. It also denotes a stance where young people can be viewed as part of the solution, not just the problem. The implementation of Government legislation such as Every Child Matters (2003), born out of a need for services to work together to improve children's care, is pertinent to this research given the

impact it has had on professional practice. Much research (Farrell et al, 2006; Squires et al, 2007) has focussed on the need for educational psychologists to contribute toward meeting the needs of children and young people, as set out in the Every Child Matters (2003) agenda. This agenda is particularly relevant to the research into the phenomenon of exclusion as it highlights the importance of nurturing all aspects of children and young people's development. The third and the fourth key outcomes, 'enjoying and achieving at school' and 'making a positive contribution in the community' are pertinent to the research into young people's experience of education and exclusion. Therefore conducting this research will be valuable in terms of making a contribution toward helping to achieve two key outcomes for young people.

This chapter has briefly outlined the rationale for the study into adolescents' perceptions of their educational experiences including permanent exclusion from school.

In Chapter 2, relevant literature is reviewed in order to give an overview of the research area, highlighting gaps in the existent literature. Here an argument is put forward as to why greater understanding of the experiences of young people, who have been excluded from school, is important.

In Chapter 3, the selection of the research design and the methodology are discussed.

In Chapter 4, the research findings are outlined.

In Chapter 5, the research findings are discussed in relation to both the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, and also in relation to new literature connected to the emerging themes.

Chapter 6, contains an evaluation of the qualitative methodology selected and considers implications for professional practice.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1   Introduction

This review outlines the relevant literature to the topic area under investigation. It attempts to acknowledge school exclusion as a complex social phenomenon and proposes that it is best understood by looking at the interactions and interrelationships of individual, institutional and societal factors. The literature in the field of school exclusion particularly relevant to this study will be considered across four broad areas; (1) Incidence of exclusion (2) Impact on the individual and society (3) Initiatives designed to reduce disaffection and exclusion and (4) The importance of children and young people's views in educational research.

In an attempt to look in more detail at exclusion and the causes, this chapter begins with a brief consideration of the evolution of exclusion including current definitions before examining the wider social and political contexts and the debates which have arisen in this area. Far reaching implications for the individual and society as a whole will then be explored before a consideration of the preventative and reactive initiatives to reduce exclusion. Finally, it is argued that there is a need to understand more about the life and education, up to and including the point of exclusion of those who have been permanently excluded from school.

2.2 The phenomenon of school exclusion

2.2.1   School exclusion as disciplinary action

Throughout history and whenever education has been formalised in the UK, there have been a number of young people who have been considered a challenge to teach and deemed uneducable within the

school system. The older terminology of 'suspension' and 'expulsion' has been replaced by 'exclusion.' Essentially all three involve 'the removal of difficult children from their school' (Wright, Weekes & McGlaughlin, 2000). Exclusion refers to a process whereby a head teacher suspends a pupil for a set number of days (fixed-term) or where a pupil is removed from the school role and is not allowed to return to the excluding school (permanent). Exclusion should only be resorted to in response to serious breaches of the law or the school's policy on behaviour (Education Act, 1993).

The most serious form of disciplinary action available to schools is permanent exclusion and should only be used in extreme cases as a last resort. Many excluded pupils experience a number of fixed-term exclusions prior to permanent exclusion indicating a pattern of problematic behaviour. Some pupils may be excluded in the event of a serious incident involving violence, assault or carrying a dangerous weapon.

There is an appeals procedure for both types of exclusion. This appeals procedure is not widely pursued e.g. in 1997/98, following 12,300 permanent exclusions being reported, 1,300 appeals were lodged by parents (DfEE, 1999). In 2004/05 approximately 1,090 parental appeals against permanent exclusion were lodged, indicating a decreasing trend and a 4 per cent decrease from the previous year (Hallam & Rogers, 2008).

2.2.2   Rates of exclusion

Significant numbers of young people do appear to experience difficulties particularly during their secondary school education and recent years have seen a marked increase in the number of exclusions from school. The early 1990s saw exclusion become a major concern for educationalists, the government, the media and the public. Prior to this time a few academics and professionals had researched why some

pupils were excluded (Galloway, Ball, Blomfield & Syed. 1982; McLean, 1987).

Since 1996 schools have been required to submit Annual Schools' Census returns to the DfEE, this has provided data on the number of permanent exclusions each year. Figures published in 2001-2 (DfES) showed that exclusions had reached an 'unacceptably high peak' of 12,458 in 1996 (Rendall & Stuart, 2005). In response, government policies aimed to reduce exclusions by a third by 2002. Figures published in 2006 (DfES) highlighted observable reductions and rates stabilized at 9,440 in 2004-5. The most recent exclusion figures published by DCSF (2008) would suggest that exclusion rates continue to fall. The latest statistics for the period 2006/7, reported 8,680 permanent exclusions.

Hallam (2007) explains that this focus on exclusion levels was born out of a lack of valid and reliable ways to measure a wider range of behaviour in schools. The issue of behaviour in schools will be afforded consideration later on in this chapter. Problems with accepting these statistics at face value have been widely acknowledged in the literature (Stirling, 1992; Vulliamy & Webb, 2000; Munn & Lloyd, 2005; Hallam, 2007; Hallam & Rogers, 2008). The limitations are two fold. Firstly, official figures provided by the local education authority are widely recognized to be underestimates of the actual number of pupils excluded from school on both a permanent or temporary basis. Managed moves resorted to by headteachers to avoid financial penalties (Harris, Eden & Blair, 2000; Munn, Lloyd & Cullen, 2000), the desire not to disadvantage pupils through the stigma of exclusion and inviting parents to find another school in lieu of a exclusion (Vulliamy & Webb, 2000) can all account for this. Therefore higher levels of hidden exclusions have been contributed to, by the pressure to reduce official exclusions (Munn et al, 2000). Secondly, there is evidence to suggest that disciplinary exclusion is not used consistently within schools or from school to school, despite government guidelines. Hallam & Rogers (2008) found that some schools use pre-determined categories to characterise behaviour which

may serve to over dramatise certain incidents e.g. the term assault may be used to categorise an act of playground fighting. Munn et al (2000) reiterates this point of varying practice in schools and talks of 'an overall impression.......of schools responding in idiosyncratic ways to individual pupils showing behavioural difficulties' (p.23). In addition to this, exclusion figures demonstrate that exclusion is rarely the result of a seriously violent incident (Scottish Executive, 2005). Gordon (2001), in an examination of numerical trends in the 1990s, found that exclusion was not and is not being used as a last resort. Added to this, McCluskey (2008) argues that certain groups of young people are much more likely to be excluded than others. This will be considered in the section below.

2.2.3   School exclusion: Who is at risk?

Parsons (1999), Blyth and Milner (1996) and Hayden (1997) provide a detailed analysis of the data in terms of those groups who appear most at risk. The figures suggest that rates of exclusion at primary level are on the increase. Figures published in 2000 (DfES) showed that 13% of those permanently excluded, were primary age. Hayden (1997) suggests exclusion is particularly detrimental at primary level as children with a history of exclusion are more likely to be excluded in the future, gaining a negative reputation which follows them through school. Parsons (1999) found permanent exclusions from the secondary sector accounted for 83% of the total exclusions during the period of 1990-1998, and the majority of these young people were boys. Recent figures published by the DCSF (2008) highlight that this pattern is persistent over time. In the period 2006/7, the exclusion rate for boys was nearly four times higher than for girls, representing 80% of the total number of permanent exclusions. The most common year to be excluded is year 9 and 10. Pupils with Special Educational Needs are 9 times more likely to be excluded than the rest of the school population. This disproportionate representation of boys, Afro-Carribean and mixed race pupils, Looked After Children, Traveller children and children with special educational needs within the excluded population is widely recognised (Charlton,

Panting & Willis, 2004; Macrae, Maguire & Milborne 2003; Parsons, 1999; 2005). McCluskey (2008) suggests that the consistent over-representation of young men in the statistics has been neglected in government policy and in school practice and calls for the gendered nature of behaviour to be considered.

In summary, quantitative data related to exclusion rates is widely recognized as unreliable and not a true reflection of behaviour in schools, and is to some extent socially constructed (Vulliamy & Webb, 2000). Similarly, quantitative data in relation to the characteristics of excluded pupils, although useful and accurate, does not provide a deeper understanding of the processes that serve to put these young people at risk. There is a need to understand experiences of those excluded. Whilst it is recognised that this alone will not eradicate the problem, it will contribute toward shedding new light on the phenomenon.

2.3 The wider social and political context

Spiralling numbers of permanent school exclusions in England are of national public concern across the political spectrum. Permanent exclusions rose from around 3,000 in 1992 to over 13,000 in 1997-8 (Parsons, 1999, p.22). Preventative and reactive measures to combat school exclusion have been a priority for the Labour Government since coming to power in 1997. At this time, Vulliamy and Webb (2000) asserted:

> *'Tackling social exclusion has become a major policy goal of the government and in this context school exclusions are viewed as a problem because of their perceived link with a section of society alienated from the mainstream by poverty, unemployment and criminality (Social Excusion Unit)' (p. 120).*

There have been some observable reductions since school exclusion were set as a government priority. A 30% decrease was recorded in permanent exclusions in 1999-2000, when exclusions fell from 13, 000 in

1997-8 to 8,300 in that recorded year (Rendall & Stuart, 2005). The unreliable nature of quantitative data should be borne in mind here.

Vulliamy and Webb (2000) argue that the response of the government to this upsurge in permanent exclusions has been unsuccessful in sufficiently addressing this problem, owing to previous Conservative reforms. It is widely held that the quasi-market structure of schools, left in place from the previous government, with an intensified focus on the standards agenda serves to undermine the inclusion agenda. League tables of examination results only highlight the academic aims of schools at the expense of the pastoral. The literature suggests that a huge contributory factor for the rise of exclusions has been on the marketisation of schools and its impact on inclusiveness (Parfrey,1994; Slee, Weiner & Tomlinson, 1998; Hodgson, 1999; Harris et al, 2000; Munn et al., 2000).

> *'Strategies to promote the government's standards agenda, such as publishing school league tables based on national curriculum assessment and Ofsted inspections, [which] are undermining the inclusion agenda. (Vulliamy & Webb, 2003, pp.45-6)*

Rendall & Stuart (2005) state that increased competitiveness between schools and the need for schools to attract pupils to secure funding have meant that schools have become less tolerant of pupils with challenging behaviour.

It appears that changes in society are leading to changes in the school system and education. This, in turn, is leading to the production of a group of children who do not 'fit in' and are subsequently excluded from school because of the reasons outlined above (Rendall & Stuart, 2005).

Parsons (1999) argues that the policies adopted by educationalists and politicians can either prevent or encourage the withdrawal of certain pupils from schools. The problems of disaffection are shared by all societies of western democracy but are dealt with differently. Gordon

(2001) provides evidence for the UK as having the highest exclusion rate in Europe. Lown (2005) also provides commentary on the UK's response to poor behaviour in schools:

> 'There are European countries that do not recognise or accept the process of exclusion from school at all. Yet in the UK the notion of the acceptability of exclusion has not yet been challenged or transparently and usefully debated' (p.47)

It is beyond the scope of this review to compare approaches to challenging behaviour at the international and national level, however it is interesting to note that some studies propose that guidance and policy on how to prevent exclusion and manage behaviour in the UK continues to encompass a broadly punitive approach (Gordon, 2001; Parsons, 2005). It is worth considering historically the broader role of schools. Bloom's taxonomy (in Fitz-Gibbon, 2000, p. 7) states that schools should have three goals: cognitive, affective and behavioural. Affective goals are related to aspirations, happiness and being satisfied in school. Behavioural goals relate to clear and precise learning outcomes. To what end are schools in the modern UK society helping pupils achieve affective goals?

2.3.1 Impact

It has been shown that there are not only short-term and long-term consequences for the young person excluded from school but also consequences for society at large. Castle & Parsons (1997) summarized the disadvantages of using exclusion as a means of dealing with disruption and disaffection which include immediate financial costs, longer term financial costs, human costs such as highly, stretched services and divisiveness and alienation amongst a section of youth.

Wider social and political motivations exist for wanting to reduce numbers of exclusions and reflect concerns about the costs of exclusion both human and financial. Wider societal concerns about social cohesion

are coupled with meeting labour force needs of a labour government (Parsons, 1999). At the peak of school exclusions in 1996-7, Parson & Castles (1998) estimate the costs of excluding pupils rose to £81 million, as opposed to £34 million if educated in mainstream.

The costs are also high for the young person. The literature suggests that permanent exclusions are associated with under-attainment and reduced employment opportunities (Social Exclusion Unit, 1998), isolation and inaccessibility to social resources (Hayden, 1999) entry into crime (Audit Commission, 1999; Social Exclusion Unit, 1998; Parsons,1999) and increased participation in anti-social behaviour, youth offending and drug use (Ball and Connolly, 2000; McCrystal, Percy & Higgins, 2007).

In summary, the factors outlined in this section, particularly those relating to the quasi-market structure of schooling, hold particular significance for this study. Disaffected and non-conforming young people are at risk of becoming *'more marginalized in a system built on the operation of market forces'* (Lloyd-Smith & Tarr, 2000, p.59) This is evidenced through parents, rather than young people viewed as consumers of education, and financial rewards received by schools based on high academic achievement. School effectiveness is currently measured by exam performance, the barriers to this viewed as the unsuccessful pupils (Lloyd-Smith & Tarr, 2000). The implications are that vulnerable pupils considered as adding little to the school effectiveness agenda are not valued in schools. Recently there has been a growing surge of research aimed at listening to the voices of marginalized young people in school, in order to give status to their accounts of experience in a system designed to ensure others succeed (Tisdall & Dawson, 1994; Lloyd-Smith & Davies, 1995; Galloway, Rogers, Armstrong & Leo, 1998; Lloyd-Smith & Tarr, 2000).

2.4 Causes of exclusion

A survey of the literature suggests that a consideration of a complex interplay of systems operating at the level of society, the family, the school, peer groups and individual characteristics, influenced by an understanding of systems thinking can lead to a better understanding of the reasons behind exclusion from school. There has been a wealth of research (Parsons, 1996; 1999; 2005; Pomeroy, 2000; Rendall & Stuart, 2005) criticising literature on permanent exclusion for focusing on single levels of analysis.

The most commonly recorded reason accounting for permanent exclusion from school is physical or verbal violence (Ofsted, 1996; Social Exclusion Unit, 1998). Sellman, Bedward, Cole and Daniels (2002) argue that viewing permanent exclusion in such behavioural terms has too narrow a focus and attributes the cause to individual factors. Placing the blame within the individual links to the growing concerns since the 1990s, from the government, the media and educationalists about the perceived deterioration of behaviour in UK schools (Hallam & Rogers, 2008).

Hallam & Rogers (2008) stress that evidence supporting the previous statement comes from the rise in exclusion figures, whereby punishment using permanent exclusions is seen as the ultimate sanction within a sanctions framework for behaviour management. They acknowledge this is not a valid way to measure behaviour due to the variation within local authorities in terms of the same behaviour which may be tolerated in an inner city school but that might warrant exclusion in an outer borough school. Differences in schools in terms of behaviour management, where the same kinds of behaviour leads to different outcomes, and computer software with pre-determined categories serving to increase the seriousness of incidents contribute to such variation.

There is no doubting the high level of concern, noted by teachers, about behaviour especially in the modern secondary school. This is illustrated

by the abundance of resources generated in this area (Farrell, 2006; Gribble, 2006). Increased pressure on teachers to contribute to the standards agenda has been found to impact upon learner autonomy within the classroom. It has been found that this can result in negative effects on behaviour, as teachers may often put performance indicators before individual children's needs (Maguire, Macrae, Milbourne, 2003). It has also led to increased tensions amongst staff members, when attempting to balance the needs of an individual child who has become increasingly disruptive against the needs and welfare of a whole class. Parsons (1999) acknowledges inclusion of disruptive pupils *'remains a strain on teaching staff and sometimes a distressing and disturbing experience for other children'* (p.103).

2.4.1 Family risk factors and school exclusion

A range of family factors can affect children and young peoples' behaviour and ultimately their exclusion from school. Hayden (1997) found that 76 per cent of primary school aged children, excluded from school, came from families where support services had major concerns. It has been widely acknowledged that children living in families under stress are at most risk for exclusion (Galloway et al; McCarthy, Laing & Walker, 2004). Sources of stress within families considered to be risk factors include death and illness (Wilkin, Archer, Ridley, Fletcher-Campbell & Kinder, 2005), divorce and family conflict (Butler, 2003) and inconsistent parenting including absence of father figure (Gardener, Ward, Burton & Wilson, 2003). Rendall and Stuart (2005) compared families of excluded children with the families of a non-excluded comparison group and found *'excessive exposure to stress in families of excluded children'* (p.98). Whilst it is beyond the scope of this review to examine these risk factors in any great detail, they have been broadly outlined to demonstrate that the causes of poor behaviour and school exclusion are influenced by family factors which interact with those at the level of society, schools and the individual (Hallam & Rogers, 2008).

This evidence suggests it does not make sense to attribute deterioration in behaviour solely to individual characteristics. Castle and Parsons (1997), in their earlier work, asserted that behaviourally challenging pupils are a permanent feature of the education culture in the UK and called for a re-conceptualisation of the problem area which takes account of interplay of individual characteristics, family factors, and institutional factors such as the marketisation of schools. Castle and Parsons (1997) argue there is a need to withdraw from a within-child deficit model and acknowledge the difficulties in the systems, in which the pupil exists and how they serve to exacerbate the problem. Sellman, Bedward, Cole and Daniels (2002) assert that focusing on a single level of analysis implies a subtext locating the cause of the problem within the individual. This is often played out subtly in the language used to describe these young people.

In summary, the significance for this study of highlighting that discourses of dominance prevail to pathologise those young people who are excluded from school, serves to prioritise the importance of listening to the views of this group. Parsons (2005) states that young people are particularly vulnerable to blame and rejection and this is even more marked when marginalisation related to class, culture, ethnicity and educational attainment is their experience. For this reason, Pear (1997) suggests that pupils have little chance of advocacy in the face of forces and resources around them and can be powerless to actions taken against them by state agencies.

2.5 Initiatives designed to reduce disaffection and exclusion

Since 1997, the New Labour Government has given priority to the issues pertaining to the relationship between poverty and low educational achievement. Raffo (2009) states:

> 'Education plays a crucial role in social inclusion because it is the principle passport to opportunity.......It follows that high levels of

educational achievement are the basis of economic development for the country and of the individual' (p.66).

There have been two major components to the current government's education policy. Firstly, the standards agenda, the implications of which have been outlined earlier in this review (2.3). The second component has been

'To target resources, initiatives and attention towards those parts of the system and those groups of students where performance and achievement lag behind the levels that are seen as appropriate'(Raffo, 2009, p.66).

The focus to these interventions has been three-fold and included group-based, area based and institution-focused interventions. An example of an area focused intervention would include the set up of the Sure Start Programmes or the Connexions services. These policies have generated some improved outcomes for groups, areas and institutions, although it is beyond the scope of this review to explore the plethora of activity and impact in these areas (for further reading see Raffo, 2009).

Current responses to disaffection and behaviour problems, resulting in school exclusion, at a local level, i.e., driven by individual schools or local education authorities have tended to be both preventative and responsive in nature. An important issue acknowledged in the literature (Lovey & Cooper, 1997; Lloyd, Stead & Kendrick, 2003; Hallam & Rogers, 2008) relates to the variability between schools in levels of exclusion. The numbers excluded can vary from school to school, even within the same catchment area. The ideology and ethos of the school can impact greatly on disciplinary exclusion procedures. Schools with low exclusion rates tend to involve parents, do not view pupils of lower socio-economic status as a burden, are committed to the importance of a behaviour policy which incorporates the driving force behind behaviour and involve pupils in decision-making processes (Hallam & Rogers, 2008).

Rendall & Stuart (2005) reporting on an evaluation of behaviour and discipline projects (1996-9) carried out by Hallam and Castle (1999), outline some common features underpinning successful projects. These include: Projects established specifically to satisfy local geographical problems, earlier consultation and needs defined from the outset, effective communication and collaboration, involvement of all school staff, enabling pupils to take responsibility for their own behaviours, and empowering parents.

Didaskalou and Milward (2007), in an overview of a number of studies (Fox & Avramidis, 2003; Charlton, Panting & Willis, 2004; Jones & Smith, 2004) responding at a local level to the problem of reducing exclusion, are critical of these initiatives for a number of reasons. They argue these initiatives are often not generalisable, have short impact and because they are applied to particular groups lack the backing of a whole school approach. Didaskalou and Milward (2007) argue that because initiatives are designed to target a particular group, they can fail to be inclusive, producing a subgroup, further marginalized by being identified as on the programme. However, Lloyd et al (2003) argue that supporting challenged and challenging pupils and avoiding disciplinary exclusion is possible through reconstructing the meaning of inclusion. For some pupils, it is necessary for them not be included in the curriculum, and what is offered outside mainstream school can be more supportive and preferable. In essence, school exclusion can be reduced by reducing inclusion.

It is widely acknowledged in the literature that the most successful projects at improving behaviour and reducing exclusions involve multi-agency working in order to address the needs of individual children and parents in relation to a range of problems (Hallam & Castle, 1999; Lloyd et al, 2003; Hallam, 2007). A recent government initiative, the Behaviour Improvement Programme (Hallam et al, 2005), reported overall gains from the project including improved attendance and the promotion of positive behaviour. Hallam (2007) found that the greatest improvements

in attendance and attainment were made in local education authorities where a focus on preventative and proactive rather than reactive initiatives were implemented, and where a multi-agency approach based on the formation of Behaviour and Education Support Teams (BESTs) was also implemented. These teams were formed of a number of professionals with relevant expertise, based on site at schools, designing a range of initiatives that responded to the needs of the school, groups of children, individual children and families.

Hallam and Castles (1999) assert:

> *'It is possible to reduce exclusions from schools. But, in order for that to happen there has to be total involvement of all the school's staff, management, parents and pupils' (p.21).*

Lloyd et al (2003) assert that appropriate support can be provided when *'lives, values and choices of the young people'* are taken into consideration.

In summary, successful interventions all advocate paying particular attention to the needs of the child or young person. Amongst other factors, support is effective when young peoples' views are valued and their response to their educational experiences is explored in detail and taken seriously. Of the successful factors alluded to by Hallam & Castle (1999) the active role of the young person is emphasized. This forms the basis of the present study.

2.6 Listening to young people

The issue of exclusion has been afforded much prominence by researchers, teaching associations, local education authorities, the media and the Government. This issue has been given a high political and public profile and there is evidence that some impact has been made in reducing school exclusions. However, the questionable nature of the reliability of this data for the reasons outlined in this review (2.2.2; 2.4)

suggests the problem is persistent. Gordon (2001) asserts that what is missing in policy and research is input from the young people themselves.

> *'Nobody seems to be asking them, the most important participants in the school exclusion policy debate' (Gordon, 2001, p.83).*

Lloyd-Smith and Tarr (2000) argue that seeking the views of children and young people within education is a powerful means of challenging assumptions made about these groups.

The elicitation of children and young peoples' perspectives is congruent with the growing use of research processes which encompass pupils' voice. (Fielding & Bragg, 2003; Flutter and Rudduck, 2004) This trend is underpinned by both international and national legislation which protects the civil rights of children (UNCRC, 1989 ; Green and Hill, 2005). UK legislation such as the Childrens Act (1989), the Education Act (1993) and the Code of Practice (1994) have introduced requirements for children and young people to contribute toward decision making processes affecting their lives. The extent to which young people are consulted and share decisions is often debated in the literature (Hart, 1992, Lloyd-Smith & Tarr, 2000) as espoused and tokenistic. There is a renewed call for respect for a young person's ability to reflect on and have agency in their own encounters with their worlds (Harris, Vincent, Thomson & Toalster, 2006).

In spite of the literature which exists signalling the importance of listening to the voice of children and young people in education (Rose & Shevlin, 2004; Clark, 2005; McIntyre, Pedder & Rudduck, 2005; Maxwell, 2006) it is still the voice of adult professionals which formulate decisions regarding pupils' education. The present study aligns itself with the growing body of research committed to facilitating young people to express their views.

Listening to the views of young people is not only a legal obligation which is the right of the young person but justifications can be made in practical terms, with clear gains for both educational researchers and policy makers. Rudduck, Chaplain and Wallace (1996) attest to the importance of young people contributing to school improvement strategies, through being able to act as keen observers of their educational situations and identify barriers, at both institutional and individual levels, to their learning. Lloyd-Smith and Tarr (2000) assert that often researchers exploring factors which facilitate success in schools are focused on the perceptions of teachers and other stakeholders, where the experiences of pupils are inferred but *'seldom are pupils seen as the analysts of schooling and monitors of its appropriateness'* (p.60). Some studies, although beneficial, have been limited to gaining young peoples' perspectives on one system in which they exist: the school system. Vulliamy and Webb (1991), in their research with teachers as researchers, found that through gathering pupil views teachers' attitudes towards pupils began to change, thus impacting on everyday classroom practice. Davie and Galloway (1996) argue that incorporating pupil perspectives can give a sense of ownership over school processes and help pupils feel they are making a significant contribution to school life. Fielding and Bragg (2003) also note that pupil involvement can lead to an increased sense of agency and motivation. Sellman (2009) citing a study by MacBeath, Demetriou, Rudduck and Myers (2003) found that taking young peoples' views into account can lead to increased feelings of belonging, within an atmosphere of inclusive membership in the school environment.

2.6.1 Listening to vulnerable young people

This growing tradition of voice research is relatively new, and the studies referred to above are related to the voices of mainstream pupils. It has been argued that pupils who have been permanently excluded from school are frequently unheard and subsequently under-represented in research of this nature (Munn & Lloyd, 2005; Davies, 2005; Knipe,

Reynolds & Milner, 2007; Sellman, 2009). Children and young people experiencing social, emotional and behavioural difficulties constitute the most significant group represented in exclusion figures (Harris et al, 2000).

Davies (2005) postulates an explanation for why there have been few studies with this particular group:

> *'The subjects are often resentful, defensive, alienated and, in some cases, disturbed. Their educational careers have invariably involved individual and family stress, and invitations to discuss them are not always welcome. This is unfortunate, since a failure to find out what these pupils really think is likely to perpetuate their negative experiences of school' (Davies, 2005, p.300).*

This view is echoed by Billington and Pomerantz (2004) and Lown (2005) who assert that eliciting the views of children and young people can be thought of as on 'a continuum of participation.' Low participation would indicate young people's views are elicited to inform certain decisions about school change. High participation would indicate young people are given meaningful opportunities to directly influence decision making processes. Lown (2005) states that where young people's views, those with emotional and behavioural difficulties, are included this tends to be more tokenistic, with little opportunity for their views to be represented at the higher end of the continuum for the reasons outlined by Davies above.

Yet research has demonstrated that when consulted about their views, young people who have been excluded are able to discuss and reflect upon their educational experiences and the process of exclusion. They do so with considerable insight, illuminating a range of issues which highlight both faults and successes in the school as a system (Pear & Garner, 1996; Pear, 1997; Munn & Lloyd, 2005). Knipe et al (2007) argue that *'educational structures and legislation have a profound effect on the experience of the individual pupil'* (p. 408). It is therefore advantageous to give young people the opportunity to have their say. Sellman (2009)

asserts that listening to pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties is imperative for two reasons. Firstly, teaching and learning is a two-way process, which implies consulting this group can yield clear and challenging messages regarding curriculum content and teaching style. Secondly, the sparse research which exists which incorporates these young peoples' perspectives suggests that they tend to attribute their difficulties (e.g., ADHD) to within-child factors, often conveying a sense of lack of agency over events in their lives. Sellman (2009) suggests that in this way young people are *'easily reproducing the dominant cultural voice'* (p. 35). He continues by arguing that

'such a 'mis-education' needs an arena in which it can be safely re-conceptualised. This requires a shift from viewing children as the objects of education/research to partners in the process' (p.35).

The paucity of research that does exist in the area of excluded young peoples' perceptions tends to examine their educational experiences (Pear, 1997; Sellman, 2009), perceptions and experiences of the process of exclusion (Doherty, 1997; Cullingford, 1999; 2003, Munn & Lloyd, 2005; Hilton, 2006; Knipe et al, 2007), experiences of returning to mainstream provision following permanent exclusion (Lown, 2005) and reference to the peer group in facilitating successful reintegration (Lown, 2007). There is consistency in the themes which are reported relating to expressed problems in the current mainstream school system, lack of consistency in school practices regarding exclusion and the sense of injustice and unfairness that accompanies this, and the reported positive aspects of alternative provision. In a recent study by Lown (2005) which explored young people's perceptions of the factors which facilitated successful reintegration, positive relationships with adults were found to foster a sense of belonging within the school environment as well as the importance and influence of the peer network. The theme which resonates with the findings of most studies examined in this review, is

that of the centrality and need for quality relationships, both teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil, to promote positive educational experiences.

2.7 Aims of the present study

A review of the literature focussed on eliciting young peoples' views, indicates that anecdotal themes are reported. To date, rigorous theoretical driven qualitative research is lacking in this area and this study aims to readdress this issue. As an EPiT, the psychological models which underpin my professional practice recognize the complex interplay of systems which lead to disaffection and exclusion. This study aims to derive a rich understanding of excluded pupils' educational experiences and the meanings they ascribe to them. The present study aims to combine an open-ended and exploratory research question and a robust qualitative methodological approach in order to unearth the views of a group of young people. The summarized aims are as follows:

- To elicit the views of young people who have been permanently excluded from school.
- To give new insight into excluded young peoples' experience of the education system and their experience of family and peer relationships.
- To derive a complex description and interpretation of this group of young peoples' experience of education which will extend the literature.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter begins by outlining ontological and epistemological considerations and their bearing on the chosen methodology, with reference to the research aims. Phenomenological approaches including the origins of phenomenology, psychology and phenomenology and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis and phenomenology will then be discussed as the theoretical underpinnings applicable to this study. Ethical considerations will then be addressed. This will be followed by an outline of the pilot study and the benefits gained. The procedures for the main study and analysis will conclude this chapter.

3.2 Ontological and epistemological considerations

As a researcher I acknowledge that I come into my research with a history, gender, race and culture. This implies that adopting a value-free perspective where the phenomenon focussed upon can be separated from the context in which it is investigated is not possible (Gadamer,1979; Gergen, 1985; Way 2005). The world view that I present in the course of conducting this study is one where it is accepted that knowledge can be accessed through understanding that 'reality' is not based upon external, objective laws and truths that have been universally ascertained. Instead understanding that all knowledge of 'reality' starts from experience and ends in it and that statements about reality must acknowledge this interpretational process can lead to greater understanding of complex social phenomena.

This view reflects critical and emancipatory approaches to research in psychology, which will be drawn upon, particularly critical realism. Adopting a critical realist stance provides a third way between positivism and relativism. Robson (2002) points out that both of these positions in

their truest form are unhelpful to researchers trying to make sense of a complex social world.

Positivism does not include the researcher and their relationship with the researched within the context of what is being examined. Relativism, in its purest form, suggests we cannot classify or categorise the world to come to a shared understanding. Therefore critical realism is a pragmatic theoretical approach which *criticises the practices that it studies'* (p.41, Robson, 2002).

Debates surrounding the reliability of exclusion figures, varying disciplinary procedures from school to school and the perceived deterioration of behaviour in school, especially in the past two decades, convey a confusing picture of what it is like to be both educated in and excluded from the current system (see Chapter 2). My approach to investigating the topic of young people who have been permanently excluded from school is influenced by my role as an EPiT. I endeavoured to use a research methodology that would both benefit from and be complimented by the skills and knowledge I have developed as an EPiT. The psychological models implemented in my practice and which reflect my view of looking at the world have much in common with the epistemological position adopted, both recognise that knowledge of the world is possible through our understandings and interpretations. A belief in the importance and value of listening to children, young people and individuals in order to open up possibilities for change underpins this study and subsequently influences the choice of research methodology.

3.3 Qualitative approach to inquiry

Understanding what sense participants make of their educational experiences and what it means for them to be excluded from school is central to this study. In order to do justice to this, the generation of rich, descriptive accounts of the phenomenon are required. This leads me to choose a qualitative research design, the key characteristics of which it is

envisaged will help to realise the aims of this study. Creswell (2007) highlights inductive data analysis, participants' meaning, the researcher as a key instrument and interpretive inquiry as key features of qualitative research.

An inductive data analysis permits a focus on the unexpected, allows pursuit of new knowledge rather than applying existing theories and preconceived hypotheses on a larger sample (Smith & Osborn, 2003). Existing literature on the topic of exclusion and disaffection has been extensive and multi-faceted, yet the problem persists with little introspection or reflection on pupil perspectives. Therefore this approach will facilitate an exploration and description of participants experiences through a 'bottom-up' approach where themes emerge from the data.

Keeping a focus on the meanings that participants' hold about the issue under investigation is central to the qualitative research process. This has much in common with my practice as an EPIT, where starting with the concerns of stakeholders is imperative to the success of casework.

Other key principles of qualitative research include acknowledging the active role of the researcher in co-constructing the research with participants and highlighting that the researcher's interpretations not only demonstrate engagement with the research but also lead to a richer analysis and deeper understanding of the phenomenon. Rafuls and Moon (1996) identified many common elements to the practice of family therapy and qualitative research including interviewing skills, empathic listening, self reflexivity and skills in analysing patterns and themes. I would suggest that these skills also underpin the practice of an educational psychologist and therefore ensure I am well-placed to utilise these skills through adopting a qualitative methodology.

The distinction between adopting a qualitative or quantitative methodology can usefully be thought about in terms of the role of the researcher in both approaches. In qualitative research, the researcher

positions themselves firmly in the study, the relationship between the researcher and participant is dynamic and interactive. In positivist research the focus of the researcher and their presuppositions are tested. There are clear advantages to both approaches. Qualitative research allows the uniqueness of individuals to become apparent, where results have the potential to be richly detailed. Quantitative studies can test hypotheses and use results to generalise to larger populations. Judging the quality of a research study will also be addressed differently according to each approach. Theoretical reliability and validity in their traditional definitions and as applied to quantitative research are not applicable to qualitative studies. Ensuring the quality of this research study will be dependent on demonstration of the transparency of the research process (Yardley, 2000) and engagement with the research.

Relatively little is known about the issues important to these young people. Therefore an exploratory study which empowers individuals to tell their story is necessary. Given the exploratory nature of this study Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Smith, 1995) was deemed an appropriate methodology as it can aim to 'give voice' to those whose accounts tend to be marginalised or discounted (Willig, 2001). Dominant exclusionary discourses which have prevented these young people's voices from being heard include a culturally specific notion of childhood which dictates the relationships between adults and young people and assumes that nothing new will be derived from this interchange (Doherty, 1997).

To explore this in more detail and go some way toward explaining why using this methodology was selected above other qualitative methodologies, where there is a similar focus on learning about the problem from participants, it is necessary to discuss phenomenology as a key aspect of the selected methodology. Phenomenology as a human science is one that offers an alternative paradigm to current natural science, it is more humanistic in its essence than the science applied to things and processes (Langdridge, 2007). Phenomenology is a paradigm

which permits an exploration of the way people think about their worlds. It asserts that each of us have a reality that is dependent upon our interpretations. In phenomenology a correct reality is not based on universally ascertained truths, but rather consensus viewpoints agreed by a group of individuals influence judgement. A phenomenological view recognises that it is not unusual for us to share interpretations of reality that are similar but that it must be acknowledged that whether they remain particular to the individual or generally shared, they are interpretations nonetheless.

Using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis as a phenomenological psychological approach was consonant with the aims of the present study in that it attempts to explore individuals' personal perspectives of an event or state, remaining as faithful as possible to the phenomenon being studied through hearing the stories of individuals who have had first hand experience of a certain situation and capturing how it has been experienced (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003). The importance of representing the subjective experiences of participants as closely as possible, and the meanings that these experiences have been ascribed is paramount in this approach (Collins & Nicholson, 2002). The benefits of using IPA as the selected methodology include complimenting knowledge and skills previously acquired as an EPiT, facilitating an exploratory study and placing strong emphasis on the meanings ascribed to experiences by participants.

3.4 Phenomenological approaches in psychological research

3.4.1 Origins of phenomenology

Phenomenology is a philosophy, whose origins can be traced back to the beginning of the twentieth century, developed by Edmund Husserl (1900), where the key aim was to ground the foundations of knowledge. The problem focused upon, to address the above aim was how objects and events appeared to consciousness. This concept is known as

intentionality, built upon the idea that as we are always conscious of something, there is a need to attend to people's experiences of how things appear in consciousness (Langdridge, 2007). Psychology was also founded at this time and since both disciplines are concerned with the study of consciousness, interaction between both disciplines have been evident in both social and health psychology where phenomenological approaches to research have been increasingly applied (Smith, 2003).

3.4.2 Phenomenology and psychology

As human nature has evolved, the paradigms within which it is viewed have continued to shift. A positivist paradigm is increasingly recognised as an inappropriate lens within which to study human nature (as discussed in section 3.3). There are many variations of phenomenological psychology, with different emphases, derived from specific philosophical theories of phenomenology (Langdridge, 2007).

The most traditional branch of phenomenology developed by Husserl, is known as descriptive phenomenology with its focus on identifying the essence of the phenomenon. A central concept in this method of phenomenological psychology is that the researcher strives to put aside all presuppositions and preconceptions about the topic under investigation. It is advocated that transcending one's own experience of the world will help to see it differently, from another person's perspective (Langdridge, 2007).

IPA aligns itself with an approach to phenomenological psychology developed by Heidegger. This approach is less concerned with identifying the essence of a phenomenon and instead is:

'Concerned more with interpreting the meanings of the things in their appearing from a position that is always grounded in the things themselves' (Langdridge, p.29).

IPA is concerned with the participant's view of a topic and also emphasises the role of the researcher in interpreting the participants' account. In this way, IPA belongs more to existential phenomenology, built on a hermeneutic tradition (Langdridge, 2007).

3.5 Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) aims to get as close to the participants' accounts as possible. A key distinctive characteristic of this methodology is that it is concerned with exploring in detail how participants make sense of their personal and social worlds (Smith & Osborn, 2003). Being phenomenological in its approach, it is a person's perceptions of events and experiences that are central rather than reducing the phenomenon to a set of identifiable variables or producing an objective statement about events or experiences.

Like other qualitative methodologies which question the objective ideal, the role of the researcher is emphasised where reality is seen as something which is *not fixed and cannot be observed uninfluenced by the observer* (Way, 2005, p.532). Another key feature of IPA is that it aims to access participants' accounts of their experiences as they make sense of them, to gain an *insider's perspective* (Smith & Osborn, 2003). In a Heiddeggerian sense, as referred to above, gaining access to a participant's personal world and understanding a phenomenon is made more complicated by the expectations and preconceptions that the researcher brings to the research, which are necessary in order to make sense of an individual's experiences. Central to IPA is the ability of the researcher to engage more interpretatively with the meanings elicited from a participant's account. Here a critical approach is taken where the researcher might anticipate a sense of something underlying that the participants are not aware of. This is an effort to do *greater justice to the totality of the person* (Smith & Osborn, 2003, p.52) This is known as the

'Double hermeneutic process in which the participants are trying to make sense of their world; the researcher is trying to make sense of the participants trying to make sense of their world' (Smith & Osborn, 2003, p.51).

The emphasis placed on meaning- making within IPA by both participant and researcher highlights the importance of cognition as a key analytic concern (Smith & Eatough, 2006). Making sense of the relationship between thoughts, actions and behaviour is imperative in IPA.

It was hoped that using IPA, would enable me to explore important issues and themes for a small sample of young people. IPA with its focus on an idiographic level of analysis embraces and maintains the individual's story as a coherent whole and whilst generic themes remain important, the narrative of individual participants is of equal importance. Statements are made about these particular individuals, where the focus is clearly not to analyse large samples. This idiographic feature sets IPA apart from other qualitative methodologies and was particularly appropriate for this study given the restricted access to a small sample of research participants from a marginalised group.

Typically IPA studies involve small sample sizes. (Meek, 2008; Young, Bramham Gray & Rose, 2008). Data analysis is time-consuming and engaging. A commitment to a descriptive and interpretative analysis which does justice to each individual account followed by nuanced case by case analysis means that decisions around acknowledging the depth of the analysis at the cost of the breadth to gain a richer, more complex understanding of the phenomenon have been made. It was felt that having a smaller number of participants would enable me to analyse the data in great detail, looking for themes that compel and capture meaning making in place of a weaker analysis with a larger sample. Using a smaller sample meant that it was important to ensure homogeneity, in order to find a more closely defined group to guarantee the research question was answered.

3.6 Consideration of other qualitative approaches

Narrative analysis and grounded theory will now be given brief consideration as alternative qualitative methodologies discarded in favour of using IPA.

Similar to IPA, narrative theory affords much importance to the relationship between the researcher and participant as interactive and co-constructing the research. Narrative theory however, is concerned with exploring the life stories of one or two participants and chronologically ordering the meaning of these experiences (Creswell, 2007). Similar to IPA, themes are generated in an inductive manner but the analysis has a strong focus on the description of each individual story, which implies the researcher collects extensive information about the participant. This method did not seem appropriate due to the focus on the individual's life story. Whilst IPA is also concerned with the individual its objective is to describe the essence of an experience shared by a number of individuals (Creswell, 2007).

Grounded Theory developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) also shares similar characteristics with IPA as it seeks to identify patterns and themes which are 'grounded' in the data rather than imposing theoretical ideas already in existence. However, the goal of the present study is to provide a detailed interpretation, both empathic and critical, of the concerns of small number of individuals related to a specific topic, balancing this with patterns across cases. The aim is not to produce a theory that can be generalised to a group which is a product of data saturation, as is the case in grounded theory.

3.7 Ethical considerations

Creswell (2007) asserts the importance of sensitivity to ethical considerations throughout all phases of the research process:

'These are especially important as we negotiate entry to the field site of the research; involve participants in our study; gather personal, emotional data that reveal the details of life; and ask participants to give considerable time to our study' (p.44)

Prior to negotiating access, my approach to addressing ethical issues was outlined in the Ethics form and approved by the Ethics Committee at the Institute Of Education. Ethical practice including procedures for obtaining informed consent, ensuring the avoidance of harm and respect for participant's confidentiality and anonymity, has been followed in accordance with ethical guidelines primarily from The British Psychological Society Code of Conduct, Ethical Principles and Guidelines (2004).

The procedure for obtaining informed consent was based on the belief that young people are competent and capable of choosing to participate on their own behalf. This method is congruent with the epistemological stance outlined earlier. In the pre-interview meeting (details of which can be found in the procedure), key issues were discussed and an information leaflet (Appendix 1.1) reinforcing the purposes of the research, anonymity, confidentiality, the right to withdraw and how findings would be disseminated was provided. Young people who expressed interest were provided with letters and consent forms for parents (Appendix 1.2, 1.3).

Following receipt of parental consent, informed consent was gained at the interview (Appendix 1.4). At this stage, time was built in for further debriefing and to provide an opportunity for the participants to ask any further questions before the interview began. Sensitivity to any learning needs participants may have was important at this stage.

Creswell (2007) alludes to reciprocity, acknowledging the time and effort given by participants. Each participant received a £15 gift voucher to thank them for their time.

Measures were taken to ensure the protection of each participant's well-being. It was recognized that in consenting to take part in the research, participants may also be committing to addressing painful issues (Kendrick, Steckley & Lerpiniere, 2008). Therefore arrangements were made with the headteacher to discuss additional mechanisms of support, if the need arose, following discussion of sensitive subjects with participants. Limits to confidentiality were discussed explicitly with participants. I also ensured that each participant had a clear understanding that, as a result of this study, nothing would change in terms of the decision made on their school exclusions. Confidence that participants were at no further risk as a result of the research came from a unanimous view that discussing these issues had been positive.

Sensitivity to power imbalances was afforded much importance in this study. I endeavoured to establish a supportive, respectful relationship at the outset through using accessible language and a friendly manner. Explaining my background and revealing some information about myself allowed for the research relationship to become more balanced. Using a visual approach (described in section 3.8.2) at the outset of each interview also helped to alter power differentials.

3.8 Research design and methods

3.8.1 Semi-structured interviews

Similar to most IPA studies, the present study was conducted using data gained from semi-structured interviews. This method of data collection honours and follows both the selected methodology and epistemological view outlined in this chapter. A semi-structured interview is a flexible instrument that will allow me to analyse in detail how the participants have made sense of their educational experiences. This reflects a commitment to enter their psychological, personal and social worlds. Benefits of this method of interviewing include the flexibility of an interview where the exact course is not pre-determined. The participant

is both privileged and respected, given maximum opportunity to tell his or her own story and therefore feels empowered to do so. It enables the participant to guide the interviewer toward a more specific understanding of the topic (Smith,1995). The interview follows what concerns or interests the participant, therefore this method remains true to the overall aims of the study by ensuring that I as the researcher, am entering into the participant's world, that they are engaged and I am not coercing them into entering mine (Smith & Osborn, 2003). Smith & Eatough (2006) stress that the interpretative nature of IPA places emphasis on 'dual focus' during semi-structured interviews whereby the conversation is led by the participant but that the researcher skillfully guides the process to gain access to the meanings ascribed to events and experiences.

Based on an interactive perspective, which emphasizes the importance of viewing an individual in context, questions were framed through exploring the systems in which the young person lives. This open-ended and non-directive method of interviewing incorporated the following areas and themes into the interview protocol: pupil's accounts of their experiences of exclusion and education, relationships with parents, teachers and peers, views about learning and capabilities and future aspirations. In addition to these general questions which aimed to appear neutral, a number of prompts were incorporated to generate discussion in the event of a stifled line of enquiry (Appendix 2).

3.8.2 The pilot study

Prior to embarking on the main study, an interview schedule was designed and piloted. The purpose of incorporating this as a pre-research stage was to possibly refine the interview questions and procedures further. Yin (2003) stresses the importance of using a pilot study by drawing on the value of refining data collection and pursuing other relevant lines of questioning.

Recruitment of participants for the Pilot Study

The following selection criteria were decided upon:
- (1) Participants will be male.
- (2) Participants will be aged between 13 and 16.
- (3) Participants will have experienced permanent exclusion from school.

The same criteria was used in the main study. The rationale for which is based on the fact that boys represent 80% of school exclusions, a pattern which is consistent over time. As highlighted in Chapter 2, most exclusions take place when pupils are in years 9 and 10, aged between 13 and 15. The third criterion was decided upon to ensure as far as possible that participants had had a similar formal exclusion experience.

In collaboration with the exclusions officer for the borough, 3 participants were purposively sampled from the Borough's Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) based on the above criteria. Parents were contacted by telephone to inform them of the purpose of the research and to ask whether they had any objections to their son participating. This was followed up by a letter.

Implications from conducting the pilot study

Completing the pilot study proved problematic due to issues gaining access to the sample. The erratic attendance of this particular group, exclusions from the PRU as commonplace, issues related to management of the PRU and unforeseen circumstances preventing the interviews, for example, involvement with the police, meant that engaging with these participants was extremely difficult. This resulted in only one pilot interview being conducted at the PRU. This highlighted to me the complex, transient nature of these young peoples' lives which served to make involvement in the initial stages of the research process very impractical.

Sampson (2004) asserts that using a pilot study can be helpful in developing research instruments, amending questions and subsequently changing research procedures. As a result of carrying out the pilot study, the role of the researcher was given much more careful consideration for the purposes of the main study. The interview schedule was also amended, for the purposes of the main study, in order that discourse was less directive (appendix 2). It was found that beginning with more general issues and leading on to more specific areas elicited a more engaged response (Smith & Osborn, 2003).

In terms of research procedures for the main study, a decision to approach an Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (EBD) school within the borough to secure a sample was taken. Organisational factors such as the influence of time and place were given more careful consideration for the main study. Ball (1993) makes reference to time as a neglected dimension of the research. Interviews were subsequently scheduled on Friday mornings at times when there were no lessons in the afternoon in the hope that this might help with more engaged dialogue. Added to this the importance of having a designated room to provide a secure and safe environment reduced the likelihood of responses being influenced by varying times and places (Jones & Tannock, 2000).

In an attempt to increase emotional security during this process, a timeline was then used in the main study as a concrete aid which served as a starting point in the interview. This also had the added effect of supporting participants' chronology of events. This is a method successfully employed by Connolly (2008), engaged in qualitative research with excluded girls. She states:

> *'As human beings we inhabit visual, as well as verbal worlds and it seemed natural to ask interviewees to depict their lives visually. I found the visual representations of the young women's lives very useful as it enabled them to clearly express their experiences, feelings and relationships' (p.309).*

Implications for the role of the researcher proved the most significant part of this process. Through the pilot interview I was able to become more acutely aware of my own biases and preconceptions. For example, a critical review of the literature suggests scepticism of the seriousness of behaviour and varying practices of schools that lead to school exclusion. My personal views that exclusion is a punitive and reactionary measure led to a bias that exclusion may well have been the result of an exclusive school culture or a series of low level disruptive behaviours. This participant's views and story were inconsistent with my expectations.

The need to be prepared for the emotional impact of participant's narratives became apparent. Interviews which focus on complex social phenomena increase the likelihood that sensitive issues will be raised and that this can produce distress for both the researcher and the participant (Lee, 1993).

3.8.3   *The Main Study*

Recruitment of participants for the main study

Owing to difficulties securing a sample at the PRU for the reasons outlined in section 3.8.2, a decision to approach a mixed day provision for pupils with behavioural, social and emotional development needs at Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 4 was taken. This was the only such provision within the borough where significant numbers of pupils have statements of special educational needs related to the areas outlined above and have been permanently excluded from school. There were 66 pupils on roll, 62 of which were male, aged between 5 and 16. Initial contact was made with the headteacher through the link Educational Psychologist for the school to ascertain possibility of access to the sample. Following a positive response, I then made contact with the headteacher and arranged a preliminary meeting (as outlined in the procedure) to explain the purpose of the research to possible participants. As stipulated by the selected methodology a small, homogenous sample was obtained (Refer

to section 3.8.2 for selection criteria and rationale). Homogeneity was increased further and an additional criterion included, based on the institution from which the sample was gained.

> (4) Participants will all attend a specialist provision for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties within the borough.

A deliberate effort was made to encourage boys to participate. As highlighted by the pilot study, there were difficulties in recruiting. Investigating the phenomenon of exclusion to some extent defined the boundaries of the relevant sample (Smith & Eatough, 2006) and as boys are disproportionately represented in exclusion numbers, and only four girls were on roll and a homogenous sample was required, this seemed appropriate. A total of six young people participated, all male, aged between 13 and 16. All six of the young people interviewed had experienced permanent exclusion from school at primary level. Three were excluded toward the end of year 6. Two were excluded in year 4. One was excluded earlier in year 2. Following permanent exclusion, the boys experienced multiple exclusions, but had been attending this provision for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties for at least a year, further adding to the homogeneity of the group. Five of the participants were White British, one of the participants was Black British. Whilst acknowledging the possible impact of ethnicity on homogeneity, it was deemed appropriate to include the Black British participant based on a number of factors which strengthened his similarity to the other participants including age, gender, background factors, similar educational experiences and attendance at the same school.

Procedure
The aim of the research was communicated by the headteacher in a school assembly, based on the information provided on the leaflet (Appendix 1.1) sent to the school. The headteacher invited boys, who met the criteria and who were interested, to remain seated after the

assembly for the pre-interview meeting. It was made clear that attendance at the meeting was entirely on a voluntary basis.

A pre-interview meeting was then held and attended by ten young people. During this meeting participant information sheets were circulated. The purpose of the research was explained and there was an opportunity for discussion, based on information provided on the leaflet. Parents did not take part in the pre-interview meetings. Following expression of interest in the research, information sheets and consent forms were sent home to parents of six young people who expressed an interest in the research. The final sample consisted of six self-selecting participants. Informed consent was gained from both the parents and the participants prior to the interviews.

Individual in-depth interviews took place with six boys. Interviews began a week later. Two interviews were conducted consecutively on a Friday morning for three weeks. Interviews were conducted in a quiet room, with no distractions within the school. Staff members were not present throughout the interviews. The interviews varied in length, ranging from between 30 and 60 minutes.

All interviews were recorded and subsequently transcribed verbatim.

I made summary notes of each interview immediately after it took place, noting down points relating to researcher-participant relationship, direction of the interview, level of engagement, initial impressions of overall concerns of the participant and non-verbal information not captured by the digital recorder. This became a self-reflective journal where a number of issues felt to be pertinent to the research question were recorded.

3.9 Data analysis

I began the analysis by adopting an idiographic approach, engaging in an interpretative relationship with each transcript and analysing each one in detail and separately before moving on to the next. I selected the first case for analysis based on an interview where I had felt a particular connection with the participant. As a researcher I felt significantly changed by this process and felt that the data seemed rich in detail. As a novice to IPA, I was keen to become immersed in the data and felt that this case analysis could provide that experience. The steps in this process are outlined below and are based on a case by case analysis.

Step 1: Responding to the first case and cases thereafter. I transcribed each interview keeping notes at this initial stage related to initial thoughts, comments, developing impressions of the key issues important to the participant. Particular attention was paid to language used, repetition and contradictions. I also listened to the tapes and made notes. These were then checked against later descriptions and interpretations further into the analysis.

Each transcript was read and re-read a number of times in order to immerse myself in the data and become as familiar as possible with the text. It was annotated with initial comments and impressions, which were recorded in the left-hand margin. It felt natural at this stage to record a combination of both descriptive and preliminary interpretative comments in an effort to capture each response to the transcript. Comments on the use of language as well as repetitions, amplifications and contradictions were recorded.

Step 2: Looking for themes. Each transcript was then re-read with emerging themes documented in the right hand margin, the themes at this stage were reflective of a higher level of abstraction with more psychological terminology being used. At this stage the richness of the data was reflected in the number of emerging themes, taking care to

reflect all meaningful units, staying close to the data, remaining descriptive and with each theme recorded asking introspective questions such as 'does this theme capture the essence of what the participant is trying to say?'

Step 3: Listing the themes. At this stage the data was further refined, connections between initial themes were made and collapsed into appropriate themes in this reductive stage of the analysis. Emergent themes for the whole transcript were then listed firstly in chronological order.

Step 4: Connecting the themes Connections between the themes were then pursued. This involved ordering of the themes analytically and through finding connections between the themes, clusters of themes begin to emerge, which were given a descriptive label to denote the overarching concept of the themes. Data at this point consisted of a number of subthemes, varying depending on the participant, representing a number of related cluster themes. Organising the data in this way is an attempt to make clear the important issues in each of the participant's accounts.

Step 5: Summary table for each participant. A table of themes was then produced for each participant. This included the descriptive labels or subthemes together with cluster themes. Quotes which best represented the essence of each cluster theme were then recorded. Again, at this stage it was important to remain as faithful to the text as possible to ensure sense making was related closely to what was actually being said, this involved checking and re-checking with the transcript to ensure themes were the best description of the data, and that this was accurately reflected in the quotes.

Step 6: Continuing the analysis case by case. Subsequent transcripts were analysed using the procedure outlined above. Adopting an idiographic approach allowed me to remain open to new themes, without

imposing previous themes on subsequent case analysis. Once each transcript had been analysed and individual summary tables compiled, a master table of superordinate themes was developed. Again this involved checking and re-checking with the transcripts to ensure subthemes for each individual were congruent with subthemes of other individuals merging under superordinate themes.

Smith & Eatough (2006) assert:

> '*If the researcher has been successful, it should be possible for someone to track the analytic journey from the raw data to the end table*' (p.338)

In an effort to provide transparency, the analytic process for one participant, Alan, including full transcript, emerging themes in chronological order and individual summary table can be found in Appendix 3.

Final summary tables outlining the three superordinate themes can be found in Appendix 4 (4.1, 4.2 ,4.3). All six participants are represented across the three superordinate themes, issues pertinent to individuals are represented clearly in the subthemes, which constitute the superordinate themes.

Following the analysis stage of the research, in an effort to add to the validity (Yin, 1994) of the research, an independent audit was carried out with a fellow EPiT, also using IPA as method of analysis. The audit on each other's analyses was made possible by setting out the data gathered from one participant's account in a 'paper trial' form, and reflecting on the logical progression through the steps. The aim here was not to replicate the same themes but to ensure plausibility of themes through peer review, providing an external check on whether the findings and interpretations are supported by the data.

I took steps to develop my skills and knowledge in IPA through participating in monthly IPA focus groups. Excerpts from transcripts were also taken to these sessions, which gave the advantage of illuminating alternative plausible interpretations which added to the richness of the analysis.

Chapter 4: Results

4.1 Introduction

Six interviews were completed. A description of the interview data analysis process using IPA, was described in Chapter 3 (3.7.3). This chapter describes the important issues which emerged for these young people as a result of their educational experiences and exclusions from school. I will provide my interpretation of these key concerns, grounded in the words of the young people.

Three superordinate themes are presented which represent the direct experiences of the participants. Responses from the young people are used to describe each theme. Appendix 4 illustrates the three superordinate themes, with connecting subthemes and cluster themes, outlining page numbers and line references for each coded theme for the participants. Summary lists have also been created for each individual.

Three superordinate themes emerged from my analysis:

1. Belonging
2. Survival
3. Maladaptive patterns

The names of the participants have been changed to ensure confidentiality. In this context, where the young people have experienced permanent exclusion from an early age, I found that a phenomenological exploration of their experiences highlighted for most young people (5), a failure to connect with education and a failure to recognise its relevance. The actual story of exclusion, because it had occurred relatively early on in their educational careers and had been followed by multiple exclusions, seemed less of focal point, and had become more normalised and accepted.

4.2   Superordinate Theme 1: Belonging

This first superordinate theme relates to what the six young people told me about their complex involvement with others, including peers and the family. This extends to experiences of the school system and how this has impacted on their sense of belonging. What was striking about all of the interviews was the sense that feelings of belonging were fragile. Having failed in mainstream education, four of them expressed feelings of stability in what they felt was a containing context (EBD school). The issues pertaining to the positive aspects associated with such specialist provision will be discussed in Chapter 5 (5.2.3). Feelings were expressed in complicated ways. With the exception of Adam, who presented feelings of belonging, which were more grounded and robust at times, none of the other boys seemed secure in their relationships. Three subthemes emerged:

- Relationships with peers
- Impact of the family
- The school as a system

4.2.1   Relationships with peers

This theme covers both the positive and negative aspects of relationships with peers, where mostly a negative picture emerges. Given the importance that forming relationships with peers is afforded in the psychological literature, I was interested to learn about the importance this group of young people placed on peer relationships. For five of the boys, interactions with peers centred around conflict situations.

A degree of conflict between peers has been described as normative throughout adolescence. However, what was noticeable about the narratives of Henry, Ron, Adam and Lenny was the tendency to overly perceive the intentions of others as negative and become increasingly

involved in negative interactions, driven by anger. Henry compared school life when he was not being excluded to when the situation changed for him:

> *'Dunno, I just didn't really care what people thought of me, but now if someone doesn't like me, I just switch.'*
> *(1.25-26)*

Similarly, Ron was able to reflect on why he had difficulties in a mainstream school:

> *Na, it's not that it's just like as soon as people would say something, I'd just switch. It's not that school wasn't important to me but as soon as someone would say something to me, I'd switch and that's it.'*
> *(2.56-59)*

Adam uses the term 'react' at a number of points in his interview indicating a similar response. It is my interpretation that the use of the words 'switch' and 'react' indicate a pattern of paying particular attention to hostile cues in their environments, and having a learned sole response, that of anger. It appears as though these boys have difficulty labelling their own emotions and differentiating between them, and therefore responding angrily becomes the default position. It was interesting that they found it difficult to communicate what might trigger these reactions even though there was a sense that they happened frequently. It is possible that their views regarding the perceived disapproval or negative attitudes of others, are perpetuating hostile situations with peers. This increased emotional reactivity tended to be the main method of dealing with problems they faced.

Lenny's earliest memories convey a sense of school as a battle field, going back as far as his time in nursery:

> *'I was always in trouble, I always had fights and all that.'*
> *(1.20).*

His story is characterised by negative relationships with peers and inadequate methods of conflict resolution, learning from an early age *'I'd*

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just punch them and that would shut them up' (2:35-36). As his story continues, his views do not seem to have changed. It is possible that behaviour management strategies which focused on containing the behaviour at the expense of explicitly teaching Lenny alternative strategies to deal with conflict or address his cognitive processes, have led to a vicious circle. Lenny spoke of punishments for his behaviour:

> *'Most of the time I wasn't allowed out when I was at primary school.'*
> *(4.98-99)*

It is possible that this may have led to Lenny becoming more socially isolated from his peers, due to limited experience of being able to develop positive relationships, further exacerbating his problems. Conflict permeates Lenny's entire narrative. This has been normalised for him at an early age and is all he has ever known. This is reflected in the following extract:

> *'Fights, I didn't mind them, it was an everyday thing.'*
> *(4.97-98)*

With the exception of Ron and Henry, reference to fitting in and being understood are important and made explicit in the narratives of four of the young people. Ron very much views his life in terms of his future and making plans for a better life. In this way, it seems that fitting in and being understood are less of a priority to him in England as he seeks this belonging in America. It is as though he is attempting to try to belong somewhere else. In contrast, Henry has a very strong personal identity, the idea that he has a network of peers he fits in with is implied, does not appear to be a concern of his and is therefore not prioritised in his narrative. For example, in response to what he felt was important in his life he told me:

> *'Money. Family obviously. My boys and my girls. That's it.'*
> *(5.127)*

For Adam and Paul feelings of fitting in come from having a network of peers who have similar life experiences. They feel that they cannot attain

this sense of belonging in a mainstream school. This is an important factor in determining whether or not they continue in mainstream school, it affects their choices and sets them on a different path. Adam told me:

> *'I didn't want to make any friends at that school. In my eyes, none of them are like me.'*
> *(11.351-352)*

Similarly Paul spoke of his experience with regard to his friendships at mainstream school.

> *'Yeah I didn't want to fit in with them because I didn't used to like people who were like.....not posh but if I was saying what they are.....I would say they're neeky [suggesting they are geeks/wimps].'*
> *(6.199-200)*

Adam compares his experience of friendship in mainstream to his current specialist provision:

> *'But the friends in here, they know where I'm coming from cos they're all in the same boat as me.' (11.362-363)*

Here identity is strengthened by what the boys have in common with some people and what differentiates them from others, giving them a sense of personal location. It also suggests class differences, which serve to make fitting in, within mainstream environment more difficult.

Conversely, Alan's feelings of belonging are fragile in the EBD school and are compounded by the fact that he cannot relate to his peers as they. This is epitomised in the extract below:

> *'It's none of their business, they all got somewhere to stay where they feel fine, they go on like they're hard done by but they're not. They don't know.....they don't know what hard done by is.'*
> *(14.448-450)*

Alan later expresses that his friendships serve no meaningful function.

Similar feelings are evoked by Lenny but he is more guarded initially. Particularly pertinent to his narrative is confusion over what constitutes

friendship. The impression gained is that he is very much an outsider. Perhaps, it is too damaging to his self-concept to acknowledge his difficulties forming friendships. It appears that having not had the experience of strong friendship, he has come to equate the word 'friend' with 'people he knows', as this forms his only experience. This is illustrated in the following quote:

> *'I had some friends but they didn't like me that much.'*
> (2. 47-48)

As more trust is gained he is more truthful in his statements, emphasising that the interview is helping him on his journey to making sense of past experiences. He reveals:

> *'Cos I never really had any friend and all that cos of all my troubles through school.'* (14.400-401)

4.2.2 The impact of the family

This subtheme emerges from observation of the extent to which the family proves a stress factor for the young people. This theme is particularly pertinent and consistent for Ron, Alan and Paul. Following the loss of his brother, Ron expresses:

> *'Na, from that point on I didn't care, what anyone told me. I didn't care. I've always had respect for my carer. I weren't never bad in care but in school and all that and on road I didn't really give a cats really. I just done whatever I thought needed to be done.'*
> *(7. 209-212)*

Loss and bereavement emerge as important issues for Ron. His parents separating at an early age led to a number of consequences such as change of home, change of school, change of caregiver from a primary caregiver to going into care. These are the types of consequences usually associated with the bereavement of a close relative. Ron also

suffered the loss of his brother. This loss was further compounded by the sudden and violent manner in which he died, having been stabbed.

Following this tragedy, he again experiences multiple changes. The intensity of this emotional loss highlights a negative turning point in Ron's life and rapidly increases the further development of emotional and behavioural problems. This is captured in the extract above.

Reflecting on how he processes the news of his brother's death, he told me:

> *'You know when like you're young and you go to a funeral of like an uncle or someone but not someone close to you. It's still your uncle but you don't really feel like that. But when you think it's like your own brother or your own sister and like he's not there no more, it's a mad feeling. I was just shocked, I didn't know what to do.'* (5. 153-158).

The trauma Ron is experiencing seems evident when he tries to express his feelings in the aftermath of his brother's death. It is as though the words he chooses are not enough to express his emotions at the time. He speaks about a 'mad feeling', conveying a sense it is all consuming and he is unable to discriminate between his feelings.

Similarly, Alan describes the absence of a significant attachment figure. Although both mothers are physically present, less so for Ron as he has spent periods of time in care, they are emotionally unavailable. Their relationships with their sons are characterised by a lack of care.

Again, like a few of the other boys, Alan's first memory of school is significant in terms of how it shapes what is to come. He remembers coming to school on his first day in his pyjamas, following a long period of time out of school (from year 2 to year 4). The context he provides for this outlines that Alan was visiting a new school, having recently moved house and was encouraged to start immediately by staff, despite not having a uniform. This incident paints a chaotic picture of Alan's family life, where little preparation for change has taken place. Alan displays much anger towards his mother for disrupting his education, for failing to realise he was struggling at school and for failing to act when he was permanently excluded. In Alan's view, his mother's inaction and failure to

advocate for him indicates a lack of care. This is captured in the extract below:

> *'Cos she didn't do anything. She didn't try. I've seen so many other kid's mums try and they get back into mainstream secondary school, something like that. Then she doesn't try so it's partially her fault.'*
> (5.163-165)

Alan appears to gather evidence to consolidate this view of his mother through a downward social comparison with his siblings:

> *'It's like, oh you've done wrong there, forget about you, let's just make sure the other ones be alright.'*
> *(6.175-176)*

This leads to feelings of resentment and further alienates him from his family, so much so that as the years have gone on, his relationships have become so fraught that: *'I don't class them as family.'* (10.317)

When Ron describes his relationship with his mother, it appears that she has made choices which do not prioritise her son's needs. He is less than convinced that the following was the only option:

> *'Cos my mum got with someone and we didn't get on and it was either she come out of his house in North London and live nowhere or I come go to foster care so I guess that's what had to happen' (3.97-99).*

For both Ron and Alan, this sense of not being cared for causes them to develop a lack of respect for their mothers. Ron expresses his thoughts:

> *'No matter what I never have the respect for her that I should.'*
> *(6. 198-199)*

Alan demonstrates a more volatile relationship with his mother. He is angered by the way she chooses to live her life and how this negatively impacts upon him.

> *'My mum says I have no respect for her but I ain't having no respect for someone who has no respect for me. Why should I show her respect cos she's my mum. No she talks to me like I'm shit so I talk to her like she's shit back.'*
> *(13.433-437)*

The absence of a father figure was noticeable in all six narratives. The only participant to make direct reference to this is Paul who feels it was a contributory factor to the problems he was having:

> *'And because my dad didn't move in with us I never had a father figure so I was getting in all sorts of trouble.'* (4.128-129)

Further comments made by Paul related to his relationship with his father are scanty and fragmented.

Interestingly, it was what was not said in the narratives of the others that highlighted that they have grown up without a father figure. This is significant given that much research indicates that boys need their fathers as positive role models and objects of identification. There is no reference to disappointments or unfulfilled expectations and the absence of the relationship with the absent father is quite stark.

Henry describes how he confides in his mother:

> *'I tell my mum everything. I tell my mum too much. I tell her absolutely everything that happened in my day, like say if I robbed a shop. I'd tell my mum I don't know why.'*
> (5.150-151)

It is possible that Henry is expressing a need for boundaries and discipline here. By confiding in her about his anti-social behaviour, it may appear to him that she is colluding and condoning his actions. It is possible that this is a cry for his mother to take a stronger parental role.

Paul's story is also punctuated with examples of seeking out rules, boundaries, order and routine. He refers to experiences, outside of the

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family home, that taught him that '*adults mean that they control and kids don't*' (9.272-273). He speaks of wanting to join the army to impose some order in his life, something he feels he cannot do for himself:

> '*Just because of how I am and they don't take no shit really, do they? So that would make me better in a way because how I live now is better than it used to be but if I was in the army it would be stricter so I'd learn more.*' (14: 455-457).

4.2.3 The school as a system

This subtheme relates to the young people's experiences of school as a system. This was an emotive theme, where the boys demonstrated much vulnerability and experienced rejection.

I asked questions about the young peoples' experiences of primary school. Given statistics placing boys of secondary school age most at risk of permanent exclusion, I was keen to find out whether primary school was a more positive and containing experience. For most (5), of the boys this did not seem to be the case.

Lenny's memory for events at primary level is detailed and honest. Getting into fights: '*I was always in fights with kids and all that giving cheek to teachers* (1.29) and negative patterns of interaction with teachers: '*teachers would shout at me and I would be shouting back*' (2.40-41) are all daily occurrences. A strong pre-occupation with his peers emerges, to which learning and relationships with teachers are secondary. It is striking that he only has one strategy for managing his anger, which has served to bring him more conflict and much unhappiness. What appears to be absent here is the role of an adult in helping him to manage this behaviour and understand that there are alternatives. Lenny shows little awareness that someone might be able to help him in this area. He does not resist developing a negative identity neither does he embrace it as Henry does, in an effort to protect his self-esteem. He is simply ambivalent and accepting:

> *'Yeah I was happy and all that and fights I didn't mind them, it was an everyday thing.'*
> *(4.96-98)*

In contrast, Alan has very clear ideas about the school and a teacher's role. He talks about a need for communication between schools *'they could have found out their thoughts from the other school'* (3.69-70) and between home and school *'they could have spoke to my mum, 'they could have found out I didn't go to school for time'* (3.72-3) and the need for practical support to help him catch up. Both of these accounts indicate a lack of care. This theme of lack of care is developed further by Alan when he speaks about teaching style. A good teacher is someone who goes further than going through the motions:

> *'It's like......there's dull teachers who give you the paper, give you the pen. Then there's teachers who get you involved like they make you understand it.'*
> *(7.226-228)*

This is echoed in Adam's story and particularly characterises his relationships with teachers at secondary level:

> *'More like, the teachers were boring by the way they were setting the work. They could have been more like exciting and made the class more confident in what they're gonna do. Anytime they gave us work they made us nervous about that, like we're not gonna do the work right.'*
> *(9.292-296)*

Here Adam is expressing the need for a safe, learning environment. Supportive relationships with teachers have failed to develop. He now views them as a barrier to his learning. Instead of teaching him, he believes that they are actively trying to make him fail:

> *'They try to wind you up and they know you're wound up and they try to be even more like fierce, a bit more angry with you and be like more strict with you, to make you more angry to give a reason*

to kick you out. They look for reasons to kick you out.' (10.304-307)

Like Lenny's account, the image of school as a battlefield emerges and it seems difficult to imagine how learning could take place in such a perceived hostile environment.

Not being liked by or not liking teachers was explicitly stated by three of the boys. Adam told me: *'I didn't like none of the teachers in that school'* (10.313). Henry's views were more extreme as he expressed *'all of them, I hate teachers'* (3.64). My interpretation here is that the difference between not being liked and not liking is significant. For Adam and Henry, the direction of this feeling indicates they hold the power and seems as though these statements in some way protect their self-esteem.

For Lenny, his self-esteem appears to be rarely protected. Lenny compares himself to other kids who were naughty in his class but were still liked by the teachers:

> *'Some of the teachers did like certain kids but the teachers didn't like me.'*
> *(4. 117-118)*

He bases this evidence on receiving praise very seldom:

> *'Sometimes I was good and all that and I got like a star award and the teacher was saying 'well-done' for behaving yourself and I thought that was alright. Like kid of the week or something like that but that was rare.' (4. 108-110)*

Again he compares himself with peers who were naughty and *'got them basically every week'* (4.111). What was poignant about the extract above is that it was in response to being asked if there was anything he particularly enjoyed about school. The one thing he enjoyed about school, getting praised, when explored actually carried negative

connotations, with teachers inadvertently reinforcing negative feelings about himself, attached to his naughty behaviour.

It is interesting that in both Paul and Ron's stories, relationships with teachers are not afforded much importance. Particularly, in Paul's case he seems to have developed routines and lifestyles that do not include regular attendance at school and therefore limited opportunities to develop relationships with teachers. When he does refer to teachers, he sees them in a role consistent with a major theme running through his narrative, that of expressing the need for boundaries and control. This is illustrated when he talks about learning for the first time that adults make the rules.

For Ron, a lack of continuity in education has negatively impacted on his ability to form meaningful relationships with teachers:

> *'I been to so many schools that I don't even remember any teachers.'*
> *(1.24-25)*

This theme of lack of continuity is apparent in all of the accounts. Chronologies of schools attended and time spent there are conveyed with confusion and uncertainty.

Each young person has experienced multiple exclusions, all permanently excluded at primary level and in Paul's case as early as year 2. The significance of this is that being able to comprehend the relevance of education at this age is developmentally, beyond their thinking it seems. What occurs is a forming of significant memories from a young age that exclusion is positive. Paul told me:

> *'I thought it was good that I was out of school'*
> *(1:33)*

Henry sees exclusion as a reward:

'I used to like getting excluded, days off school. Being excluded is good, it's so stupid. You're being bad and you get days off school, how dumb is that?'
(2: 52-54)

As does Lenny:

'Cos it gets me out of school, I was off for a few weeks.'
(6:157)

For Adam and Alan, reflecting on their second permanent exclusion, gaps in education are not welcomed. Being excluded has now taken on more meaning and begun to characterise their rejection. Following Adam's second exclusion in year 7, he was out of school for a year. He told me:

'They wouldn't accept me until year 8.'
(10: 338)

According to Alan he also missed half of year 6 and year 7 and when I asked him about his understanding of why he had not been in school, he replied:

'I don't know, there was nowhere for me to go they said.'
(8:259)

Both these boys acknowledge and attach much meaning to the difficulty they have had with learning, throughout their interviews. The impact of these gaps in schooling, both educationally and psychologically, in terms of sending a message that they do not fit in anywhere, is profound.

When positive aspects of relationships with teachers were acknowledged, it had powerful effects. A strong sense of Adam's journey beginning positively is conveyed. This centrality of ideas of reciprocity in connection with respect and equality is evident:

'Ah, just the way she spoke to us with respect and she never looked down on us cos we was kids. She spoke to us like the way we would want to be speaking to her. The way she wants us to

speak to her she'd speak to us. That's why everyone appreciated and respected her cos she respected us.'
(1: 22-24)

More than this, there is a sense, for Adam, of teacher's going beyond their professional role, looking out for him and steering him on the right path:

> *'She meant she doesn't want us cut out of education and she doesn't want us being used to getting excluded. She doesn't want us getting used to be being naughty, she wants us to follow the right leads.' (2: 37-40)*

He recognises and seeks out these qualities in other teachers. He talks about an important teacher in his current provision:

> *'Yeah, yeah same as Mr Hall. It's like he does exactly what she does.'*
> *(3.72-73)*

Class differences, referred to previously, in the subtheme relationships with peers, are more explicit when Adam refers to the positive relationships he has with staff at his current school. This is encapsulated in the quote below:

> *'Kerry: So what is it that makes you have good relationships with them?*
> *Alan: By the way I talk to them......cheeky. They'll ask me to do some thing and I'll say why cos I'm special and they'll say only special to me now go away..........if I'm sitting there like a posh person then that would wind me up so I just talk to them the way I would talk to my friends.'*
> (13.410-413; 417-418)

Adam's quote provides good evidence for the need for a flexible means of communicating. Adam appears reluctant to adapt his social register as though it might in some way challenge his identity. It appears clear that for Adam this playful banter, can and does serve a social purpose.

Similarly, a positive comment made by a teacher has the power to give Alan a glimmer of hope and shape his future plans, in an otherwise overwhelmingly negative situation. Alan expressed to me he was considering a career in cooking, basing this on a compliment given by a teacher as illustrated below:

> *'The teacher said that I stood out, out of everyone that was in there. I was the one that stood out most when I done it. She said I'm a perfectionist or something like that.'*
> *(10.333-335)*

For Lenny and Adam, supportive relationships that have failed to develop in a mainstream secondary environment have been found in specialist provision. Lenny indicates this in terms of the practical support he is now able to access. This is illustrated in his comparison of mainstream and current provision:

> *'If you couldn't understand something the teachers would say I'm helping someone else, I'll come over in a minute but they didn't but here, they help you understand and come over straight away'(13. 393-396)*

Again, Adam views the teacher's role as going beyond what is expected and being instrumental in encouraging him to reconstruct his identity.

> *'The way they're trying to do is like, change your mind round from being naughty into being good.'*
> *(12.398-399)*

A strong theme of injustice emerged from five of the narratives. This was a particularly emotive theme, were the boys were not only able to articulate feelings of injustice in relation to themselves but considered the wider impact of issues affecting them and affecting others in similar positions. Adam criticises his excluding primary school for displaying a lack of tolerance and for not taking contextual factors into account which may have been impacting on his behaviour.

'They weren't tolerating nothing, they weren't tolerating nothing at all. Especially as I was the new boy and as soon as I started I was in trouble so they weren't going to tolerate nothing so they just kicked me out straight away.'
(6. 201-204)

This is echoed by Lenny who perceives the school to be intolerant, yet casual in their decision to exclude without following recognised procedures. This is highlighted by the extract below:

'It was a week before I was going into year 9, they said 'oh yeah, you're not coming back see ya later.' They didn't have no meetings with governors or nothing, they just kicked me out.'
(11.325-326)

Perceptions of unfairness, in relation to temporary exclusions, prior to permanent exclusions was commented on by Henry:

'Then I dunno, I was getting excluded for stupid things, really little things like forgetting a pencil I'd get excluded.'
(3:73-74)

Adam's experience has led him to form a view of the role of schools, which in his experience, have narrow boundaries and inclusion criteria. This is encapsulated in the quote below:

'They just want to tolerate people that are willing to work and who get their head down and not be messing around and stuff. So they'll just kick you out if you're naughty.'
(7. 215-217)

He presents the view that schools should have wider goals that nurture both the social and affective development of pupils, indicating his needs are not being met. This can be evidenced through the following quote:

'It's an alright school for education and that but any other way it's not a decent school.'
(7.238-239)

The sense of anger and injustice Alan feels over being excluded is evident throughout his narrative. His feelings of injustice are intensified through comparison with his peers, whom he feels have had more favourable outcomes than him. He told me:

> '*My mum tried to put me in the next primary school and they said they've got me down for a centre and that's just taking the piss. I see loads of kids now and I know loads of kids my age who have been kicked out of primary school and just gone to the next one. But for me I just got sent straight to a place like this.*'
> *(3. 83-87)*

This implies a frustration about lack of second chances, something which Adam makes explicit reference to. When comparing positive and negative experiences at two primary schools, he expressed:

> '*They give you chances, they believe in chances, they don't. They don't believe in nothing, they don't tolerate anything.*'
> *(8:240-242).*

For Ron, this sense of injustice and disappointment at a system's failings is also manifested, but directed toward the wider community systems especially the criminal justice system.

> '*When I done the crime, I want to talk about it but when I ain't done the crime, it gets me mad to think I could be going to jail for something I didn't do. I was just on my work experience just like normal, it's a joke, the police are a joke.*'
> *(15.478-481)*

Ron's narrative appeared steeped in a dialogue connected to criminal activity where poverty-survival offences where contrasted with more serious offences and therefore justified. This will be considered further in superordinate theme 2.

Ideas about hope and possibilities emerge only for Ron, when he speaks about starting a new life in America. As his life is now, he feels strongly that his freedom is under threat. His empathy towards his friend who spent time in prison has highlighted that this is a real possibility for him.

'I know I can go to prison for something I didn't do cos he did so why can't I. So you know what I'm saying this world, not even this world, this country is a joke.'
(16.512-514)

4.2.4 Summary of Superordinate Theme 1

Most of the young people's relationships with peers were characterised by conflict and negativity, perceiving the behaviour of others in a range of situations as hostile and responding through anger. Positive relationships with peers were fostered when there was a sense of sharing similar life experiences and being understood. For most of the young people this was difficult to achieve in a mainstream environment, with more success in developing relationships with peers demonstrated in specialist provision.

The most pertinent finding from the impact of the family theme relates to the absence of a father figure in all six narratives. Three of the boys experienced additional family stress factors where primarily weak attachment relationships with their mothers was evident.

Most (5) of the narratives were dominated with expressions of negative relationships with teachers. When positive aspects did emerge, this had the potential to have a powerful impact on the individual's sense of self. All the boys have been affected by lack of continuity in their education. Five of them expressed feelings of injustice in relation to their educational and wider community experiences.

4.3   Superordinate Theme 2: Survival

All six young people described experiences of living through hardship or adversity. These included statements requiring basic needs to be met relating to living conditions, safety, money and leading a normal life. Strategies to ensure survival in the school context and to live through difficult experiences were employed and alluded to, although not always

conscious processes. Positive views of the future were expressed by all six young people as a way out of situations they were currently in. Three subthemes emerged:

- Expresses need for the basics
- Protecting the self
- Positive views of the future

4.3.1   Expresses need for the basics

For Ron, Adam and Paul feelings of safety are not taken for granted, permeating both the school and home context. Feelings of safety have been threatened by the growing problem of urban violence and rise in weapon use in the UK. In Paul's case he has direct experience of the reality of a violent street world. He expressed the need to protect himself:

> *'There has been the time obviously when my friend got stabbed and I thought to carry a knife but then I thought, in the end there's no point cos if I'm gonna get stabbed and I've got a knife, there's more chance of it getting switched back on me.'*
> *(12.368-371)*

Feelings expressed, fluctuated between being confined to new experiences as Adam explains:

> *'Well most of the time it was fear cos I'm like the new boy and there's other people from my estate who like go to that school.'*
> *(4.113-114)*

and being more pronounced and impacting on every day life.
Paul talks of his journey to school:

> *'Kerry: Why do you have to get a cab to school?*
> *Paul: No just because my mum said she don't want me walking the street now, cos where I live is Croydon and theres been like 30 stabbings or something stupid like that there, there was a shooting yesterday and she said she don't want me to be walking about on my own with all them other school kids.'*

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(13.414-418)

Ron appears to be immersed in a world where the threat of urban violence affects him daily. Feelings of his safety being compromised are so extreme that he likens it to having no life.

> *'For real, I do. I honestly feel like I don't have a life here. There's nothing to do. You know the best feeling yeah. I've never told anyone this, I've told no-one this. When I leave school at 3.15 and I'm home safely that's my best feeling. I've never told no one that, that's my best feeling.'*
> *(12. 378-382)*

For Alan, the need to improve his living conditions is apparent, he describes a home environment negatively impacting on his psychological well-being.

> *'My house is like shitty and I've said to mum there's a lot of stuff that you could do, not even expensive stuff that could make the house just that bit better but it's like she just wants to sit around and leave it...'*
> *(12.375-378)*

What makes this situation more desperate for him is the further impact of environmental factors which appear out of his control:

> *'Yeah and living on a where like......imagine like......this is the main road yeah and my house is there and my bedroom is up there and my window is about half of that top window and that's the only window I got, half of that and it opens up to about that much. So when you do open it you ain't getting as much air as you want plus you're just listening to vroom so if you leave it open during the night thinking yeah there's no cars on the road, you only hear one every five minutes. From about four in the morning you're up cos you hear loads of cars.'*
> *(12. 387-394)*

What is striking about this account is that Alan is acutely aware of what needs to happen for his life to improve. This awareness extends to his educational needs, which will be explored later in the analysis. He is an

expert on his own needs but is frustratingly unable to change things, due to lack of facilitation.

For four of the young people, importance is placed on both having and making money. My interpretation is that for these boys, this is a way of taking control and meeting their own basic needs. Henry ranks money as the most important thing in his life.

For Paul this need to make money was impacting on his learning:

> *'Kerry: So tell me more about your learning?*
> *Paul: Back then I wasn't thinking about learning, I was thinking about getting money.'*
> *(7.231-233)*

This motivation and focus on making money takes on more centrality in Ron's narrative. He acknowledges the limitations on his mother being able to provide for him and expresses the need to take on financial responsibility for himself:

> *'Cos it's not about.....you can't live off you parents when your 16.'*
> *(3.76-77)*

Needing to make money is fuelled by the view that *'Money, if you ain't got money you can't do nothing.'* (11.356) Ron presents a moral dilemma where he is trying to resist a life of criminal activity *'I do whatever I need to do to make money but I try not to make it criminal ways'* (8.260-261). Here Ron makes the distinction between petty and more serious offences. Ron conveys a sense that certain illegal activities engaged in have a place in normal everyday life. A sense that making money transcends ideas about what is right and wrong is clear in Paul, Henry and Ron's stories. Three of the young people spoke of wanting to lead normal lives. For Ron, having money opens the door to this normal life:

> *'I want to have a nice house, a wife, 3 kids, 4 kids but if you ain't got money you ain't doin' that.'*

(11.356-7)

Given that these young people are often pathologised and vilified in the media as perpetuating their own downward spirals, this sheds some light on this image and goes some way toward showing that they have conventional aspirations, similar to non- excluded peers. The need to lead a normal life is manifested in different ways.

Alan's motivation to tell his story was one of anger especially toward adults who were not able to sort out the problems he was having at school, on a practical level. He told me:

> *'I just wanted to go to a normal school, if not where I was then somewhere else. I didn't want to go somewhere like that. They didn't have to put me somewhere like that, they could have sorted the problem out a lot quicker.'*
> *(4.131-134)*

Similarly, Paul acknowledges the unsettling nature of moving schools and how this has contributed to feeling as though he is not leading a normal life. More than the others, this idea about leading a normal life appears. Everyday activities appear unattainable to him:

> *'But I wanna get on the bus like normal kids do. Living a normal life instead of getting a stupid cab'*
> *(13.424-5)*

I would suggest that Paul's desire for a normal life stems from a need for boundaries, order and routine. He alludes to this a number of times:

> *'But for school I think it's a better routine, wearing one particular thing. I don't really like that but I would like to live that life.'*
> *(13.433-435)*

4.3.2 Protecting the self

All the young people conveyed a sense of having to protect themselves. This ranged from protecting themselves emotionally from thinking about situations, relationships or events that were either too painful or stressful and/or altering their behaviour to ensure more favourable outcomes. For three of the boys, loaded emotional statements, later contradicted, suggested that they were using defence mechanisms to protect their pride, self-esteem and self-concepts. Ron told me about his parents' separation:

> *'I didn't give a damn, I hardly saw my dad really so I didn't really care. It's nothing to do with me.'*
> *(3.94-95)*

Later he lets his true feelings show as he told me:

> *'No kid is gonna like it when their parents split up, no matter how much you don't care when your mum gets with someone you're not gonna like that person.'*
> *(4.105-109)*

Ron finds it difficult to refer to himself and his feelings directly and through his language chooses to distance himself from the negative feelings he so clearly experiences.

Similarly, Lenny spoke about being excluded from school, expressing feelings of not caring, which he then contradicts

> *'Lenny: I didn't care!*
> *Kerry: Why didn't you care?*
> *Lenny: Cos it gets me outta school but I did care cos I*
> *didn't get to say goodbye to the people I got on with and all that.'*
> *(6.155-159)*

Henry appears to be torn between speaking honestly about how he feels and keeping his defences up, for example:

> *'Kerry: Are some of these issues difficult to talk about?*
> *Henry: Some things are but most things I don't really care.*
> *Kerry: What are the things you find difficult to talk about?*
> *Henry: I dunno, actually nothing. I don't care about nothing to do*
> *with school or myself or anything.'*
> *(5.131-132)*

This was expressed with such strength of feeling that indicated the contrary. I would suggest that this is Henry's way of protecting himself against feelings of rejection. However when Henry provides detailed descriptions of the futility of the process of exclusion (8.219-22) and his approach to learning, it seems clear that these are issues which are important to him.

Adam is able to reflect on more conscious approaches to protecting himself. He speaks about starting a new school as a frightening experience and one where it is necessary to be:

> *'More confident in yourself and more loud, otherwise people will*
> *think you are all geeky or something, like a victim or something.'*
> *(6. 183-185)*

Adam describes a tactical strategy to promote his survival in school, in terms of protecting himself from being bullied and establishing his position in a new school. However, once this obstacle has been crossed and he has been able to:

> *'Get into school and be friends with the good people, the people I*
> *want to be friends with so I don't like get picked on or anything.'*
> *(7.224-226)*

The outcome is less than favourable for him and he feels this is unfair:

> *'I put on a front to come out on top and then I get kicked out.'*
> *(7.226-227)*

Throughout the interview with Paul, it was evident that he compares a past self to a present self. Paul is able to observe himself engaged in similar behaviour in order to gain acceptance from his peers:

'Being how I used to be I used to try to look up to people to make me look like them, but now I just try and be my own self'
(12.399-401)

4.3.3 Positive views of the future

Positive views of the future as a means of coping with their present situations have all been described. They could all place themselves as adults in the future in a range of occupations: Adam as a mechanic, owning his own business (15.477- 480), Ron working for a delivery company (9.280-281), Henry as a model (9.275-6), Alan as a chef (10.325), Paul working in computers or joining the army (14.447-448) and Lenny as a fireman.

Both Adam and Ron demonstrate considerable insight with regards to the consideration of their futures. It is evident that they have spent some time planning and recognising what needs to be in place for them to actualise their plans. Adam, in particular, having spent a few months in a Youth Offending Centre is clearer about the direction he wants his life to take. He regrets this experience *'cos I wish I wish I could go back so that can be erased (meaning young offenders)'* (15.495) but yet it has led to a positive change:

> *'So I started planning when I was in prison, I needed to sort myself out. I got my head down and that in there and then I just did my time and then I come out and come back here and get my head down abit.'*
> *(15.497-500)*

It is interesting that only Adam and Alan recognise the relevance of education for later life. Ron views getting an education and getting a job as completely separate, highlighting the urgency of getting a job:

> *'When I get older I can get into doing what I've accomplished at school but for now I just need to get a normal job'*

(3.74-76)

A deeper understanding of why education is low on Ron's list of priorities and shows what is upmost in his mind comes from this quote:

> *'The only thing I think it helps you with (Education) is say you do get a conviction and you've got good grades, you can show your educable to do something, then that's the only way I can see it helping you cos otherwise I can't see it helping you with nothing'*
> (13. 423-426)

A theme of aspects of their behaviour or character changing emerged from five of the narratives. For four of the boys, this motivation to change comes from within and is in response to a number of events in their lives. In contrast although, Henry speaks about changing his behaviour, he does so with reluctance indicating a forced change:

> *'It's fun but I'm changing now, I can't be bothered to get arrested cos if I do get arrested again I'll most probably go down to like a young prison.'*
> *(4.107-108)*

Henry's outlook is different to the other boys in that he seems to revel in this negative identity that has been built around him. The benefits he experiences from certain behaviours outweigh the consequences for him at present and he lacks motivation to change. This will be explored further in relation to identity in superordinate theme 3. Henry is also the youngest participant, who has possibly not yet made the connections that the others have made, in terms of negative consequences now reducing future possibilities and life chances.

The idea of real, sustainable and manageable change as reflected in Adam and Alan's accounts is contrasted with Paul and Lenny's narratives. It seems as though they want to change but there is a sense they do not have the resources to make it happen or it becomes too difficult to manage.

Adam is proud to tell people he is different now and is a shrewd observer of the changes he is made:

> *'I'm not violent as much, I don't get rude as much. I've got my head screwed on about education more times now than I did then.'*
> *(14.445-446)*

This change has been validated by members of staff, helping him to grow in confidence as illustrated below.

> *'Well half the time, teachers get me out of class to calm other people down.' (16.530-531)*

This indicates the importance of responsibility for fostering self-esteem and developing a positive identity. In contrast, Lenny speaks about trying to change his image at school from one as the class clown. This realisation led him to change his behaviour:

> *'When I realised I started trying to be good for a few weeks but then I thought I can't be bothered with all this so I started being naughty.'*
> *(9.265-267)*

This change did not have the desired effect and his efforts were not recognised. He then found it difficult to sustain and returned to an old pattern of behaviour.

4.3.4   Summary of Superordinate Theme 2

Fulfilment of basic needs proved challenging for most of these young people. For half the participants, feelings of safety continue to be threatened, violent acts have been witnessed and changes to their environments have been necessary for protection. Most of the young people stressed the importance of money in their lives. Some of the young people conveyed strongly the desire to lead a normal life.

Protecting the self was an important theme for most of the young people in terms of presenting a false self to increase their social standing in and out of school and through using defence mechanisms to protect against negative feelings.

All of the participants had ambitions and positive views of the future. There was variation amongst the participants as about how to concretely realise these ambitions.

4.4   Superordinate Theme 3: Maladaptive Patterns

The third superordinate theme relates to the young people's difficulty in adapting positively in the face of adversity.

In contrast, Adam appeared to be the most resilient person in the sample. This can perhaps be explained by the interaction that occurred at primary level. It is significant that his earliest memories of primary school are positive and that his relationships, up until a point, were characterised by respect and trust and Adam may have been more accepting of this support. The details of which have been explored with relation to superordinate theme 1. I propose that unlike some of the other young people, whose self-concept has been largely formed through negative experiences and relationships, Adam has been able to build up a degree of self-confidence and competence much earlier than the others, which he can draw upon in times of hardship. Although Adam, Ron, Henry, Alan and Paul all make reference to engaging in criminal activity, Adam is the only one to have spent time in a Young Offenders Centre. This formed a significant turning point in his life and led to a positive outcome. He conveys a sense of realisation and a willingness to break the cycle of negativity he is engaged in, illustrated in the quote below:

*'Cos that's when it hit me when I seen my mother cryin in court,
that's when it hit me that I needed to back my ideas up. So I
started planning when I was in prison I needed to sort myself out.'*
(15.495-498)

For Henry, Paul and Lenny having a diagnosis of Attention Deficit
Hyperactivity Disorder has had significant implications for their sense of
agency and development of the self concept. For Alan, placement within
specialist provision and the meaning he attaches to this has also had a
significant impact upon his identity. Therefore two subthemes emerged:

- Locus of control.
- The impact of labelling.

4.4.1 Locus of control

This indicates the extent to which the young people felt they were able to
affect different types of events in their lives.

Alan's narrative is peppered with examples of feeling powerless in
response to a range of life events. This first becomes evident through his
response to the process of exclusion and the absence of involvement in
the decision-making processes. Alan expresses his dissatisfaction with
school, with a focus on the type of provision he reluctantly attends and
the meaning that this holds for him. He told me:

*'I knew I didn't want to be there but like......what am I meant to do,
I'm like 12, not even 12, like 11. Nothing I can really say or do is
there?'*
(6.185-186)

This extends to his feelings ;about his home environment. He
acknowledges ways and means to improve his living situation but feels
powerless against other factors such as lack of support from his family to
make it happen. His comments on his living situation are tinged with
resentment:

> *'It's like you could do that with the whole house, a lick of paint, carpet on the stairs and the place would look nice again but no one wants to do anything. It's just lazy......so why am I......I'm not doing it for you to live in.'*
> *(12.382-385)*

Alan's perceptions of his relationship with his mother are also very static. I asked him:

> *'Kerry: Are there ever any times at home when it's better?*
> *Alan: Yeah, there is times but it always goes back to the same thing, it don't last long.'*
> *(13.429-431)*

Similarly, Ron expresses feelings of powerlessness but in relation to the criminal justice system. He conveys a sense of hopelessness at not being in control of his own fate. This is encapsulated in the sequence of conversation below:

> *'Kerry: So when is your case coming up, it must be really worrying?*
> *Ron: Really, I don't really care, when I'm in front of the judge I laugh.*
> *Kerry: why?*
> *Ron: Because I didn't do it so I laugh and the worst thing is it was on work experience so now I can't go on work experience in a shop. What can I do? I've got to convince 12 people, the jury, what can I do? I can't do nothing else to convince the 12 people, they ask me questions and all I can say is I didn't do it. I can't do no more.'*
> *(14:467-474)*

A lack of belief that situations and events can become unstuck was an important issue for five of the young people. Ron tackles larger issues such as personal freedom becoming compromised due to the increase in knife and gun crime in what he portrays as a violent street world. He is unable to see any solutions to this problem and the repetitive language in the following extract, conveys a sense of searching for a solution that cannot be found. The repetition in this extract suggests a note of desperation about the current situation:

> *'Personally I don't see how it is gonna stop, that's my honest opinion. I can't see how it's gonna stop. I can't see how this is gonna stop. I can't'*
> *(13.410-411)*

With the benefit of hindsight, Alan is able to reflect on his changing attitude toward schoolwork as a priority. For him, placing importance on schoolwork at an earlier point would not have made any difference to his situation. What is evident from the extract below is that although his views regarding schoolwork are changeable, his belief in his ability to influence or control life events remains fixed.

> *'Nothing was important back then, but now I see it was important but it's not my fault, is it? Even if I did think it was important back then, there was still nothing I could have done so it won't change anything and it can't be changed now.'*
> *(9.271-274)*

4.4.2 Impact of labelling

There has been much debate about the use of labels to describe children and young people and particularly the negative consequences of this. Labelling, in terms of what is pertinent to the research, can be defined as the recognising of differences and assigning social salience to these differences.

This theme relates to both the positive and negative consequences for these young people, associated with having a label. This is in terms of having a diagnosis of ADHD as is the case for Henry, Paul and Lenny or the less explicit label of what it means when you are not educated in mainstream education, which is particularly pertinent to Alan. This theme is applicable to most (4) of the young people and is afforded much importance due to its centrality to their life stories, in terms of becoming the basis of personal identity.

The issue of loss of personal agency emerged as a strong theme for three of the young people. Agency refers to a person's ability to have effectiveness over problems and other aspects of their lives. Henry very much views himself as different:

'I'm different cos I've got like ADHD and ODD.'
(5.154)

He embraces this difference in terms of what it means for his personal identity, which will be discussed later. Henry absolves himself of responsibility by expressing:

'......the thing it about it is it's not really my fault I've got these things. I didn't ask for them so.....And if they give me stupid tablets that don't do it they need to give me something better or something cos obviously it ain't working.'
(6.172-175)

This belief that his difficulties have a solely biological explanation appears to be an invitation for Henry to forget his competencies and attempt to solve problems from the relatively narrow confines that the dominant view of ADHD allows.

This is echoed by Paul:

'I think it's not an excuse but the reason I've been acting like this is because of that [ADHD].'
(10.318-319)

Family perceptions have played a key part in eroding Paul's sense of personal agency:

'My nan used to call me the c word cos I was being so naughty and that and she said you need to check him, it might not be his fault he might have something wrong with him and then they checked and said yeah I have got ADHD.'
(9.298-301)

Similarly Lenny's views on the cause of his behaviour are captured in the following quote:

'I kick off…. but that's to do with my ADHD.'
(5.135)

For these three boys, what followed a diagnosis of ADHD was the administration of Ritalin. Negative consequences emerged from all three accounts. Both Henry and Paul speak of the physical side effects. Henry recalls his experience of medication and what led to his decision to stop taking it:

> *'They used to make me feel tired, like make me not eat, give me like dry mouth all the time ugh. Couldn't sleep at night, it was horrible.'*
> *(6.162-163)*

Paul has had a similar experience of suppressed appetite and feeling lethargic and as his tolerance has increased, so has the dosage. This is reflected in the quote below:

> *'When I first take them I still feel dopey but then after I'm lively, not lively but I can talk but when I first started taking them I couldn't talk. Everytime someone talked I was just like (makes face) and then basically I got used to it so now I'm taking more.'*
> *(10.324-327)*

Unlike Henry, for Paul seeking another treatment method for his difficulties is not an option. Parental perceptions appear to place unrealistic expectations on the medication and feed into Paul's belief that medication is the only form of support. He commented that:

> *'My mum thinks I've got to take a higher dosage cos it's crept up and I'm being naughty on her.'*
> *(10.311-312)*

Paul likens the effects of taking medication to those associated with recreational drugs:

> *'Cos they've got speed in, it feels like I've taken drugs basically ………I can't be bothered to be naughty.' (10.332-335)*

I considered the long terms effects of this for young people in similar positions and how this may indicate the possibility of over dependence on drugs to cope with pressure and stress throughout their lives.

Paul believes that medication has the power to correct his difficulties rather than providing him with the ability to self-regulate. He demonstrates he is at the mercy of medication when he expresses:

> *'I'm definitely going to get them doubled cos I don't want to be naughty and I've only got two years left of school.'*
> *(11.335-336)*

Lenny recalls taking medication since nursery or year 1. At this young age, he has not formed a view about what this might mean and it is significant that he viewed it as normal:

> *'I thought it was something normal, so I didn't really mind, I thought I'll just take it.'*
> *(3.83-84)*

This has implications at a wider level in terms of consent to treatment and issues of children's rights. What is striking about Lenny's story is that the diagnosis has served to marginalize him from the other children and it has certainly changed their view of him. He told me:

> *'People used to wind me up and take the mickey out of me.'*
> *(2.59-60)*

He reasons that:

> *'Cos they knew I had ADHD and all that and they started saying go and take your mental pills.'*
> *(3.62-63)*

This led to a downward spiral for Lenny as he used aggression as a coping mechanism and therefore the label of ADHD begins to constitute a self-fulfilling prophecy.

I was interested to know what happens to the selves of these young people when they are categorised in terms of ADHD or not being deemed educable in the current mainstream system. I found that these two factors had a strong impact on the construction of the self for most (4) of the young people, where both negative and positive identities have been formed.

Alan shows resistance to accepting the identity that comes with attending alternative provision. He refers to this provision as *'somewhere like that.'* (4. 133) and expands on the meaning he attaches to this by stating:

> *'Here where I am now, a centre with loads of bad kids. I'm not stupid this is where they send bad kids. Bad kids yeah, that's the point of this school and they didn't have to send me somewhere like here.'*
> *(5.137-139)*

It is as though Alan is resisting confirmation of what he already knows about himself and what he has learned through his relationships with adults and his time at a number of schools. This is illustrated in the quote below where he recalls the reason why he was excluded from school:

> *'Kept bein bad, kept bein bad, kept bein bad.' (2.59)*

Similarly, Lenny presents as someone with low self-esteem, this is evidenced by the fact that is not only accepting of circumstances and life events that impact on his well-being but that he also equates having ADHD with being *'hyperactive, naughty, rude and quite aggressive.'* *(5.138)*

For Paul there is a sense of acceptance of the fixed nature of his identity as he expresses:

'I wouldn't be naughty if I had a choice but it's just the way I am.'
(14.444)

In contrast, a diagnosis of ADHD and a history of exclusion from school have led to the creation of a falsely positive identity for Henry. The function of Henry's behaviour becomes very clear toward the end of his narrative. For Henry, there are no perceived disadvantages or costs to behaving badly, in fact the benefits are too good to give up. He conveys a sense of wanting to be a somebody not a nobody and this is encapsulated in the quote below:

'If I was good, I would just be some normal boy in school with no attention but because I'm bad I get....I'm coming to places like this, I'm coming here, there. I'm getting loads of attention, ain't I?'
(9.262-265)

It is interesting that when these motives, within this particular context are understood, the behaviour takes on a whole new meaning. It is my interpretation that Henry has developed a misplaced sense of importance. It appears as though there is too much risk involved, in terms of protecting his self-esteem, in engaging in learning and more positive behaviours.

4.4.3 Summary of Superordinate Theme 3

Most of the young people appeared to have an external locus of control, demonstrating limited individual and social resources to draw upon during times of stress. Beliefs about their abilities to control successes and failures have been altered. Feelings of powerlessness, feeling trapped and lacking a belief that things can change have been illustrated throughout this theme.

The impact of having a label, either through medical diagnosis of ADHD or the stigma attached to attending specialist provision was significant for four of the young people. Loss of agency, low self-esteem and over

reliance on medication and negative side effects were reported by those diagnosed as having ADHD.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the three superordinate themes which emerged from the analysis. The participants brought a rich store of information about their lives, where the struggle to belong, to survive, to positively adjust and develop positive identities, is shared between them but also reflected from the viewpoint of the individual. This chapter relates the findings to literature discussed in Chapter 2 and also, as a result of unexpected themes emerging, new and relevant literature not previously discussed is included. Implications for practice will be drawn from each theme and discussed at a general level. Applications of the research will be addressed more specifically in Chapter 6.

5.2 Superordinate Theme 1: Belonging

It is an interesting feature of my research that all six of the young people predominantly expressed a lack of belonging amongst peers, in the family context and particularly within the mainstream school system. According to a number of researchers, relatedness forms one of the three basic psychological needs that are essential to human growth and development, together with autonomy and competence (Connell & Wellborn, 1991; Deci, Vallander, Pelletier, & Ryan 1991; Ryan, Deci & Grolnick, 1995). The need to experience a sense of belonging or relatedness involves the feeling of being securely connected with others in the environment, in terms of being accepted and supported. It involves experiencing oneself as worthy of love and respect whilst maintaining positive and significant interpersonal relationships. Some studies have shown there are far-reaching negative consequences related to being deprived of stable and supportive relationships (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Resnick et al, 1997).

The link between belonging and success in schools has been found by a number of researchers. In particular support from friends, peers and teachers promotes engagement, motivation and academic achievement (Berndt & Keefe, 1995; Marks, 2000; Roeser & Eccles, 1998). The significance of this is that both belonging and academic autonomy are strong predictors of psychological adjustment (Roeser & Eccles, 1998).

Relationships with peers and the impact of the family will now be considered together as they have much in common in terms of the psychological theories they apply to.

5.2.1 Relationships with peers & impact of the family

A striking feature of most of the interviews was a lack of supportive and trusting relationships that developed with peers. Much of the literature stresses the importance of peer relationships as adolescence progresses (Buhrmester & Furman, 1987; Ellis, Rogoff, & Cromer, 1981; Larson & Richards, 1991). It has been found that young people's perceptions about their social success and acceptance by the peer group in early adolescence paves the way for successful social adjustment into adulthood. Extracts from all six of the young people in the present study indicated unsuccessful entry into childhood peer groups. Relationships with peers were characterised by conflict and a lack of peer acceptance.

Attachment Theory (Bowlby 1973, 1988; Waters & Cummings, 2000) proposes that early attachment relationships are a strong predictor of achieving a sense of felt security in future relationships with others. This theory postulates that experiences with primary caregivers are represented in Internal Working Models (IWM) based on either effective or inefficient emotion regulation by the caregiver. The IWM of the attachment relationship informs a person about their own self-worth and indicates the dependability of others in providing care and love (Kennedy & Kennedy, 2004).These IWMs form a person's beliefs about themselves and others which develop through their interactions and can impact upon

the quality of future relationships. IWMs form the basis of what we expect from others in terms of responsiveness and dependability. These representations can guide thinking, feeling and behaviour and influence the development of maladaptive and adaptive strategies of coping in times of stress. Children who have experienced responsive and sensitive caregiving, develop trusting relationships and view the world as a safe place where exploration can occur. When the converse is true, children may expect the world to be a hostile place and project this on to interactions with others.

The frequency of conflict with peers which began at an early age, and the increased emotional reactivity that accompanies this, emerged strongly. The notion of 'switching' that emerged in three of the narratives highlights this. A consideration of the origins of misplaced anger can be attributed to IWMs, stemming from attachment theory as outlined above. This suggests maladaptive thinking patterns develop, which can trigger negative emotional and behavioural responses (McGinn & Sanderson, 2001).

Baer & Maschi (2003) attempt to explain the cognitive structures and processes, such as IWM, in more detail as these structures and processes act as the foundation for both self-constructive and self-destructive behaviour. Their research was primarily concerned with youth offenders, who it is argued, have impaired cognitive functioning as a result of living in traumatic contexts. This is relevant to the sample in the present study who have experienced a range of traumatic events including incarceration of siblings, witness to neighbourhood violence, parental substance abuse, neglect and loss of a significant family member. Most of the young people in the present study referred to an increase in emotional reactivity in situations with peers. Explanations for this conflict were usually in relation to perceptions that peers wanted to fight, were 'winding' them up, or they did not like what they were saying.

Baer & Maschi (2003) assert that:

> *'The individual's cognition consists of schematic processing, which is defined as the ways that assumptions about the self and others are formed and generalised. Schematic processing consists of a schema, which are stored bodies of knowledge that interact with incoming information and involve pathways of cognition, affect and behaviour' (p.87)*

Therefore repeated exposure to affective experiences of a similar kind will lead to certain internal representations that guide behaviour in the external world. This theory puts forward a clear psychological interpretation of how conflict emerges between peers. Dodge (1986) found that children who act aggressively are often hyper vigilant. They pay particular attention to hostile cues, often over-perceive aggression in others and under-perceive aggression in themselves. This is in comparison to non-aggressive children who can use complex inferences about others people's behaviour.

> *'This pattern of distorted perception and interpretation of others contributes to their justification of aggression......These distortions occur in traumatized aggressive children because their cognitive rules for predicting, interpreting and responding to, and controlling embody aspects of earlier trauma including emotionality, and specifically the idea that others are hostile toward them' (Baer & Machi, 2003, p.87)*

It was interesting that most of the participants used language indicating difficulties regulating their emotional response. When Ron's brother died he could only articulate his feelings by repeating 'it's a mad feeling', which seemed an almost infantile response. Two of the young people used the word 'switch' and another used the word 'react' often to indicate an angry response to a situation. It has been found that children who display aggressive tendencies have difficulties with affect regulation which is strongly related to distortions in affect labelling. It is common for these children to label affect as anger in a range of situations, rather than sadness or fear. The implications of this are that other more appropriate responses are underused, reacting angrily becomes the sole response,

severely limiting problem solving skills and strategies (Garrison & Stolberg, 1983; Ingram & Kendall, 1986). This was evident with Lenny who demonstrated a fight response to every situation, regardless of context.

Basic assumptions about the self and world following a less than 'good enough' caregiving experience, and the impact this has on psychological well-being and formation of positive relationships, can be illuminated by the Shattered Assumptions Theory (Janoff-Bulman, 1992). According to this, assumptions include the notion that the world is benevolent and meaningful and the self is worthy. These constructs are moulded by the family environment. The assumption of benevolence of the world refers to the extent to which the world is viewed in either positive or negative terms, this extends to how events and people are perceived. In the case of troubled youth who have not experienced a positive caregiving experience, their views of the world may become distorted, perceiving it to be hostile instead of safe and perpetuating distrustful relationships. This is a theme that strikes a chord with Ron's narrative. He is distrustful of his mother, his peers in the community and especially authority figures. Meaningfulness of the world, stemming from the theory, is a theme which outlines an individual's attempt to make sense of the events that happen in their lives and is guided by the principles of distributive justice, controllability of outcomes and chance. According to Shattered Assumptions Theory, when psychological adjustment occurs normally individuals are reassured by the principle of distributive justice because it lessens the possibility that events occur by chance without any order. An individual with a negative perception of the world will find it difficult to apply this principle. Controllability of outcomes refers to learned beliefs acquired through interactions with caregivers that control over ones' life, comes from effort, hard work and practice. This is central to problem-solving ability. Finally, worthiness of the self is also learned through interactions with caregivers and refers to a person's beliefs about themselves as lovable individuals. It is possible that for some troubled

youths, self-destructive behaviour acts as punishment due to their core beliefs about themselves as unworthy (Baer & Maschi, 2003).

Humphrey & Brooks (2006) found negative consequences associated with young people experiencing anger problems. Long-term consequences link uncontrolled anger to substance abuse, domestic violence and the breakdown of relationships. The implications of these findings indicate the primacy of early intervention in this area using attachment theory as the conceptual framework for assessment and intervention planning. It would be beneficial for practitioners to gain more knowledge regarding attachment issues that children bring to school with them in order to support them in developing secure relationships with peers. As highlighted above, distorted cognitive structures and processes which contribute to the development of self-concept are strongly impacted upon by weak attachments relationships and traumatic events. Programmes can be developed and implemented in schools to help young people to both understand and control their anger. However, an approach based solely on conflict resolution is unlikely to match the complexity of the presenting issues. A more tailored, individualised therapeutic input devised by Mental Health Professionals, based on principles from Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) where the focus is on rebuilding more positive templates of construing the world, may prove more effective.

There is a wealth of literature which can be added to that discussed above suggesting that risk factors within the family domain increase the likelihood that young people will become involved in school exclusion, drug-taking and offending (Haines & Case, 2005).

Broad categories of risk factors identified in previous research include early separation from mother, the bereavement of a close relative, divorce and family conflict and the absence of a father figure (Rendall & Stuart, 2005). Where multiple risk factors are experienced, outcomes are more pronounced. The absence of a significant attachment figure is

made apparent in the narratives of both Alan and Ron, which are characterised by both physical absence and emotional unavailability. The effects of which have been alluded to above.

An interesting feature of the present study is that all the participants demonstrated weak emotional attachments with their fathers. The absence of reference to a father figure is poignant in most accounts. Jones & Brent (2004) in a review of the literature in this area found that positive father-child interaction at five years old was a significant predictor of empathic concern later in life. They cite a study by Biller & Kimpton (1997) who conclude that fathers who are active and committed in the upbringing of children produce children who are successful in their academic, social and emotional lives. Contrasted with this, is the literature which highlights the absence of a father figure as related to lower self-esteem, poor academic performance and difficulties related to social and emotional development (Jones & Brent, 2004).

5.2.2 The school as a system

All the participants expressed a lack of belonging in the school context, which began in primary school. For Adam and Lenny this was exacerbated in their secondary school contexts. What was evident in all accounts was a lack of continuity of educational provision. The responses of all of the young people reflected faults in the school system. Expressions of unfair treatment were common. This finding is in keeping with a growing body of research which advocates that:

> 'Capturing the voice of young people is a legitimate and pragmatically valuable process that adds to the understanding of the effects on the school system on children.' (Knipe, p. 423, 2007)

However there is a need to acknowledge that some young people will be externalising issues and may hold negative constructs as discussed in section 5.2.1.

One of the key factors when discussing a sense of belonging in schools is the significance of the teacher pupil relationships. Osterman (2000) notes that if interactions are positive and affirming, pupils will have a strong sense of relatedness. Initially, these interactions characterised Adam's earlier school experiences and a number of positive emotions were expressed. Adam presents as having a more robust level of self-esteem than the others. Strong foundations and positive interactions in this area may explain why.

This is contrasted with the narratives of all the other young people, including Adam's own story in different contexts, where experiences of relationships with teachers have been negative. Most (5), young people indicated that they received feedback that they were not valued. This strongly impacted on their sense of relatedness. Many comments were connected to feeling unwelcome and rejected in the classroom. Osterman (2000) found that when this was the case, pupils were less likely to engage in prosocial behaviours, instead adopting patterns of withdrawal or aggression, a finding which is consistent with the present study. The interaction between teacher and pupil is a complex one which needs unpicking and suggests a cycle of negativity which occurs. Research has consistently found that pupils receive differential treatment based on certain characteristics and that this differentiation begins early in their school career (Schwartz, 1981; Gamoran & Berends, 1987). This highlights an alienating tracking system for those perceived as 'troublemakers' and 'failures.' The children that usually fall under these categories tend to hold negative IWMs and have low expectations of relationships, expecting negative feedback. Therefore teachers find engaging these children difficult which may lead to distancing behaviour. This reinforces self-perceptions and negative behaviour and so the cycle continues. A further implication of this, found by Hymel, Wagner & Butler (1990) is a consideration of the relationship with teacher perceptions and peer acceptance in further reinforcing self-perceptions. The idea of reputational bias refers to status differentials and their impact on how

group members perceive and interact with their peers. Negative reputations are gained and maintained, colouring how behaviour is perceived, evaluated and responded to by others. Lenny, Adam and Henry make reference to differential treatment from teachers. Lenny perceives that he has received less praise than children who were in trouble as frequently as him. This suggests his self-concept has developed based on information received from social comparisons with other children (Osterman, 2000).

Five of the young people stress the positive aspects of being placed at a school for pupils with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (EBD). They expressed the appreciation of being able to conform to rules, re-engage with education and work towards acquiring nationally-accredited certificates. The main conclusion drawn was that positive experiences were underpinned by the quality of relationships with teachers. This is consistent with research carried out by Sellman (2009), who also reports the importance of relationships with teachers, influencing feelings of positive regard for specialist provision, amongst similar participants. Many comments from the young people in the present research study related to the qualities of teachers in terms of being consistent and fair, being able to use humour effectively with the young people, being committed to wanting to help them to change and going beyond their professional role. This is consistent with the findings of Cole, Visser and Upton (1998) who examined good practice across special schools providing for pupils with EBD. Here it was found the interaction between teachers and pupils was a key factor impacting upon a proficient school.

Alan was the only participant to convey a mostly negative experience of specialist placement. This was related to a common and significant element expressed by similar participants reflecting on their school experience (Polat & Farrell, 2002; Jahnukainen , 2001), namely the experience of being labelled. Alan feels strongly that because he has been sent to this school he must be a 'bad kid' and shows awareness of

how this will impact upon his future possibilities. Polat & Farrell (2002) state that:

> 'One of the main criticisms of special schools is that they isolate pupils from their communities and build up negative stereotypes among the general population' (p. 105).

They also make reference to Ofsted reports on EBD schools, which have in the past been critical, stressing that much work would need to be done to improve the quality of education. The implications of these findings are that specialist provisions do appear to be able to make a difference for some young people, especially in terms of their affective needs being met, however this is offset against the negative connotations in society, of attending such provision. The majority of the participants viewed their existing provision as more nurturing and supportive than previous mainstream settings attended.

Feelings of injustice were evoked in relation to the process of exclusion, including perceived reasons for being excluded and outcomes of exclusion. As discussed in Chapter 2, there is a paucity of studies which focus on the voices of young people in provisions for pupils with EBD (Davies, 2005). However, in the research that does exist in this area, strong themes of injustice and unfairness emerge, consistent with the findings of the present study. Lenny's powerlessness in the decision-making process is evident. Henry has clear ideas about the ineffectiveness of the process of exclusion. Alan expresses strong feelings about the processes serving to discriminate against him through adults failing to solve the real problems and not granting him a second chance in a mainstream school. Both Adam and Ron echo this strong theme of being granted second chances both in school and in the community. All of the young people in this study described schools as alienating institutions. Difficulties in forming supportive relationships with teachers and peers, detailed above, exacerbates this feeling of rejection.

McMillan and Chavis (1986) and Furman (1998) assert that pupils who fail to experience a sense of belonging do so because they do not see their own importance. They cannot rely on members of the school community including teachers or peers to meet their needs. This implies there is a need for schools to give consideration to how best pupils' needs for belonging can be satisfied. One implication might be for schools to consider more creative ways that these pupils can make a positive contribution to their school community. Osterman (2000) asserts that this involves drastic changes in cultural values, norms, policies and practices which dominate schooling, with particular reference to secondary education. This resonates with literature previously discussed in Chapter 2 related to the dichotomy of raising attainment and maintaining inclusive practice.

5.3 Superordinate Theme 2: Survival

5.3.1 Expresses need for basics

As illustrated in Chapter 4, most (5), of the participants described experiences of living through hardship or adversity. They presented as a group at risk of being unable to adequately fulfil their basic human needs due a range of factors including overcrowding and inadequate housing, daily fear of violent threat, emotional abandonment and rejection.

The importance of being able to adequately fulfil basic human need was first afforded by Maslow (1970), outlined in his hierarchy of needs. Maslow characterised humans as possessing an innate drive toward health, growth and actualisation of the human potential. Maslow's theory outlines that all human beings have five basic needs and that these basic needs can be arranged on a hierarchy according to prepotency (Harper, Harper & Stills, 2003). Within this theory, lower levels of need must be met and satisfied prior to the advancement of higher level of needs. Maslow's hierarchy of needs which is based on his theory of motivation starts from the lowest level of needs to the highest level and includes

physiological needs, safety needs, need for belonging and love, esteem needs and self-actualisation. Oleson (2004), in reference to satisfying lower level needs, states:

> 'When these basic physiological needs are fulfilled, other levels of needs become important, and these motivate and dominate the behaviour of the individual. When these needs are met other needs emerge, and so on up the hierarchy (p.84)

A striking feature of this research is that most of the participants appeared to come to school preoccupied with issues, making learning difficult. Their agenda seemed largely focused on survival and attainment of basic needs. The implications of this are such that, before the educational needs of these young people can be addressed, there is a need for an understanding to be derived of the obstacles to fulfilment of basic needs (Prince & Howard, 2002).

The first level of basic needs identified by Maslow are physiological, referring to necessities such as food, shelter and clothing. Defining adequacy of physiological needs being met, exists on a continuum and will differ according to different populations. For instance, the severity of physiological needs not being met could mean death in some non-western countries. In the present study, these young people did not present as 'at risk' in such extreme terms but attaining physiological needs for some, proved challenging. Alan speaks about the negative impact of his living conditions. His narrative is characterised by a fraught and hostile relationship with his mother, which has resulted in him sleeping rough on a number of occasions and on the day of the interview, he had left home and was not sure where he would be sleeping later that night.

A surprising theme which emerged from the analysis was the importance that three of the young people afforded to having money in their lives. For Ron, this is both explicitly linked to survival and embedded in current values in society. He has learned from an early age that he cannot rely

on his mother for the things he wants owing to past experiences of emotional abandonment and her financial situation. Cullingford (2003) notes that young people are increasingly encouraged to position themselves as consumers owing to the prominence of capitalism in recent years. Both Paul and Henry repeatedly refer to the consumption of material goods. Bauman (1998) reasons that being an inadequate consumer carries much shame and stigma and that both 'fitting in' to the peer group and demonstrating a sufficient degree of individuality can come from consumerism, fulfilling key goals of adolescence. Cullingford reports the experiences of young offenders, excluded from secondary school, and found that a recurrent theme in the narratives of these young men related to a dominant discourse of materialism. The present study found that most of the young people reported repeated engagement in criminal behaviour, where obtaining goods and making money to obtain goods was cited as the main reason. Cullingford postulates that for this group, a clear indicator of success is the acquisition of consumer goods rather than qualifications. He found that deferred gratification with regard to studying and securing future employment prospects did not have as much appeal as engaging in criminal activity.

Lange (1995) states that a key motivator of consumption is its' power in introducing the young person to more horizontal relationships. Being able to own goods and purchase services puts them not only on equal footing with adults but more affluent peers also. Superordinate theme 3 explores intrapersonal factors impacting on these young peoples' development and makes clear that they lack a sense of control over life events. It is a possibility that they may think that by having money, this is the only way they can have control over their lives thus placing them on equal social standing with adults and peers. This is echoed by Cullingford (2003) who states that consumption carries a range of benefits for the adolescent. He postulates that the search for meaning in life and the enhancement of the self has not emerged due to a negative school experience. Instead it is replaced by criminal activity which facilitates the purchase of material

goods, which help the young person to earn respect and enhance their sense of self.

The need for safety emerged from the narratives of four of the young people. Expressing a need for safety was evoked in different ways, some more subtle than others. Elton (1996) states that the need for safety includes security, stability, protection, dependency and freedom from fear, anxiety and chaos. A theme which emerges throughout Paul's narrative is a need for boundaries, structure and routine. He speaks about his first experience of learning that adults should be in control, taking on the parent role in the father-son relationship, fantasises about joining the army to impose some structure and order in his life and has desires to lead a normal life. Oleson (2004) states that an indication of the need for safety is the preference for routine and structure in life.

Four of the accounts highlighted that for these young people living with the threat of physical and psychological harm is a very real factor in their lives. Many comments were related to growing up in environments where they are repeatedly exposed to violence, which typifies their experience both inside and outside of school life. The quality of life of families exposed to violence has been well-documented by researchers suggesting that violence has a negative impact on a child's education, health, emotional well-being and communication skills (Barrett, 1993; Bell & Jenkins, 1991; Black & Krishnakumar, 1993). A recurrent theme in the narratives of four of the young people was the anticipation of violence. Paul speaks of stories of riots and police vans, going to court as commonplace and witnessing his friend being stabbed. Lenny's entire school life has been characterised by violence, Ron's brother died as a result of a violent killing and Henry seeks belonging in 'going around in large numbers terrorising people.' These young people's storytelling seemed marked by a sense of normality, where narratives about violence were commonplace.

McIntyre (2000) found that when people grow up repeatedly exposed to violence, this can result in similar symptoms to those suffering Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, typified by restlessness and a heightened sense of fear. Testimonies from the young people in the present study taken together with recent crime figures which reveal that 47 young people have been murdered in London alone throughout 2007-8, where the killings involved the use of a gun or a knife, suggest that there is stark reality to the violent street worlds that these young people are engaged in (Hallsworth & Young, 2008).

Ron, more than the rest, feels his sense of safety is threatened on a daily basis. He only ever feels truly safe when he is home at the end of each school day. Prince & Howard (2002) found that:

> 'Children who grow up in dangerous environments develop behaviours which are counterproductive in educational settings. The child's refusal or inability to disregard survival instincts places them at serious risk for academic failure' (p.30).

Similarly, McIntyre (2000) in a study related to how adolescents construct meaning about violence, school and community, by engaging young people as 'experts' on their own experiences found that:

> 'most of the participants [had] a sense of impending doom which has a tendency to consume their energies, distracting them from engaging in other aspects of their lives' (p.135).

This was also true for some of the participants in this study, especially Ron.

Most of the young people were challenged in terms having their physiological and safety needs met. The need for belonging and love posed an even bigger challenge for these young people, particularly within the context of the mainstream school environment. This has been afforded much importance with relation to superordinate theme 1. The

implications of these findings rest in the duty of care of schools and practitioners to recognise when children and young people are in extreme need, ensuring their basic needs can be met in order for them to grow and develop and for each of them to fulfil their potential. In an effort to meet safety needs, schools could develop peer mediation groups in order to support the resolution of angry conflicts between and among young people. Preventative group guidance could be established in relation to bullying, violent crime and gang violence. In order to meet physiological needs, schools could become more knowledgeable in the referral of families to private and government agencies to ensure fulfilment of basic needs (Harper, Harper & Stills, 2003).

5.3.2 Protecting the self

All of the participants demonstrated evidence of the use of coping mechanisms to deal with stress and adversity that they were experiencing in their lives. Their coping mechanisms mostly took the form of alternative mechanisms for adaptation- defence mechanisms (Cramer, 2007). The concept of defences first emerged as a result of Freud's work in relation to certain forms of psychopathology. However, in recent years both in research and in theory the use of defence mechanisms is viewed as an aspect of normal psychological functioning. Defence mechanisms refer to cognitive processes which serve to protect the self from experiencing negative emotions. The distinction between primitive or immature and complex or more mature defence mechanisms has been referred to in a number of studies (Turner, 1999; Evans & Seaman, 2000; Cramer, 2007). This distinction is largely based on evidence that defence mechanisms change over the course of normal development and that defence style is related to positive psychological adjustment in adolescence.

Evans & Seaman (2000) in a study which explored psychological defences in relation to self-complexity, found that adolescents who report they use more mature defence mechanisms, such as anticipation, report

higher levels of self-complexity than adolescents who report using more immature defence mechanisms such as denial or projection.

Self-complexity involves the capability of an individual to differentiate among various aspects of the self such as the physical self, the social and the cognitive self. The implication of having greater self-complexity is that it acts as a protective factor. If an individual's self-concept is formed entirely through one domain (e.g., the social self) and conflict arises in this area, this will have a negative impact on global self-worth (Evans & Seaman, 2000). Conversely, if self-concept is made up of a number of domains it is less likely that global self-concept will be negatively affected.

> *'The use of more mature defence mechanisms and an ability to distinguish among multiple domains of the self can act as protective factors' (Evans & Seaman, 2000, p. 248).*

Commonly discussed defence mechanisms and those which have most significance for the present study include denial, acting out, projection and repression. Ron, Lenny and Henry when talking about both life events and the exclusion process, try to convey a sense of 'not caring,' but each contradict this with an emotionally charged tone. It is possible that the activation of denial as a defence mechanism functions here by ignoring and misrepresenting thoughts and experiences that would be upsetting if accurately perceived (Cramer, 2007).The rejection from consciousness of painful memories and feelings can be viewed as a maladaptive response given that the use of this mechanism can invite negative responses from others. Cramer (2007) found that individuals who are repressed often have emotional outbursts, typified by anger, which perpetuate negative responses from others, this then can serve to reinforce an individual's sense of shame and guilt over engaging in such an outburst. This finding that the participants have developed maladaptive defence mechanisms which show little sign of maturing as would normally be expected of typical adolescents, has important implications. Turner (1999) argues that the key to dealing with negative

emotions is self-talk where thoughts and emotions can be slowed down *'to allow for more careful inspection and introspection'* (p.153). The value of CBT focusing on cognition during frustrating situations, where interventions incorporating social problem-solving, affect labelling, relaxation techniques and cognitive restructuring, would seem most appropriate.

Peppered throughout the accounts of most of the young people were comments relating to acting out behaviour and outbursts in class when aspects of the learning was perceived to be difficult. Jackson (2002) argues that social psychological theories of self-worth protection can offer insights here. Covington (1992, 1998) developed the theory of self-worth motivation in relation to academic achievement. He argues that due to the prominence that academic achievement is afforded in western society, it is inextricably linked with self-worth. There is a wealth of literature which illuminates that negative consequences such as shame, withdrawal and anxiety are linked to academic failure. Avoiding failure and therefore protecting self-worth motivates a number of pupils. Four of the main self-worth protection and defensive strategies include procrastination, intentional withdrawal of effort and a rejection of academic work, avoiding the appearance of working and promoting the appearance of effortless achievement and disruptive behaviour (Jackson, 2002). Jackson (2002) suggests a number of strategies to enable a positive desire to learn to develop such as making evaluation private not public, encouraging a learning culture where mistakes are valued as part of the learning process, varied incentives are offered and a focus on individual improvement is nurtured.

5.3.3 Positive Views of the Future

Although the subthemes explored above appear to present a bleak picture of the young people, focused on surviving in hostile and largely unsupportive environments and then developing maladaptive coping mechanisms, hope appears in the form of future aspirations expressed.

Many comments were related to the theme of change, where they expressed a desire to discard their old selves. Insight can be gained here by drawing on literature in relation to the theory of self-concept and behaviour change (Stein & Markus, 1996). Behaviour change begins with an understanding of the 'negative trends' that have led to the current problem that is being faced by an individual. Abrams & Aguilar (2005) describe a negative trend as '*a consistent and presumably troubling pattern of behaviour*' (p.177). All of the young people were able to recognise the need to change their behaviour. However, unlike the others who could envision alternative behaviours in the future, Henry saw the need to change his behaviour as a result of possible incarceration in the future. Apart from this, he seemed reluctant to identify negative patterns in his life and seemed to be content to willingly engage in the behaviour without recognition of the self-destructive trend (Stein & Markus, 1996).

Personalised and realistic images of how a person can be seen in the future are necessary to contribute to this behaviour change process. This is known as 'possible selves' theory (Stein & Markus, 1996). Possible selves include those selves one might aspire to but within a realistic context. A person who has difficulties conceptualising alternative behaviours is least likely to engage in behaviour change. Although all the young people demonstrated evidence of 'hoped-for selves' that were future-oriented, they differed in their strategies for achieving this change. This is consistent with research carried out by Abrams and Aguilar (2005) who explored youth offenders responses to individual treatment in a Youth Offending Centre using the self-concept and behaviour change framework, developed by Stein & Markus (1996). Both studies found that the young people's strategies for achieving their hoped-for selves ranged from being vague and appearing unattainable to concrete and attainable. Although the sample from the present study and that referred to above are from different populations, there is a wealth of literature that makes links between the two explicit, and therefore some conclusions drawn from Abrams & Aguilar (2005) are relevant to the present study.

Applying the self-concept model to the young people in this study is useful as it shows that they are able to reflect on their engagement in 'negative trends,' consider alternative behaviours, and begin the behaviour change process. These behaviours make the hoped-for self more attainable. Another positive finding was related to the young people's reference to having a role model in their lives as a means of helping them build a better future. Abrams & Aguilar (2005) suggest that:

'Anchoring a possible self in terms of role models is most likely to sustain a process of change because role models offer tangible examples [for young people] to pattern themselves after' (p.191).

Whilst these findings are positive, research has shown that sustained behaviour change can be challenging despite the best circumstances and good social support networks, important factors which are lacking in the lives of these participants. It will be important then to consider the viability of these behavioural changes given their real world situations and how they can be supported by the family, the school and the community to ensure sustainable change. Consideration regarding how to best support this group with concrete, step by step strategies to achieve their possible selves within the school setting may prove most effective.

5.4 Maladaptive Patterns

5.4.1 Locus of Control

The third superordinate theme relates to the participant's difficulty in adapting positively in the face of adversity. Research has shown that individual cognitive and behavioural resources available to young people such as locus of control can mediate the effects of stress and adversity on resilience. For five of these young people the protective factor of internal locus of control (LOC) is lacking. Reference to the principles of Attribution Theory (Weiner, 1986; Graham, 1997) can bring insight here.

The basic premise of Attribution Theory is that *'causal attributions or thoughts about why outcomes occur are important determinants of behaviour'* (Graham, 1997, p. 22). Causal attributions answer 'why' questions, outcomes are interpreted as successes or failures. Where the outcome is negative, generally an individual will engage in a causal search to determine why the outcome occurred. Causal attributions are made about both the self and others, influencing personal and social motivation respectively. Attribution Theory focuses on the underlying properties of attributions as well as specific causes. This is because attributions can differ in a number of domains. Graham (1997) describes three properties, also known as causal dimensions.

> *'These are locus, or whether a cause is internal or external to the individual; stability; which designates cause as constant or varying over time; and controllability, or whether a cause is subject to volitional influence' (p.23).*

The present study found that LOC was particularly pertinent for most of the participants. It was apparent that their attributions about life events rested in the external domain, indicating that they believe that outside forces and more powerful people determine events. A person with an internal LOC has strong beliefs about events being contingent upon their own actions.

Rotter (1966), who first measured this construct, argued that LOC developed as a result of generalised expectancy about the world. An individual who has extensive experience of efforts being consistently rewarded will develop an internal LOC. An individual who has no experience of efforts meeting with success will develop an external LOC. The importance on the focus of the role of LOC is in terms of its relationships with moderating behaviour. Jackson, Frick and Dravage-Bush (2000) state that when consequences occur in life, an individual will identify the self or outside forces as responsible and this will determine what action is taken. Therefore choices regarding actions or reactions are dependent upon LOC in the first instance.

A wealth of literature exists which suggests that LOC as a cognitive resource can lead to positive adaptation. Grob, Flammer & Wearing (1995) found that resilient outcome for adolescents exposed to adversity was influenced by control beliefs. Sandler, Kim-Bae & MacKinnon (2000) found that internal control was a protective factor in mental health problems, in children experiencing parental divorce. Bolger & Patterson (2001) suggested that for maltreated children who displayed internal control, this acted as a protective factor against internalising problems.

Recent research postulated that as LOC measures a belief that is learned, it follows that the larger social environment will influence the direction of LOC across populations. Just as the present study found that most of the young people demonstrate control beliefs which are external to the individual, this is consistent with a growing trend over time which suggests that young people increasingly believe their lives are controlled by outside forces rather than their own efforts. Twenge, Zhang and Charles (2004) argue that this increasing externality of LOC can be explained by several trends. They continue to argue that rather than increase independence, individualism in western culture and increased alienation and cynicism have led people to believe there is little that can be done to change their larger world. The implications here are that these are issues that should be considered for all young people as the implications of externality of LOC can be negative (Twenge, Zhang & Charles, 2004) state that:

> *'Most researchers who study locus of control strongly believe that internal control is the more desirable choice and describe externals in negative terms (e.g., Lefcourt, 1991; Rotter, 1971)*

Research concretely formalizes this negative perception as externality is found to be linked with poor academic achievement, poor stress-management skills, weakened self-control and inability to delay gratification.

5.4.2 Impact of labelling

As stated in Chapter 4, this theme relates to both positive and negative consequences associated with having a label. For the purposes of this discussion, the diagnostic label of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) will be focused upon.

Three of the young people in this study talked at length about being diagnosed with ADHD and in particular the impact this has had on their sense of personal agency which has been compounded by the prescription of medication.

Hughes (2007) states that:

> *'ADHD is diagnosis of the American Psychiatric Association (APA, 1994). It describes behavioural symptoms of inattention, impulsiveness and hyperactivity that are presented to a degree that significantly interfere with a person's family, peers and relationships as well as their educational and/or occupational functioning' (p.69).*

ADHD has become one of the most commonly diagnosed childhood disorders. The prevalence amongst school aged children is now between 3-6%, with males outnumbering females by a ratio of 3:1 (Tannock, 1998). There has been an extensive body of research exploring various aspects of ADHD, with a particular focus on the aetiology of the disorder and the various conceptualizations of ADHD.

Although it is beyond the remit of the present study to enter into the various debates surrounding the disorder in any great detail, those most pertinent to the findings will be discussed. Contentious issues currently debated in research journals, the media, the school and the family system include the existence of ADHD as a purely biological disorder (Block, 2001; Timimi & Radcliffe, 2005), the growing concern about rate of diagnosis and over-medication (Safer, 2000; Zito et al, 2000, Nylund, 2005), the role of pharmaceutical companies and profit making (Lloyd &

Norris,1999) and the need for ADHD to be recognized as a biopsychosocial condition (Hughes, 2007).

There have been limited studies (Kendall, 1998, 1999; Byram, 1999) which explore the lived experience of children and young people diagnosed with ADHD. This study replicates findings by Sellman (2009), referred to in Chapter 2, who found that young people with EBD tended to attribute their difficulties to within child factors. Nylund (2005) argues that the dominant medical model in society views ADHD as a disease. Most common practice endorses the use of medication but there is evidence to suggest that more importance is placed on profits rather than the long-term benefits to the children and young people who take it. The issue of the negative impact of medication has been discussed in the literature (Kindsvatter & Nylund, 2005; Hughes, 2007). Hughes (2007) found that young people diagnosed with ADHD experienced negative physical side effects such as appetite suppression, weight loss and lethargy, as a result of medication. Psychological effects were also noted in terms of over-dependency, powerlessness and abdication of responsibility. The social context also served to intensify these psychological effects as it was found that both the school and the family system often placed unrealistic expectations on the medication. This was evidenced in the present study also. Paul appears reliant on medication in order to ensure he is perceived in a positive light by his family. Although he does report negative physical side effects, these are offset by his efforts to seek approval from his family, which leave him in a double-bind situation. As his tolerance to medication grows, he rationalizes that the benefits outweigh the costs. Again as his tolerance rises so, too does his dependency upon it to control his behaviour entirely, indicating he is at the mercy of medication.

The present study found that Lenny had the most persistent and chronic difficulties in the social domain. Arguments began with peers as a result of being teased about taking his *'mental pills'* or *'loony pills.'* Hughes

(2007) comments on the impact of medication being handled in a public manner and states:

'Factors around the ways in which medication is portrayed and managed, both in the home and at school, actually exacerbate the very problems that the medication is intended to alleviate' (p.77)

Further research conducted has found that children's views of peers with ADHD characteristics are on the whole negative. They are often excluded from their peer group and characteristics of those with ADHD are viewed as undesirable and troublesome (Hoza et al, 2005). Law, Sinclair and Fraser (2007) found that children's attitudes and behavioural intentions toward a hypothetical peer displaying ADHD symptoms were largely negative. Common adjectives used to describe this hypothetical peer included 'lonely', 'stupid' and 'crazy.'

There are a number of implications for practice, stemming from the findings of the present study which are grounded in previous research. It highlights that the social context in which these problems take place is of huge importance. Nylund (2005) reasons that it is understandable that when teachers and parents are presented with such complex and serious behaviour problems in the face of limited resources, responding to ADHD as a biological problem is appealing. He attributes this to wider social and cultural influences where biological explanations are privileged and qualitative research is less funded. This can explain the prevalence of biological explanations. For the three young people in this study, their perception was that treatment was limited to medication which did not seem to be able to help them regulate their own behaviour and there were signs of damage to self-esteem, self-control and social development.

These findings have implications for both diagnosis and treatment. It is a striking feature of the research that the narratives of all of the boys, not just those with ADHD highlighted a number of factors that may have contributed to them displaying of a range of symptoms likened to that of

ADHD. These include weak attachment relationships and the impact on the development of the self-concept in terms of developing negative patterns of thinking about others and the world in which they live following this, recovery from traumatic life events and family breakdown. This means that misdiagnosis is possible. Therefore it will be necessary for professionals working with individual children and young people to come to a shared understanding of the problem and one which respects and reflects the complexities of their lives. The finding that having a diagnostic label contributes to a loss of agency and increased externality of locus of control implies that treatment should be of a bio-psychosocial nature, focused on individual need.

Implications for school and teachers include issues concerned with diagnostic confidentiality. Individuals should be consulted on how best this should be shared with peers. This should follow preliminary work in schools where children and young people are introduced to peers with a range of differences i.e. emotional, behavioural and physical through hands-on learning and an emotional literacy and perhaps mental health literacy curriculum. Research alluded to in superordinate theme 1 highlights the influence that teacher's perceptions about pupils has on peers perceptions. How this can be mediated should be given careful consideration.

In section 3.8.3 reference is made to a common, unexpected factor namely that all 6 participants had experienced permanent exclusion at the primary level. It is therefore important to acknowledge the particular nature of the sample and discuss any implications which arise. It has been documented that primary age exclusions are relatively unusual (Lawrence & Hayden, 1997; Maguire, Macrae & Milbourne, 2003). Figures published by the DfES for the period 1998/9 highlighted that of those permanently excluded, fifteen percent were from primary schools (Parsons, Godfrey & Howlett, 2001). This trend has remained consistent. Children excluded at primary level are a particularly vulnerable minority. Exclusions at this level tend to be qualitatively different from those in

secondary school because their lives tend by characterised by extremely disrupted and stressful family backgrounds or identified as having special educational needs. Hayden (1997) points out that their behaviour more illustrates distress rather than disaffection, which may be observed at secondary level. This is an important distinction to bear in mind whist considering the themes which have emerged and the vulnerable minority alluded to above which they might better apply to.

6   Evaluation

6.1   Introduction

This aim of this chapter is to evaluate the quality of the present study. Yardley (2000) argues that traditionally-used criteria for research quality are often inappropriate and that quality and validity in qualitative research is best judged in accordance with four broad principles. These include sensitivity to context, commitment and rigour, transparency and coherency, and impact and importance. The chapter is structured by addressing each principle and evaluating how it can be applied to the present study. The final principle of impact and importance will involve considering how the findings can be applied in professional practice. Directions for future research will then be discussed.

6.2   Sensitivity to context

Sensitivity to context is a key characteristic of good qualitative research. This refers to awareness of the relevant literature base, sensitivity to the rationale of methodology, ability to ground evidence firmly in the data, explicit reference and awareness of the relationship between the researcher and the participant and adherence to the social context of the study.

I have outlined in Chapter 2 the problem of school exclusion as a complex social phenomenon, and attempted to position the present study in relevant literature. The multi-faceted nature of the issue has been explored through outlining what is known about the characteristics of those most likely to become excluded, short and term long term consequences for both the individual and society with links to wider social exclusion and approaches to this issue, including those which have been met with most success. I have concluded from this that this is a complicated phenomenon and amongst other things, what is missing from

the literature is the views of the young people who have been excluded from school. This is the context which highlights a clear gap in the literature and justifies the study in order to gain a fresh perspective on the problem of exclusion, drawing on the experiences of young people who have first hand experience.

In Chapter 3, I considered other qualitative methodologies and their appropriateness to the present study. I outlined a clear rationale for the use of IPA and highlighted the distinct characteristics of the methodology which make it particularly suitable for the exploratory nature of the present study. This approach has been guided by my epistemological view, and the psychological models which underpin my practice as EPiT.

I have attempted to ground evidence firmly in the data by following a systematic analysis that allowed for unexpected themes to emerge. Arguments posed and themes generated are supported by direct statements of the participants. I have demonstrated sensitivity to the data by adopting the hermeneutic of empathy throughout the analysis and by preserving the voices and experiences of the participants, whilst acknowledging the interpretative role of the researcher.

Particular attention was paid to the interplay between the researcher and the participants at each stage of the research process. I took steps to minimise the possibility of power-imbalance (Section 3.8.2).The importance of the interplay between the researcher and the participants i.e. reflexivity, is afforded more consideration later in section 6.5.

The socio-cultural setting of the study has been acknowledged throughout and made mostly apparent in Chapter 2 by considering the impact of the political context, marketisation of schools, changing socio and historical notions of childhood and differing national and international approaches to the topic under investigation.

6.3   Commitment and rigour

The principles of commitment and rigour refer to the demonstrated level of engagement with the topic, alongside demonstrated competence in the methodology employed. The models previously outlined, that underpin my practice as an EPiT and which similarly guide my epistemological stance highlight a sustained and continued engagement with the experiences of others and the meanings they ascribe to them. As an EPiT I have much experience through casework of the complexities of trying to bring about change for young people at risk of exclusion. This provided a strong foundation for the development of engagement with the topic.

In order to develop my skills in IPA, I have participated in monthly IPA workshops and IPA discussion forums. This has helped me to deepen my understanding of key concepts in IPA, whilst being involved in debates and collaborative learning surrounding challenges to the methodology, in the company of researchers with extensive experience in this field. At each step of the process I have actively sought supervision from both an Educational Psychologist as a researcher supervisor, with much experience using this methodology, and an academic researcher supervisor with much experience. I have also regularly engaged in peer supervision with other EPiTs using qualitative methodologies. This critical feedback has been invaluable in helping to develop my skills in producing a contemplative and empathic analysis and interpretation.

6.4   Transparency and coherence

Transparency and coherence relate to clarity of the research process provided, at each step, for the reader and the persuasive relevance of the arguments presented.

Yardley (2000) asserts that:

'A convincing 'transparency' in the presentation of the analysis and empirical data can be achieved by detailing every aspect of the data collection process and the rules used to code data, by presenting excerpts of the textual data in which the reader can themselves discern the patterns identified by the analysis, and/or by making detailed records of the data available to other analysts' (P. 222)

I have demonstrated transparency in the present study through providing a clear justification for the methodology, as one which is well suited to the exploratory nature of the research question. Coherency has been demonstrated when arguments in the research are made clear and can be followed easily by the reader, and when there is a good fit between the research carried out and underlying principles of the chosen methodology. A review of the literature suggests the views of young people are often inferred. Using IPA provided the freedom to conduct an exploratory study, where themes could emerge from the data as opposed to testing a hypothesis.

The aims of the study, the key concepts of the methodology, models underpinning professional practice and epistemological view are all in accordance with each other. A testament to the good fit of these is the generation of rich, quality data from the interviews yielding new insights. It is acknowledged that the analysis presented constitutes one possible interpretation of the data. I have approached the data looking for themes that compel and capture meaning making. I have attempted to present the best description and interpretation of the content of the data, firmly grounded in the statements of the participants.

The methods have been detailed in Chapter 3 i.e. how participants were selected, how the data was collected and how the methodology was applied in order to analyse it.

This short section addresses issues related to gaining a homogenous sample. As outlined in Chapter 3, use of IPA dictates a homogenous

sample. I have attempted to control for this where possible. Homogeneity can be shown in different ways. An important feature of this study is that the fact that all participants are attending the same institution which gives them homogeneity. Smith (2003) stresses the importance of homogeneity but advocates tempering this with being pragmatic about obtaining the sample which will allow the research question to be answered. Attention has been paid to divergence of ethnicity in the sample. A clear rationale for including Ron, the only Black British participant, the other participants being White British, is outlined. Although there are aspects of Ron's narrative which appear particular to race, for example, his views on opportunities for black youths, many of his views converge with the other participants. He shares similar characteristics and similar experiences to the others, and the richness of his narrative brought great value to the study.

The presentation of the data shows that an inductive approach which stays close to the data, involving systemic analysis, has been utilised. An annotated transcript, together with the emergent themes and steps followed using IPA has been included in Appendix 3. This case by case analysis is documented for all six interviews. This paper trail is an essential feature of a good qualitative study. In accordance with good practice outlined by Smith (2003) I have worked closely with other educational psychologists conducting similar research projects and my research supervisors to discuss issues of plausibility, validity and rigour in relation to my analysed transcripts. I actively sought out another researcher using IPA to act as an independent auditor and examine the plausibility of my themes. These measures are in response to recognition of the interpretative nature of this approach, where one possible interpretation of the phenomenon is offered. The key point to bear in mind is the plausibility of the interpretations.

6.5   Reflexivity

The validity of qualitative research can be strengthened through self-reflexivity in the researcher. Reflexivity refers to the acknowledgement of the assumptions and intentions of the researcher which form their world view and impact upon the research conducted. Connolly & Reilly (2007) assert that the researcher co-creates knowledge with participants through social interaction. With this in mind, it is important to reiterate the experiences and influences which have come to bear on the present study in an attempt to add to the transparency of the study.

As an EPiT my professional practice is underpinned by a number of psychological models based on an Interactionist Framework, whereby possibilities for change emerge from understanding people in the various contexts in which they exist. My stance as a researcher also mirrors these models in terms of coming to a deeper understanding of a phenomenon through exploring how people make sense of their worlds. Personally, I have always acknowledged the currency of being a white woman in society, with many life chances and having experienced positive interactions within school experiences. This led to my interest in the experiences of young people which have been more challenging. One of the aims of the present study was to explore the reality experienced by young people in educational settings and the meanings that they attach to their experiences, which are free from assumption, not often the case in research. The use of IPA is not only compatible with these aims but enabled them to be fulfilled. Being able to follow the concerns of each participant was a humbling and invaluable experience. Novel and interesting lines of enquiry were co-constructed. For example, the impact of urban violence, the importance of money, the positive aspects of attending specialist provisions. These themes emerged naturally and without imposing hypotheses on the data.

I found the participants to be generous in the giving of themselves and their stories, the authenticity with which they told their narratives was

both striking and at times uncomfortable. Uncomfortable in the sense that such extraordinary and traumatic events had come to be viewed as normal and accepted. Similar to the experience of Connolly & Reilly (2007) engaged in qualitative research, I found I became the repository for the participant's emotions and feelings. Some of the details of their lives which emerged have been shared with me only, which has been experienced as both a privilege and a challenge. My role as a researcher differs to that of a therapist, where not contributing any help beyond this interchange and perhaps being the sole person to hear their narrative, felt emotionally uncomfortable. This has implications for the researcher seeking out support when conducting research of an emotive nature. I would suggest that this study provides a platform for further studies which regard young people's knowledge and understanding as worthy of respectful consideration.

6.6   Impact and importance

Yardley (200) asserts that this is *'the decisive criterion by which any piece of Research must be judged'* (p 223). This section considers both how the findings can be applied and how they have contributed to changes in understanding.

A valuable contribution of the research is that it provided rich, complex and interesting insights on the phenomenon of educational experience and exclusion. These insights such as alienation from mainstream education and the need to feel a sense of belonging, failure by the systems around the young people to adequately meet their basic needs and the complexity of conflict and aggression are some of the themes that challenge current practice with regard to excluded young people. The themes brought to light in this study contribute towards a greater understanding of why certain young people struggle to succeed within a mainstream setting. Rendall & Stuart (2005) assert that understanding is the first step towards changing behaviour. Therefore this understanding can help parents, teachers and practitioners to implement change.

There has been a scarcity of studies which have sought the views of young people in provision for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties and applied IPA, as a rigorous methodology. Therefore the distinct contribution of the research is that it highlights that IPA can be used successfully with a vulnerable group, this strengthens the appropriateness of using IPA with other vulnerable groups.

It is acknowledged that the young people interviewed form a small sample. However, using a small sample has permitted a focus, in depth, on each individual's story whilst examining points of convergence across them. The present study has illuminated the development of self-concept and cognitive structures and processes as important in determining negative outcomes. The themes identified have been substantiated by previous studies and relate to psychological theories which can be used in practice. A contribution to knowledge in this field has been made by using a small number of well-conducted interviews which resulted in detailed phenomenology and analysis, the value of which can be explained by Smith & Eatough (2006):

> 'Researchers can also think of theoretical rather than empirical generalisability. Theoretical propositions can be refined and modified through comparison with other cases, other conceptual claims in the extant literature, and the personal and professional experience of the researcher or reader. The strength of the IPA study is then evaluated in terms of the insights it gives concerning the topic under investigation. (p 329)'

New insight is gained from findings related to the lived experience of young people being diagnosed with ADHD. It was striking that difficulties were solely attributed to factors within themselves, psychological effects were also associated with medication and these were at times, exacerbated by the social situation. This area has not previously been afforded much importance in literature.

The views of the young people in relation to the exclusion process, which highlight lengthy periods of time out of school between provision and lack of agency in the decision-making and appeals process indicate systemic changes needed in terms of revisiting legislation and formalising guidance. However, these findings would need to be replicated using a larger sample.

The research has brought to the fore, the importance of an understanding of psychological theories and how they could be applied to contribute to the prevention of and earlier identification of young people at risk of exclusion. Insights gained from attachment theory are useful for schools and practitioners highlighting the need for effective early assessment and intervention based on home-risk factors. Such treatments which address caregiver-child relationships can impact positively on later adjustment to school and future relationships. Knowledge and training on attachment theory specifically in schools can help to elevate the importance of the teacher-pupil relationship as an important protective factor for adaptation to school and contribute to an understanding that behaviour manifested in school can reflect relationships history.

A need for schools to meet both the social and affective needs of young people has been identified. This study found that for the participants, a sense of belonging was linked to the development of psychological well-being. It will be important for consideration to be given to how similar young people can make a real and positive contribution to their school community, through a climate where young people develop a sense of their own worth and potential for achievement. There is a need to focus on a range of outcomes, in addition to academic outcomes. To date, schools are often unable to identify specific measures that reliably indicate whether social and effective outcomes have been met (Fredrickson, Simmonds, Evans and Soulsby, 2007).

A greater understanding of why conflict arises and appears to characterise certain young people's interactions can be used. This can take the form of devising more sophisticated programmes that tackle the complexity of the

issue and go beyond traditional anger management and conflict resolution programmes in schools. It highlights that individuals who have experienced traumatic events and poor attachments may require more individualised, therapeutic input. My research may be of interest to those therapeutically employed. Early intervention may include nurture groups to help foster positive relationships at an early age, whereas on-site counselling facilities to counteract the effects of traumatic experiences put in place as treatment.

The present study provides evidence of the positive aspects associated with attending alternative provision. These findings are also substantiated by previous research. Important factors are noted such as a good ratio of adults to pupils, a supportive learning environment and positive relationships with teachers which extend to supporting their emotional needs. Most of the research and statistics on alternative provision focuses on the less than favourable outcomes for those who attend. However this research highlights that alternative provision can meet academic, social and affective needs for some young people. It is possible that whilst what is offered outside the mainstream classroom can be effective and nurturing, this is offset by the negative label attached to attending this type of provision.

6.6.1 Implications for Educational Psychology Services

Schools requesting in-service training from Educational Psychology Services have shown a growing trend in receiving input on commonly diagnosed disorders amongst children and young people. It is an interesting finding that the young people in the present study diagnosed as having ADHD present with difficulties that can be explained in terms of environmental factors. It is suggested that school staff may benefit from developing their understanding on psychological theories such as Attachment Theory and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs which can be more helpful in terms of understanding the motivation and functions of behaviour.

Educational psychologists with their knowledge of school systems, are well placed, to contribute to toward whole school behaviour policies to support schools in developing policies which focus on encouraging pupil participation and on what drives behaviour, rather than focusing solely on the mechanisms. Involving pupils in decision making is likely to lead to increased respect for rules, based on a clearly understood rationale.

All of the young people reported that the research process had been a positive experience. Two examples are illustrated below:

Henry: 'I enjoyed it. I don't know it like clears my mind of everything. I don't know it just clears my mind.'

Alan: 'Hard at first, definitely hard at first but it gets easy after a while. Yeah, it's definitely positive, don't keep it bottled up...... It's not nice, it sticks in your head and you feel like you're the only one.'

This has shown that there is a place for giving young people opportunities to discuss important issues in a safe space. Educational psychologists are equipped with the skills to help schools become proactive in the development of support systems that give young people these opportunities. This could take the form of peer mentoring, where both learning mentors and peers could be trained to use effective communication skills such as rapport building, active listening skills, summarising and reframing to ensure young people feel both understood and listened to.

The findings from this study indicate that a systemic view, drawing on information from the three systems in which a young person exists, can elicit a rich picture of the conflicts and dilemmas that pupils who have been excluded from school are experiencing. This serves to reinforce and strengthen the need for Educational Psychology Services to use psychological models to understand the complex lives of these young people. Complex patterns of behaviour identified in the present study which are mutually reinforced through teacher-pupil interactions should continue to be punctuated through consultation applying Systems

Thinking derived from Family Systemic Therapy. The centrality of the development of self-concept and self-esteem also identified, consolidates the need to continue to understand how these young people construe the world through applying Personal Construct Psychology. The narrowing of the EP role, particularly in secondary schools, where work can tend to be more statutory based therefore, is less preferable to the approach outlined above.

6.7 Directions for future research

There is a lack of qualitative research which explores the lived experience of adolescents diagnosed with ADHD. Owing to the number of children increasingly diagnosed with the disorder, a study which explores the physical, social and emotional impact of having a diagnosis of ADHD would be beneficial for parents, practitioners and clinicians alike.

The present study indicates the need to further understand the developing self-concept of young people who have had largely negative school experiences and reduced life chances. Further work in this area might include examining self-concept, and how domains within self-concept are differentiated between and maintained, in an attempt to capitalise on protective factors which may appear. A study such as this would need careful refinement.

6.8 Final Reflections

Undertaking this research study has been an invaluable experience. I have been challenged, overwhelmed, engaged, humbled and stimulated by this process. The benefits to my professional practice have included the development of an extensive knowledge base in this area and the refinement of skills necessary to effect positive change for young people.

The complexities of engaging in real world research presented as a significant issue in this study (3.8.2). Gaining access to this 'hard to

reach' population proved difficult and involved much perseverance. The need to conform to the practicalities of the research process was tempered by a belief that is possible to carry out valuable qualitative research with a vulnerable group. The extent to which the participants disclosed personal details about their lives seems to confirm a desire to be heard.

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Appendix 1.1

Excluded from School: A Young Person's View.

April 2008 –May 2009.

Information for young people.

Please will you help me with my research?

Here is some information that you might want to think about before you decide.

My name is Kerry Moore and I am a student carrying out research into the area of exclusion. I also work for **** Council. I have come to realise that more and more young people appear to experience difficulties during their secondary school education and in recent years there has been a huge rise in the number of exclusions. I would very much like the opportunity to talk with you as a young person who has been directly affected by this and find out your views. For this reason you are being invited to take part in a research study which will involve discussing your experiences of education and being excluded. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully. I am happy to answer any questions.

Why is this research being done?

There are a growing number of young people, like you, who find themselves permanently out of school. There can be lots of reasons for this connected to school, home and individual factors and often it is a combination of all three. Although researchers, the government and the media have been interested in why exclusions in this country are so high, not many people have thought to ask you, the young person directly affected by this, how it impacts on your life and why you feel it came about.

It is hoped that through participating in this research and sharing your story about schooling and education this might help other pupils like you who have struggled to stay in school, have a more positive experience.

Who will be in the project?

I am asking only young people in who have been permanently excluded from school in Sutton. I am aiming to talk with 6 young people about education and exclusion from their point of view.

What will happen during the research?

If you agree to take part, we will arrange a time and a place, that is convenient for you, when we can meet. I will ask you some questions and I will ask if I can tape record the interview.. The interview will last around 30-35mins. The information provided by your interview will be used to find out how schools and other people interested in reducing exclusion can help young people like you successfully get back into school and come to a better understanding of what the experience of exclusion is like. I will write a report for professionals based on the information you give. They will not know your names, or any personal information about you.

What questions will be asked?

I will mainly be talking to you about your school experiences. This will involve asking questions about your family, relationships with parents, teachers and friends, your views on learning and your ability and your hopes for the future. This is an opportunity for you to speak your mind. It is your own unique experience I am interested in and so there are no right or wrong answers.

I will also ask other questions that will depend on what you say as we talk.

Could there be problems for you if you take part?

I hope that it will be a positive experience talking to me. It is important that you understand that taking part will not change the fact that you have been excluded.

Will doing the research help you?

You may find that sharing your thoughts and feelings about such a significant event in your life is helpful. You will also be contributing toward helping people to understand what factors can lead to permanent exclusion from a young person's point of view. You will also be given a £15 gift voucher as a token of thanks for your time.

Who will know that you have been in the research?
Only your parent/ guardian will know that you have taken part.

I will keep tapes and notes in a safe place, and will change the names in my report, so that no-one knows who said what.

Do you have to take part?
You decide if you want to take part 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 will take part by signing the consent form.

Will you know about the research results?
If you would like, I can send you a short report by September 2009.

Thank you for reading this leaflet.

Kerry Moore

Appendix 1.2

Dear Parent/Guardian,

My name is Kerry Moore. I am a trainee Educational Psychologist working within Sutton Educational Psychology Service. I am also currently studying on the Professional Doctoral programme in Child, Adolescent and Educational Psychology at the Institute of Education.

As part of my studies I am undertaking an extensive piece of research to look specifically at the exclusion of young people from **** schools. I am contacting you as a parent of a pupil who has become permanently excluded from school. I am sure this has been a very worrying and stressful period in your family's lives and it may be helpful to share some of those thoughts and feelings.

The focus of my research is exploring young peoples' experiences of schooling and exclusion and would welcome the opportunity to talk with your songiven the fact that they have been directly affected by this. An essential part of the research would involve interviewing young people like your son to gain a better understanding of what factors led to this exclusion with a view to helping similar children in the future.

I am attaching an information sheet for X, which explains the purpose of the research and what is involved. It may be helpful to talk this over with X and decide whether or not you would like to take part.

There is a consent form for you to sign if you are happy for your son to take part in the research. It should be returned to the school office.

Thank you for your time and co-operation.

With very best wishes,

Kerry Moore

Appendix 1.3

Researching pupil experiences of Exclusion – Parent/ Guardian consent
forms

Please provide the following information

Print your name in block capitals:

_____

Address_____

_____Tel no:_____

_____

Please print your son's name

_____

I have read the information leaflet about the research and
have had the opportunity to ask questions.

☐ (please tick)

I agree to giving the researcher access to
information held on file about the young person named above
e.g. reports from school and relevant professionals.

☐ (please tick)

I understand my son's participation is voluntary
and confidential and that I am free to withdraw
my son At ANY TIME.

☐ (please tick)

I understand that the interviews will be tape-recorded
and transcribed and that after the research is completed,
the tapes will be wiped clear and the transcripts shredded.

☐ (please tick)

I understand that any publication resulting from this research
will not identify my son in any way.   ☐ (please tick)

I chilgive my consent for the young person named above to take part in
this study.   ☐ (please tick)

signed:_____ Date: _____

Thank you

**Leading education
and social research**
Institute of Education
University of London

Excluded from School: An Exploration of the Experiences of Young People who have been Excluded from School.

Participant Consent Form

Please read the consent form carefully and if you are interested sign you name in the space provided. There is also a separate consent form for your parent/guardian to sign.

Please write your name in block capitals here:

Date of Birth: _____

I have read the information leaflet about the research and
have had the opportunity to ask questions.   ☐ (please tick)

I agree to giving the researcher access to
information held on file about me e.g. reports from school
and relevant professionals.
                                                     ☐ (please tick)

I understand my participation is voluntary
and confidential and that I am free to withdraw At ANY TIME.
                                                     ☐ (please tick)

I understand that the interviews will be tape-recorded
and transcribed and that after the research is completed,
the tapes will be wiped clear and the transcripts shredded.
                                                     ☐ (please tick)

I understand that any publication resulting from this research
will not identify me in any way.   ☐ (please tick)

I agree to take part in the above study.   ☐ (please tick)

signed:_____   Date: _____
                    Thank you

Appendix 2

Interview Schedule for the Main Study

Tell me a bit about yourself? What's going well for you at the moment? What words would you use to describe yourself? Has that always been the case?

Think back to your time in primary school. Can you try to describe what that experience was like for you?
- Was it a positive experience?
- Did you have any favourite teachers?
- Any special memories?

When you transferred to High School can you remember what your first year was like?
- did you become familiar with the school and teachers quickly
- did you make friends easily?
- Was there anything you found particularly challenging/ enjoyable?

When did things begin to change
Can you describe in as much detail as possible what was happening at that time?
- Was anything going on at home?
- How were you doing in your lessons?
- How were you getting on with your teachers?
- Are there any teachers you got on particularly well with?
- Was there anything they did or said that made school better for you?

After you became excluded from school, what happened then?
- what did you do?
- How were you feeling? Did you feel like talking to anyone?
- Can you remember any of the thoughts you had at the time?
- What about your family, what views did they have?

Do you feel differently about your time in school now? If 15 year old X could go back and give 13 year old X some advice, what would you say?
- what would you say to the teachers?
- What difference do you think it would make?

Tell me about some of your friendships. Are they important to you?
-Is there anyone else important in your life?

If you think about schoolwork. How important is school work to you?
- Are there any other things that are important to you?
- If I asked some of the important people in your life what they think of education, what would they say?

What do you think would have needed to have happened for you to have stayed at school?
- Is there anything you could have done?
- Who could have helped, what could they have said/done?

How do you feel about going back into mainstream? What would need to be different for it to be a positive experience?

Any message you would like to give to young boys in mainstream at risk of exclusion?

If I came back in five years time, what would be talking about then, what would you be telling me about your life?

Appendix 3.1

Interview Transcript: Alan

1 K: Can you remember which Primary School you went to Alan?

2 A: Ashburton

3 K: Can you remember a bit about what that was like?

4 A: I wasn't there for that long.

5 K: How long where you there for?

6 A: From September til December.

7 K: Was that in reception?

8 A: No that was in year 4

9 K: Can you remember where you where before year 4?

10 A: My first Primary School was Granard which is in Roehampton. Em..

11 after I left there I didn't go to another Primary School til I was in year 4.

12 K: You didn't go to another Primary School til year 4?

13 A: No

14 K: Why did you not go to another Primary School? What where the

15 circumstances which meant that you didn't go to another Primary school?

16 A: We were just moving around? I had nowhere to live

17 K: Can you tell me a bit about why you had nowhere to live?

18 A: I don't really know. We just had to move that's all I know.

19 K: Who where you living with at this time/

20 A: Just my mum

21 K: So you and your mum where moving around quite a bit.

22 A: yeah

23 K: And is it just you and your mum at home?

24 A: no not any more

25 K: So who else is at home?

26 A: Older brother, younger brother, little sister.

27 K: Ok so can you remember did you move from Roehampton to where.....

28 Was it lots of different places?

29 A: yeah

30 K: So when did you live Granard/

31 A: Beginning of year 1

32 K: Ok lets just go from Ashburton then, whenever you started in year 4, what

33 was it like? What was your experience like?

34 A: I don't know, it was just like primary.. .just school. It was nothing special.

35 K: So what about. cos you weren't in school for so long. was the learning

36 abit difficult when you went there/

37 A: Yeah, yeah it was

38 K: So that must have been quite hard for you, was it?

39 A: Yeah

40 K: Did you get help from the teachers?

41 A: Not really

42 K: Can you tell me a bit more about that? Can you remember your first day

43 going there or?

44 A: yep.

45 K: Can you tell me some more about that?

46 A: Just moved to my new house and I was going to the school across the

47 road and mum took me there, I was in my pyjamas. They were like 'let him

48 start now' and my mum was like 'he hasn't got a uniform.' I don't know, I

49 stayed there for the day.

50 K: In your pyjamas?

51 A: Yeah, that's what I had on and then nothing really, went home after a while.

52 K: And, how did you feel being in your pyjamas on your first day?

53 A: I dunno, I can't remember. It was a long time ago.

54 K: So you stayed there til when?

55 A: Til December

56 K: And then where did you go?

57 A: Got kicked out

58 K: Can you remember what happened or?

59 A: Kept being bad, kept being bad, kept being bad. Then I had a fight in

60 December and they told me I'm not allowed back.

61 K: So what do you mean by kept being bad?

62 A: just not listening and stuff like that, disrupting the class.

63 K: Why do you think you were disrupting the class?

64 A: I don't know maybe the work was hard, I hadn't been in school for like....

65 I don't know how long.

66 K: Did you feel like the teachers weren't supporting you?

67 A: I wasn't getting enough help at all, not at all.

68 K: What do you they could have done to make that better for you?

69 A: They could have done a lot of stuff, they could have found out their

70 thoughts from the other school.

71 K: What else could they done? You started well

72 A: They could have spoke to my mum, they could have found out.....they

73 could have found out I didn't go to school for time and tried to help me.

74 To help me catch up.

75 K: So it seems as if that was a hard time, was it?

76 A: Yeah

77 K: What about making friends and stuff, how was that?

78 A: That was fine

79 K: You didn't find that difficult or anything?

80 A: Em, no

81 K: So whenever they excluded you in December of year 4, where you

82 thinking or feeling anything at the time? What were your thoughts about it?

83 A: I don't know, My mum tried to put me in the next primary school and they

84 said they've got me down for a centre and that's just taking the piss. I see

85 loads of kids now and I know loads of kids my age that have been kicked out

86 of primary school and have just gone to the next one. But for me I just got

87 sent straight to a place like this.

88 K: And...so....I'm getting the impression that you think that's wrong?

89 A: Yeah

90 K: Tell me a why.......I know its seems as if I'm asking you really obvious

91 questions but I'm asking you these questions because I think you have a lot

92 of important things to say......so I want you to tell me them. Do you know what

93 I mean?

94 A: Your questions are fine, I don't mind answering them.

95 K: Ok, good. So...em...you said that, you said that you feel like you should

96 have went to another primary school. Instead of going to another primary

97 school, where did you go?

98 A: I went to like.....basically a centre.

99 K: Can you remember what it was like?

100 A: Like here but not as bad. If you were in, cos it was like here and had a

101 primary as well. It was like, if you were in primary, Have you met kyle yet?

102 K: No

103 A: He's big, tubby, black. He went there with me so if you meet him, he'll tell

104 you about Beckmead cos.. and Victoria House cos we went there. Basically,

105 you wear a uniform when you're younger and when you get to secondary,

106 you stop wearing a uniform.

107 K: So would it be a small place?

108 A: yeah definitely, compared to a mainstream school.

109 K: So how many people would be in your class/

110 A: maybe 8, tops

111 K: One or two teachers?

112 A: two

113 K: So what were your teachers like at Beckmead?

114 A: I got like one teacher for everything

115 K: So you were at Beckmead in December at the end of year 4?

116 A: no I went Victoria House first?

117 K: right ok

157

118 A: but I only stayed at Victoria house for about three/ four months. I spent the
119 rest of year 4 there and then moved to Beckmead in year 5.

120 K: Ok, so why did you move from Victoria House.

121 A: Cos they like wanted to put me in a permanent place, Victoria House aint
122 a place where, it's like while they find you somewhere else, they put you
123 there so you don't miss out on work and stuff like that.

124 K: Ok, ok. So you went to Beckmead in year 5

125 A: yeah and I got kicked out in year 6.

126 K: whenever you went there, where you. …where you able to make sense of
127 why you were going there? How were you feeling about the fact you'd had so
128 many moves?

129 A: I didn't want to do it.

130 K: You didn't want to do it?

131 A: I just wanted to go to like a normal school, if not where I was then
132 somewhere else. I didn't want to go somewhere like that. They didn't have
133 to put me somewhere like that, they could have solved the problem a lot
134 easier.

135 K: you've said somewhere like that. What do you mean by somewhere like
136 that?

137 A: Here, where I am now, a centre with loads of bad kids. I'm not stupid this is
138 where they send bad kids. Bad kids yeah, that's the point of this school and
139 they didn't have to send me to somewhere like here. I could have gone to..
140 They could have found out what the problem was, do you get what I mean?
141 Because, Ashburton done a lot of one on one work with me but it's like
142 they never done enough. They done one on one work but they never got
143 around to the problem properly.

144 K: What do you think the problem properly was?

145 A: Basically the work was hard cos I wasn't in school for so long. Cos it was
146 so hard like….I just won't do it. So I just get up, cos I'm bored cos I'm the
147 one not doing it I'd just end up disrupting the lesson. And when it came to
148 maths and doing timestables and all that I didn't know anything cos I hadn't
149 been in school since year 1, its now year 4. How many different years of work
150 do you go through until like you get to year 4…..so…it was hard.

151 K: So it seems like. …and you can tell me if I'm wrong but that you are angry
152 about a lot of things that happened?

153 A: Yeah

154 K: who are you angry with?

155 A: The schools, not just the schools…it's the people who said I have to come
156 to Victoria House from the start.

157 K: Why are you angry with them?

158 A: I don't know, cos they said it. I know a lot, a lot of kids who have been
159 kicked out in primary school. I know a load of kids, even more kids that have
160 been kicked out in secondary school and they have just gone back to the next
161 secondary school. I'm angry at them and my mum.

162 K: Why are you angry at your mum?

163 A: Cos she didn't do anything, she didn't try. I've seen so many other kids'
164 mums try and they get back into a mainstream secondary school, something
165 like that. Then she doesn't try so it's partially her fault.

166 K: What do you think she could have done?

167 A: she could have pushed it a little bit more than what she did instead of her
168 asking them.....Instead of her asking them, instead of her going to them in
169 primary school and trying to enrol me. She should have like....when they
170 said I must go to Victoria House, before that happened, when she saw things
171 getting bad she should have taken me about of Asburton, cos obviously if I'm
172 doing bad then that's not the right place for me cos after I got kicked out she
173 never sent my brother or sister there, do you get what I mean?

174 K: mmm

175 A: It's like, oh you've done wrong there, forget about you, let's just make sure
176 the other ones be alright.

177 K: I mean, that was a really short period of time you were in your first primary
178 school, where you able to talk to your mum about your feelings?

179 A: Nope

180 K: Why is that, do you think?

181 A: My mum don't care

182 K: So how do you think....whenever you were in Beakmead in year 5 right,
183 em.....where you thinking I don't wan't to be here? Or what where your
184 thoughts?

185 A: I knew I didn't want to be there but like.....what am I meant to do, I'm like
186 12. Not even 12, like 11. Nothing I can really say or do is there?

187 K: How was your learning at that school?

188 A: It got better, I learned a lot in Beckmead. The maths thing was still like
189 out of the question but I was good at English so. I could read and write, the
190 spelling thing, stuff like spelling those things are still hard, I still don't get
191 those, the whole spelling thing. Do you get what I mean? And I didn't really
192 get it cos I'd been out of school so much. Do you get what I mean?

193 K: yeah cos you missed a big chunk of your early education.

194 A: Yeah and people think it's not needed...it's not needed but it is. When you
195 get to year 11 in a test room and that answer you don't know it and when you
196 go back and you think what age you're meant to learn you're times table at,
197 you realise that......that's what I missed like. Like my little brother he hasn't

198 even started his timestables and that and he's in year 1 and my sister started
199 learning it in like year 2, year 3, year 4 so my sister is in year 5, no year 6
200 and like thinking of what she was doing at that time I never done any of that
201 so.

202 K: So how does that make you feel?

203 A: It makes me feel like I've missed out.

204 K: So….why…why where you not in school? Have you spoken to
205 your mum about it?

206 A: No I don't ask her.

207 K: have you asked her in the past?

208 A: Yeah, I asked her why but she don't say anything. She doesn't say
209 anything?

210 K: Are you the oldest?

211 A: No

212 K: so what was your older brother's experience like?

213 A: I don't even want to talk about him.

214 K: You don't get on too well?

215 A: Not at all.

216 K: Is he still at home with you?

217 A: Mmm yeah.

218 K: So things seemed to get better at Beckmead in terms of your learning, is
219 that right?

220 A: yeah

221 K: How were your relationships with the teachers? I mean how come your
222 learning took off, where you working really hard?

223 A: It depends how the teacher teaches, if the teacher is a good teacher then
224 you'll learn.

225 K: Tell me what a good teacher is?

226 A: I don't know, it's the way they teach, the way they teach. It's like. . .there's
227 dull teachers who like give you the paper, give you the pen. Then there's the
228 teacher's who get you involved like they make you understand it. .like
229 instead of you just doing the work, they get you to understand it. I think that's
230 what it was.

231 K: So was it difficult to make friends?

232 A: not really cos from Beckmead, I mean Victoria House like cos like I lived in
233 Ashburton, my friends lived in the area so I was still friends with them. When I
234 went Victoria House I met a couple of people. I met one boy and then his
235 brother was at Beckmead so when I got to Beckmead, I was kinda like cool
236 with them. So..

237 K: And so what happened between years 5 and 6?

238 A: I just started bein bad when I got to year 6, like soon as it got to year 6.

239 Like soon as I got to year 6. I just used to have outbursts but they weren't as

240 bad. But I just used to like. ..be stupid, I just didn't want to do the work and

241 be really bad and they put me on half days and then I got kicked out?

242 K: When you say bad, what do you mean?

243 A: jumping on the tables, dancing around, making noise, throwing pens, have

244 fights.

245 K: What do you think that was connected to?

246 A: I don't know. I think it's the work thing again where it just got too hard.

247 K: Whenever you were being bad, what do you think you were getting out of

248 that? Does that make sense?

249 A: Something to do like if you're not doing work then something to do?

250 K: So what was the incident that led to you leaving.

251 A: I don't want to talk about it.

252 K: That's ok, that's alright!

253 K: What about whenever..... did you come straight to Wandle Valley?

254 A: Hmmm

255 K: So have you been at Wandle Valley this whole time?

256 A: No I haven't actually. I didn't go anywhere til year 7. I missed half of year 6

257 and the whole of year 7 and then I came here in year 8.

258 K: So whats your understanding of why you missed half of year 6 and year 7?

259 A: I don't know, there was nowhere for me to go they said.

260 K: whose they?

261 A: The people who sent me to this school, education welfare. People like that.

262 K: Did you go anywhere else? What was happening with your learning?

263 A: I wasn't

264 K: So what were you doing for a year and a half?

265 A: Hmmm.....nothing

266 K: What does nothing look like?

267 A: Me in my house watching tv, doing nothing.

268 K: what were your thoughts about school?

269 A: I wasn't thinking about school cos school wasn't that important.

270 K: What was important to you at that time?

271 A: I don't know, pokemon cards (sarcasm) Nothing was important back then

272 but now I see it was important but it's not my fault, is it? Even if I did think it

273 was important back then, there was still nothing I could have done so it won't

274 change anything and it can't be changed now.

275 K: Would you say that in time you were out of school, where you happy?

276 A: I don't know, I can't remember.

277 K: So what was it like then when you started here in year 8? Can you

278 remember your first day?

279 A: came in, they put me in my class, started working and it was alright.

280 K: In what way was it alright?

281 A: just back in school innit? It was something to do, I weren't bored every day.

282 K: How were you getting on in your lessons?

283 A: I don't know it was a long time ago, good I suppose.

284 K: How are you doing now in school?

285 A: I'm behind in some lessons, in most lessons cos my attendance was 32%
286 last year.

287 K: why was your attendance 32%?

288 A: A lot of stuff happened.

289 K: Stuff outside of school?

290 A: Yep.

291 K: Is it anything you would like to share/

292 A: Not really.

293 K: But it was a difficult time?

294 A: very.

295 K: Are things a bit more settled now.

296 A: yeah but not at home.

297 K: So do you feel like when….do you feel like coming to school is a break?

298 A: Definitely, that's why I come to school every day now.

299 K: and these things that are difficult at home, is there anyone you can talk to?
300 A: Nope

301 K: What about within school, can you tell me a bit about your friendships?

302 A: I have friendships but I'm not gonna tell any of them about my private life.
303 It's none of their business.

304 K: So what do you talk to your friends about?

305 A: Stuff, clothes, guns, shoes.. .not real guns bb guns.stuff, girls, money stuff
306 like that.

307 K: so things that you've talked about in your private life…..when things are
308 tough for you. How do you cope? Who do you talk to? What are your ways of
309 coping?

310 A: I don't want to say… .I don't really.. I don't know.

311 K: why do you not want to say?

312 A: I don't know….smoking weed, anything. Relaxin. .just getting out my
313 house, just being away from those people who live there.

314 K: So are there lots of people in your house?

315 A: No just not family

316 K: What do you mean when you say not family.

317 A: I don't class them as family.

162

318 A: Cos they don't care about me.

319 K: How do you know that?

320 A: cos I'm not stupid that's why. You have to be stupid not to see it.

321 K: So you've said to like cope with things that are going on at home, you like

322 to relax and get out of the house and stuff and it sounds like things are hard.

323 If I was to come back and speak to you in five years time, what do you think

324 you would be doing?

325 A: Dunno, hopefully have my own house by then, have a job.. ..maybe in

326 cooking.

327 K: So you like cooking?

328 A: Yeah. Do you do much cooking at home?

329 K: No.

330 K: So when did you develop a love for cooking.

331 A: School, last year.

332 K: And em....are you good at it.

333 A: The teacher said that I stood out of everyone that was in there, I was the

334 one that stood out most when I done it. She said I'm a perfectionist or

335 something like that.

336 K: (laughs) That's a good thing, that's a compliment, do you no think?

337 A: Dunno, don't even know what it means to be honest.

338 K: It means that you like to get everything just right.

339 A: Yeah I do. I like other things perfect.

340 K: can you tell me what other things you like perfect?

341 A: When I'm doing schoolwork, I like everything to be neat and laid out nicely.

342 When I'm writing, I like everything to be organised.

343 K: I'm going to draw a scale and I want you think about where you would put

344 schoolwork on this scale?

345 A: What you mean, how good I am at school work? Or if I like it/

346 K: No, how important you think schoolwork is? O means you think it's not

347 Important and 10 means you think it's really important.

348 A: (Points to 10 on the scale)

349 K: So why do you think it's really important.

350 A: You know why?

351 K: But I want to know what you think?

352 A: It's very, very , very important. Like to think about........Imagine you have

353 GCSEs yeah, think about in the long run, when you go college and stuff like

354 that, you might be able to get courses yeah but if you want the courses you

355 really want you are gonna have to have GCSEs to get there. You might not

356 need to have good ones but you still need them. Do you get what I mean?

357 And it's better to try and fail then not try at all.

358 K: mmm. Have you always had those thoughts or have you ever thought
359 differently?
360 A: Last year I didn't care, school work was that (points to 0 on the scale)
361 K: So what's made the difference?
362 A: Everybody getting at me in school, moaning at me and telling me I'm
363 gonna fail all my GCSEs so I kinda... ...
364 K: It seems more than that tho, it seems more than your teachers getting at
365 you. It seems like something you thought?
366 A: No one in my house has GCSEs. Mum, brother, two eldest people in the
367 house have none at all. Mum may have some, but she don't know what she
368 has, she never knew what she got.
369 K: So what would that mean for you to have GCSEs?
370 A: That would mean that I'm different from them, I don't want to be like them
371 just bums. Just living off the Government.
372 K: When you say you don't want to be like them, what way do you want
373 things to be different for you?
374 A: I want to own my own house, even if I don't own my own house... .flippin
375 not sit around and just like, like. ... My house is like shitty and I've said to
376 mum there's a lot of stuff that you could do, not even expensive stuff that
377 could make the house just that bit better but it's like she just wants to sit
378 around and leave it and I'm like come on man, my room looks better
379 than the whole house and like that's because I know what kind of stuff to buy
380 to make it look better. You don't have to spend a lot of money, like a lick of
381 paint, a little £15 rug and some new bedsheets and the room looks nice again.
382 Do you get what I mean? It's like you could do that with the whole house, a
383 lick of paint, carpet on the stairs and the place would look nice again but no
384 one wants to anything. It's just lazy. ....So why am I.. ... I'm not doing it for you
385 to live in it.
386 K: That must be hard fighting against it at home?
387 A: Yeah and living on a where like.... ...Imagine like.. ...this is the main road
388 yeah and my house is there and my bedroom is up there and my window is
389 about half of that top window and that's the only window I got, half of that and
390 opens up to about that much (shows me with his hands, not much) So when
391 you do open it, you ain't getting as much air as you want plus you are just
392 listening to vroom so if you leave it open during the night thinking yeah,
393 there's no cars on the road, you only here one every five minutes. From
394 about four in the morning you're up cos you can hear loads of cars. It's not a
395 road, it's a main road, it's like there's traffic lights and everything, it's like a big
396 main road. It's not nice to live on.
397 K: yeah that's difficult to get used to.

398 A: Yeah it's definitely like, it's hard to get used to. Like just cos it's double
399 glazing, even if the window is shut you can still here it.

400 K: So do you share a room?

401 A: na I got my own room, I'm meant to be sharing with my little brother but my
402 brother come out of jail and my mum gave him her room so my mum doesn't
403 have a bedroom, she sleeps on the sofa and my little brother sleeps in my
404 sister's room and she's ten and then I sleep in my room with my cousin cos
405 he's got nowhere to stay.

406 A: But I got kicked out yesterday so I'm gonna have to go council.

407 K: So it's amazing that you even made it into school? How are you coping?

408 A: I don't know. Headteacher will help me, that's the first person I thought of
409 will help me what to do.

410 K: So what will he do?

411 A: He said he's going to call my mum and have a chat with her and stuff like
412 that but if she's still saying what she's saying then he'll probably help me call
413 the council and that and help me get somewhere to stay.

414 K: So must be worrying being in school today?

415 A: Not really.

416 K: have these sorts of things happened with your mum before?

417 A: Once when I got kicked out and I don't come back for two nights and then
418 one time she tried to kick me out and I slept in like.......do you know a tower
419 block? I slept in one of them, inside on the stairs.

420 K: That sounds like it's really difficult for you but you seem really determined
421 about your schoolwork and getting somewhere. What sorts of thoughts do
422 you have to get yourself through things because you seem strong?

423 A: I don't know, I just want to leave that house that's all, I just can't wait to
424 leave, get school over and done with and then leave, get my own hostel or
425 something.

426 K: Do you have a plan?

427 A: Not really. All I plan to do is as soon as it hits study week next year try and
428 find a hostel.

429 K: Are there every times at home when it's better?

430 A: Yeah there is times but it always goes back to the same thing, it don't last
431 for long.

432 K: Why does it blow up?

433 A: My mum says I have no respect for her but I ain't having no respect for
434 someone who has no respect for themselves. I'm not having respect for
435 someone who has no respect for me. Why should I show her respect cos
436 she's my mum, No, she talks to me like I'm shit so I talk to her like she's shit
437 back. I'm not gonna talk to her when all she does is swear.....I tell her to shut

438 up, don't talk to me and walk out.

439 K: Sounds as if you've made yourself a haven in your bedroom, I know you're
440 not there today, but somewhere you can go and be by yourself.

441 A: Yeah but she'll just come in to my room and start shouting, smashing my
442 door.

443 K: Maybe we could talk about something that's more positive like your
444 friendships. Are they helpful for you?

445 A: I don't really tell them anything so they don't really help so......I don't really
446 tell them.

447 K: So why do you not tell them, what's holding you back?

448 A: It's none of their business, they all got somewhere to stay where they feel
449 fine, they go on like they're hard done by but they're not. They don't know.....
450 they don't know what hard done by is.

451 K: So it's difficult for you to share things with them?

452 A: yeah, they're not going to understand.

453 K: So whats going well for you, what do you enjoy doing?

454 A: I don't really do anything

455 K: But you're determined to get your GCSEs?

456 A: Yeah

457 K: So what's the plan for getting those?

458 A: I can't make sure. I can only try my hardest and make sure I try to catch up
459 with all my Schoolwork and stuff like that. Stuff like easy GCSEs.
460 Do you get what I Mean?

461 K: What's that?

462 A: It's a term I use, easy GCSEs. PHSE which is 100% coursework, easy
463 GCSE. Em design technology, easy GCSE where you do one test but most of
464 it is like coursework where you're building stuff and em art, easy GCSE.Music,
465 those ones there are easy GCSEs cos I'm good at music, I'm not so good at
466 art but I can try. I'm good at DT.

467 K: That sounds like a good plan though.

468 A: But Like I missed my mock exams. I did one maths one, one science one
469 and I got the highest mark in science so I think I can do good in science.

470 K: I just want to ask you a few more questions, one I think I've asked before
471 but I just want to ask it again. It seems as though you feel like a lot of what's
472 happened isn't your fault?

473 A: A lot of it is but I lot of it isn't. Like I shouldn't have been bad when I
474 couldn't do the work things like that.

475 K: What do you think could have been another way of dealing with it?

476 A: I don't know but that wasn't the right thing to do.

477 K: If you could go back and give advice to pupils in the position as you who

478 got excluded from primary school, what would you say to them?

479 A: I would say like, I'm not even joking, teachers and whoever is telling you

480 like school is important, they're not lying at all. I'm not even joking they're

481 not lying at all.

482 K: If you could give advice to school and teachers about pupils in the same

483 position (Interupts)

484 A: I'd tell them to take their finger out their ass

485 K: Tell me what that means?

486 A: Do more

487 K: what does do more mean?

488 A: instead of like labelling the kid as a bad kid find out why they're doing it,

489 why they are doing that, instead of like labelling them, 'you're bad'. Do you

490 get what I mean? It's like a kid whose got ADHD, they label them as bad

491 straight away in a mainstream school and then they get sent here just

492 because they didn't find out the problem first. Do you get what I mean? They

493 could have given them one on one support and stuff like that, making sure

494 they have a pad and pen and that they're more organised. Cos like their

495 minds at a different speed so they need to be organised, they need to be

496 occupied cos they got like basically low attention spans. They can't stay on

497 something for a long time. It's like you need to keep them interested, you got

498 to get more interactive and that.

499 K: What does it feel like to answer these questions and talk about your

500 personal Experience?

501 A: What does it feel like? Hard at first, definitely hard at first but it gets easy

502 after a while. Yeah, it's definitely positive, don't keep it bottled up.

503 K: Why is it better not to keep it bottled up?

504 A: It's not nice, it sticks in your head and you feel like you're the only one.

Appendix 3.2

Alan   IPA analysis   step 3
Emerging themes in chronological order

Theme	Line no.
Lack of continuity of educational experiences	10-14, 121-123,256-257
Stressful home life	16
Indifference	33-34, 453-454
Feelings of incompetence leading to 'acting out' behaviour	62-65
Lack of practical support	67
Lack of communication between schools	69-70
Lack of communication between home and school	72-73
Anger	83-83
Injustice/unfairness	85-86, 158-161
Lack of control	86-87
Expresses desire to go to a normal school	131
Expresses a need for the problem to be understood	140, 142-143
Frustration leading to acting out behaviour	145-147, 239-241,243,246
Anger at the school system	154-156
Anger at family system	162-165, 172-173
Placing blame	165
Feeling not cared for	175-176,318
Feeling powerless	185-186,272-273
Comparison with other siblings experience	175-176, 197-200
Missing out	203
Not wanting to talk	213, 251
Teaching style	223,228
Boredom leading to 'acting out' behaviour	259
External locus of control	272
Lack of belief that things can change	273-274,430-431
Escapism	297-298,312-313
Future aspirations	325
Teacher acknowledging strengths	333
Pupil acknowledges strengths	341-342
Importance of education	352,479-481
Expresses a need to be different to family	370
Escapism through education	370-371
Expresses need to improve living situation	375-378
Resentment	384-385
Negative impact of physical environment	387-396
Overcrowding	401-405
Teacher as dependable/available	408-409
Not feeling respected	434-437
Indifferent to friendships as they have no real function	445-446
Feeling alone	449-450, 504
Expresses need for teachers to understand what Is driving behaviour, in order to understand pupils	488-497

Appendix 3.3

Alan   IPA analysis

Step 5 Clustering themes and summary table of themes

Themes	Line no.
Strong sense of injustice	
Lack of continuity of educational experiences	10-14, 121-123, 256-257
Missing out	203
Comparison with other siblings experience	175-176, 197-200
Comparison with other pupils who have been excluded	85-86, 158-161
School as a system	
Lack of practical support	67
Lack of communication system between schools	69-70
Lack of communication between home and school	72-73
Expresses desire to go to a normal school	131
Locus of control	
Feeling powerless	185-186, 272-273
Lack of belief that things can change	273-274, 430-431
Resentment	384-385

Cycle of negativity
Feelings of incompetence leading to 'acting out' behaviour 62-65
Feelings of frustration leading to 'acting out' behaviour 145-147, 239-241, 243, 246
Boredom leading to 'acting out' behaviour 259
Not feeling respected 434-437

Belonging
Feeling not cared for 175-176, 318
Disconnected from family 313, 317
Indifference to friendships as they serve no real function 445-446
Feelings of not being understood 452
Feeling alone 449-450, 504

Survival
Expresses need to improve living conditions 375-378
Noise pollution 393-396
Overcrowding 401-405
Future aspirations 325
Expresses a need to be different to family 370
Through education 370-371
Coping mechanisms 310-314

Qualities of teachers
Teaching style 259
Dependable/available 408-409
Acknowledges pupil's strengths 333
Need to understand what is driving behaviour in order to understand pupils 488-497

Appendix 4.1

A Summary List of Super ordinate, Sub Themes and Clustered Themes from young people's interviews
Code: **Bold heading = Super ordinate theme** *heading in italic = sub theme* normal text = cluster theme

Super ordinate Theme 1	Adam	Ron	Henry	Alan	Paul	Lenny
Belonging						
1.1 Relationships with peers						
Conflict	4:115-116	8:250-254	1:25-26		12:382-385	4:92-93
Fitting in and being understood	11.351-2			14.448-52	6.199-200	2:56-57
1.2 Impact of the family						
Loss		5:153-158				
Lack of parental control		3.97-99	5.150-2	5.163-5	4.127-129	
Lack of care		6.202-205		6.181	5.162-16	
1.3 School as a system						
Negative relationships with teachers	10.313		3.75	3.67-74	2.47-51	9:247-249
Lack of continuity	10.338	1:24-25		8.259		
Injustice	6:201-4	15.479-481	3.73-78	3.84-87		11.324-326

Appendix 4.2

A Summary List of Super ordinate, Sub Themes and Clustered Themes from young people's interviews
Code: **Bold heading = Super ordinate theme** *Super ordinate theme heading in italic = sub theme* normal text = cluster theme

Super ordinate Theme 2	Adam	Ron	Henry	Alan	Paul	Lenny
	Age					
Survival						
2.1 Expresses need for basics						
Wants improved living conditions						
Safety		12.378-82		12.375-8	13 415-20	
Money	4 113-4	3 74-7	4 118-24	12 380-81	7.231-31	1.27-30
Leading a normal life		11.356-359		4.131-32	4.422-24	
2.2 Protecting the self						
Not caring		3.94-96	4.128-32			6 153-5912 336
Putting on a front	7.223-27				12.398-401	9.263-68
2.3 Positive views of the future						
Future aspirations	15 477-80	11.356-9	9 275-6	10 325	14.447-52	14.420
I'm changing!	13.442, 445-6		4 107-8	11 360	12.380-381	
Wanting a better life	16.525-28	7 225-7		11.370-1	14.455-57	

Appendix 4.3

A Summary List of Super ordinate, Sub Themes and Clustered Themes from young people's interviews
Code: **Bold heading** = Super ordinate theme *heading in italic* = *sub theme*   normal text = cluster theme

Super ordinate Theme 3	Adam	Ron	Henry	Alan	Paul	Lenny
Maladaptive patterns						
3.1 Locus of control						
Feeling powerless		13.471-6		6.185-6		
Feeling trapped		15.484-487		12.382-385	15.492-495	
Self-fulfilling prophecy			8.228-9			11.313-14
Lack of belief that things can change		13.410-411		9.272-274		13.366-68
3.4 'labelling' and it's impact						
Loss of agency			6.172-173	15.488-492	10.318-19	5.135
Negative consequences associated with medication			6.162-164		10.308-310	3.62-63
Views on medication			6.173-175		10.331-335	3.83-84
Identity			9.262-265	5.135-139		1.20-21