

The experience of male adolescent refugees during their
transfer and adaptation to a UK secondary school

Catherine Elizabeth Burcham

Doctorate in Professional Educational, Child and
Adolescent Psychology
Institute of Education, University of London

Abstract

Making a successful transfer to secondary school in the UK has been linked to a range of positive outcomes for refugee children. Yet research investigating this experience from the perspective of refugee children themselves is scarce. This study aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of how male adolescent refugees experienced their transfer and adaptation to a secondary school in the UK. The research used a qualitative design, it was idiographic and the approach adopted was Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). Semi-structured interviews were completed with six male adolescent refugees. The data generated three superordinate themes which reflected the participants' sense of being in need of help during the early stages of their transfer, their process of adapting to school and developing a sense of belonging in this context, and their overriding need to feel safe. Participants identified a wide range of factors as supporting and hindering their transfer and adaptation to secondary school. These are explored in relation to existing research and psychological theories. Implications for the practice of Educational Psychologists and schools are offered. In particular, results showed that older siblings were often the primary educators of participants at home. Schools that adopt a family engagement framework, rather than parental engagement, may more successfully support the learning of refugee children. All participants experienced a strong motivation to learn English and believed that speaking their first language in school would hinder this process. Further research is needed to investigate perceptions of first language use in school. Finally there is a reflection upon the applicability of using IPA with children learning English as an additional language. The author suggests that IPA can be successfully applied in research with this population.

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Declaration and Word Count

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

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Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Catherine Burcham". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'C' and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Catherine Burcham

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1. Introduction

This research aims to gain an in depth understanding of how refugee children experience transferring into secondary school in the United Kingdom and the factors they identify as impacting upon their adaptation to this setting. The research further aims to explore how refugee children understand and experience a sense of belonging in secondary school. In order to understand the experience of refugee children in UK schools we must first understand the wider background factors which provide the context of the refugee child's experience in the UK. This chapter aims to provide this context and to offer a rationale for conducting the current study.

Chapter one begins by offering a definition of the term refugee before providing an overview of global and national issues related to refugees, with particular attention to refugee children. Dominant discourses¹ surrounding refugee children's experiences and psychological literature related to these are explored and an alternative construction of the refugee child is offered. Existing literature that is relevant to the experience of transfer and settlement into UK schools (particularly secondary schools) for refugee children is reviewed, before offering a rationale for this research. The chapter ends by highlighting the contribution the current study will make to knowledge and professional practice.

1.1. *Refugee and asylum seekers*

The aim of this section is to highlight the context in which refugee children enter UK schools and wider society. This is important since this context provides the backdrop to their experience of life in the UK, including their experience of schooling.

¹ Where discourse refers to everything that can be 'read' for meaning (Burr, 2003)

1.1.1. Definitions and the global context

Children and adults who are defined as asylum seekers have left their home country, arrived in another country and formally sought asylum there. They have not yet found out whether their claim for asylum has been accepted. For most member states of the United Nations (including the UK) an asylum applicant is granted refugee status if they meet the criteria laid down in the 1951 UN Convention on Refugees, which states that if they were to return to their home country they would have a well founded fear of persecution (Reading & Robertson, 2006; Refugee Council, 2008). Asylum seekers and refugees have often fled from countries where violence is commonplace and where the government is either the perpetrator of this violence or helpless to do anything about it (Refugee Council, 2008). There are large numbers of refugees in the world today: by the end of 2007 there were 11.4 million refugees under the responsibility of the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR, 2008).

1.1.2. The UK context

The arrival of international migrants in the UK is not a new phenomenon. Migrants from different nationalities have frequently sought refuge in the UK from conditions in their country of origin (Rutter, 2006). Notably as early as 1066 large numbers of Jews were arriving in Britain and Jewish refugee communities have immigrated here in significant numbers since this time, particularly during the periods 1881-1914 and 1933-1939 (McConnachi, 2002). Other examples of large groups of immigrants included Gypsies in the 1500s, and the Huguenots from France who arrived between 1560 and 1720 (McConnachi, 2002). This pattern of migration into the UK has continued, and today a number of children and adults enter the UK each year seeking asylum. In 2007 there were 28,860 claims for asylum made 4515 of which were made by dependants (Home Office, 2008). The demographic data regarding the number of refugee children currently residing in the UK are imprecise, but in 2006 it was estimated that there were over 60,000 refugee children of compulsory school age living in the UK (Rutter, 2006). In 2003 it was estimated that around 6.5% of all school children in London were asylum

seekers, refugees or other groups of forced migrants (Rutter, 2003b). Refugee and asylum seeking children make up a significant proportion of children in UK schools, particularly in London.

1.1.3. Perceptions of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK today

A number of factors have raised the profile of asylum in the UK in recent years and arguably led to increasingly negative attitudes towards this group. These include: the sharp increase in asylum applications in the late 1990s (mainly due to an increase in wars and national insecurity); the negative reporting of asylum issues in local and national press which have perpetuated myths about the preferential treatment of asylum seekers over local residents, and the fact that recent terrorist events have been linked to asylum seekers² (Appa, 2005; Boyden & Hart, 2007; Giner, 2007; Pinson & Arnot, 2007; Reading & Robertson, 2006; Sporton, Valentine, & Bang-Nielsen, 2006). Research suggests that in at least some UK schools, teachers identify widespread negative public attitudes towards refugees and asylum seekers as a barrier to the integration of these students in their schools (Whiteman, 2005).

The UK government has been keen to present itself as strict on asylum and since the 1980s a plethora of government legislation and policies have been published. These have introduced policies aimed at minimising the number of asylum-seekers entering the UK, alongside making it increasingly difficult to claim asylum here (Boyden & Hart, 2007; Giner, 2007; Maegusuku-Hewett, Dunkerley, Scourfield, & Smalley, 2007; Rutter, 2006). In relation to refugee and asylum seeking children, a number of researchers have argued that, in recent years, legislation in the UK related to implementing asylum policy has tended to override child welfare policies (Boyden & Hart, 2007; Giner, 2007; Rutter, 2003b; Sporton et al., 2006). For example, not all duties of the Children's Act (1989) are extended to asylum seeking children and, until very

² Specifically, two suspects in the attempted suicide bombings in London on the 21st July 2005 arrived as children of asylum seeking families and asylum seekers were portrayed as potential terrorists following the September 11th terrorists events in New York in 2001 (Giner, 2007; Rutter, 2006)

recently, the UK government chose to apply the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) with reservations which prioritised immigration and asylum legislation over the rights of children as outlined in the CRC (Giner, 2007; Sporton et al., 2006). It is in this context that refugee and asylum seeking children construct their sense of self, identity and adapt to life in the UK, including school (Sporton et al., 2006).

1.2. *Constructing the refugee child*

1.2.1. Trauma and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

Trauma can be defined as an overwhelming or devastating event which causes intolerable anxiety, results in a sense of helplessness and which can lead to negative psychological consequences including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). All refugees will have experienced some degree of trauma, for example in relation to upheaval, loss, or the experience of war, but not all young people will develop clinical symptoms as a result of this trauma (Hamilton, Anderson, Frater-Mathieson, Loewen, & Moore, 2004). Literature surrounding refugee children (and adults) is dominated by psychological research related to trauma. Indeed, Rutter (2006) claims that 76% of material from her literature review on refugee children (conducted in 2006) comprised of psychological research about trauma. Given the dominance of research in this area, it is important to review what it says about refugee children since this may help us to understand their experiences, including their transfer and adaptation to secondary school in the UK.

A wide range of research has shown that refugee children appear to be at risk of poor mental health outcomes and that PTSD is a condition to which refugee children appear particularly vulnerable (Athey & Ahearn, 1991; Espino, 1991; Fazel & Stein, 2003; Macksound & Aber, 1996). Indeed, Hodes (2000) estimates that as many as 40% of refugee children may have psychiatric disorders. Research which has illustrated the relationship between exposure to trauma and poor psychological outcomes, including symptoms of PTSD, has taken place in different cultures, different countries

and using different measures. This indicates that this relationship is evident in a number of different contexts and can be measured in a range of ways (Hodes, 2000). This research has also shown that refugee children may experience mental health difficulties during their time at school, that these difficulties may not be identified and that their mental health needs may go unmet (Fazel & Stein, 2003). As such this discourse has helped to highlight the potential psychological needs of this population. At the same time, there are common methodological issues inherent in much of the research in this field which challenge some of the conclusions drawn. Furthermore, it has been argued that many aspects of this discourse are founded on false assumptions about the relationship between traumatic events and psychological consequences and that this discourse may be an unhelpful way of understanding refugee children. An overview of many of these issues is provided below.

Much of the research investigating the impact of trauma on refugee children is based on data which shows a correlation between exposure to trauma and mental health difficulties, yet correlation does not imply causation. In addition research has shown that the type of trauma rather than the quantity of exposure may be related to mental health symptoms (Macksound & Aber, 1996). In their research with Lebanese children, who had experienced chronic strife amidst political, social and economic deprivation, Macksound and Aber (1996) also found that the child's age and gender had an impact on the quantity and type of trauma they experienced and therefore on the trauma-related symptoms they subsequently identified. This research indicates that it may be invalid to generalise between the outcomes of trauma for individuals in the same population, let alone between groups of children in different populations who may have had very different experiences of trauma. Much research into the relationship between PTSD and exposure to trauma fails to explore the nature of the trauma experienced and the context in which this takes place.

A further criticism of this discourse is that it focuses on just one segment of the experience of trauma - the devastating event - thereby neglecting other

stages of the trauma experience which include anticipation, survival and adaptation (Papadopoulos, 2002). Yet research has shown that the devastating event may not be the most difficult phase for some children (Papadopoulos, 2002). Indeed Guaranaccia and Lopez (1998) note that the most enduring social psychiatric finding in the mental health literature is the inverse relationship between socio-economic status and psychiatric disorders. As such it is possible that the conditions that refugee children and their families face post-migration (for example living in relative poverty) may go some way to account for the psychological difficulties that many of these children are reported to display. It follows that the mental health difficulties these young people may report during their transfer and adaptation to secondary school could be a consequence of their current situation, rather than the experience of trauma.

There is some evidence to suggest that exposure to some traumatic experiences could provide a source of strength in the long term. For example, research with Cambodian adolescent refugees whose parents had been exposed to traumatic events in their home country before they were born and who had subsequently sought asylum in Canada, showed that parental exposure to trauma appeared to have a positive impact on the lives of their adolescent children at various times. For example, parental exposure to trauma was related to lower incidents of academic failure in their adolescent children (Rousseau & Drapeau, 2000; Rousseau, Drapeau, & Platt, 1999). Similarly Macksound and Aber (1996) found that exposure to particular types of traumatic experiences were related to some adaptational outcomes in the Lebanese children in their study. Specifically, those children who had witnessed violent acts were more likely to exhibit pro-social behaviours than children in the sample who had been exposed to different traumas, and children that were not displaced and/or those that had lost someone close to them during the war were more likely to exhibit planful behaviour³ than children in the sample who had been exposed to other types of war trauma. Whilst it is not claimed that the experience of trauma is in any

³ Characterized by taking more control over the direction of their lives and planning for the future

way a desirable condition for children, it is argued here that the discourse surrounding trauma focuses on the negative consequences of exposure to trauma and as such it fails to account for the individual's capacity to gain strength from experiencing adversity.

Rousseau and Drapeau's (2000) study found that the positive relationship between parental exposure to trauma and lower incidents of academic failure in their adolescent children (as outlined above) were observed in the Cambodian participants but not in those participants from Central America. This highlights the importance of considering the role of culture as a mediating variable on the impact of exposure to trauma. Indeed, research has shown that the meaning individuals ascribe to their experiences impacts upon the effect they have on them. For example, Jones and Kafetsios (2005) investigated the psychological well-being of Bosnian adolescents in two towns on two different sides of the war in Bosnia. Whilst both groups had been exposed to the same war-related traumatic events, the consequences of these on individual well-being varied significantly depending on the community in which the adolescent lived and the meanings they ascribed to the war. For example, the impact of hearing shelling on an individual's psychological well-being appeared to depend upon the degree to which it was perceived as personally threatening. Adolescents in one town believed NATO bombs were only aimed at military targets and therefore that their homes were safe; in consequence although they experienced an equal amount of shelling to the adolescents residing in the other town, they were less affected by this experience. Similarly Hoffman and Bizman (1996) found that the reasons Israeli children ascribed to the Arab-Israeli conflict had an impact upon their emotional response to the conflict and that the nature of the attributions made appeared to change developmentally. For example, elementary school children who attributed conflict to controllable causes expressed guilt or shame when Israel was seen as the predominant agent. The causal dimension was linked to different emotional responses among adolescents: specifically control was linked to feelings of shame but not to guilt, which was associated with the attribution of agency.

Together these studies highlight that the meaning individuals attach to traumatic events can work to moderate the impact of this exposure and that these attributions are in part culturally, contextually and developmentally determined. As such the trauma discourse wrongly assumes an inevitable causal relationship between an external event and intra-psychic consequences (Jones & Kafetsios, 2005; Papadopoulos, 2002; Rousseau, Drapeau, & Corin, 1997). Furthermore this finding highlights the need for research which is culturally sensitive and able to explore the individual's experience of trauma from their perspective.

Finally, the trauma discourse that surrounds refugees constructs them as weak and vulnerable (Clark, C, 2007; Pinson & Arnot, 2007). Indeed, images in the media have arguably reinforced a public view of the refugee as helpless and damaged (Loizos, 2002). As such this discourse fails to acknowledge the personal agency and resilience that many of these children show in the face of huge adversity. At the same time, as Loizos (2002) notes, by rejecting the trauma discourse as an appropriate lens through which to view the refugee's experience, we are not denying that the experiences a refugee may have faced will likely have a long term impact upon them, nor are we denying that refugee children are vulnerable. Rather we are questioning both the helpfulness of primarily viewing refugees in this way, and the inevitability that their experiences necessarily lead to trauma or functional incapacity (Loizos, 2002). The discourse of trauma may not offer the most helpful or appropriate framework from which to understand the experiences of refugee children, including their transfer and adaptation to secondary school in the UK.

1.2.2. Sense of home and cultural bereavement

Given the critique of the trauma discourse, alternative constructions of the refugee experience have been offered. Papadopoulos (2002) has argued that forced loss of home is the only condition that all refugees share, not trauma, and that this loss should guide our understanding of the psychological needs of refugee children and the types of interventions that may support them. He argues that home is one of the most fundamental

notions of humanity; all human beings have a sense of home. Home has a wide range of meanings from:

“A physical and geographical community, to a psychological locus of relatedness and communion; from a seat of origins, to the ultimate goal, a place of rest, beyond all conflict” (Papadopoulos, 1987, p7) cited in (Papadopoulos, 2002)

Papadopoulos (2002) has argued that home is associated with our sense of self, our relatedness to others, and with feelings of safety and predictability. From this perspective refugees experience a loss of the *sense* of home and the psychological processes attached to this, rather than simply the physical loss of their home. It follows that promoting the well-being of refugee children requires the restoration of the psychological processes associated with home: a secure base, a sense of containment, and a safe place in which to ground experiences and to live out the diversity of emotions that these experiences entail.

However, for many refugees these definitions of home seem somewhat problematic. Rather than providing a ‘place of rest beyond all conflict’, home may have come to be a place associated with conflict and fear. Some refugees may have been forced to move continuously, never having the opportunity to experience the secure base that Papadopoulos refers to. Nevertheless, Fullilove (1996) argues that all humans have a fundamental need to belong to a place; some refugees may simply not have had this need fulfilled. According to Fullilove, a sense of belonging to a place arises from three distinct psychological processes: familiarity with a place; the development of a sense of self which is linked to place, and attachment to a place. The experience of displacement is seen as a disruption to the psychological processes associated with place and he argues this can lead to a sense of nostalgia, disorientation and alienation (Fullilove, 1996). Therefore whilst some refugees may not have experienced a sense of home or of belonging to a place, they may still have a fundamental need to develop a relationship of this kind. From this perspective the well-being of refugee children may require providing an environment which enables the

development of a sense of belonging to a place and of the psychological processes associated with home discussed above.

Eisenbruch (1990) has offered the term cultural bereavement as an alternative way of understanding the refugee experience. He argues that the refugees loss of home can result in a grief reaction as the individual mourns for their abandoned culture and home and that this is a culturally normal response to an abnormal situation (Eisenbruch, 1983; Fantino & Colak, 2001; German, 2004). Yet because refugees' experiences are commonly understood from a western perspective, professionals working with refugees often misinterpret their behaviour as indicative of psychological disturbance (Eisenbruch, 1990; Maras & Aveling, 2006). Whilst it is acknowledged that for many refugees leaving their home may have been experienced as an opportunity and may not have been accompanied by feelings of loss or grief, it is argued here that, in the first instance, the emotional difficulties that some refugees experience may be more helpfully understood from the framework of cultural bereavement rather than that of trauma. This is because the cultural bereavement framework does not pathologise or medicalise refugee children. Furthermore the framework of cultural bereavement encourages future research which seeks to understand the experiences of refugee children from their own perspective and to use this research to inform culturally appropriate interventions to address the needs that may arise in this population as a result of the loss and change they have experienced.

Refugee children who arrive in the UK do not have a sense of home or of belonging here. Whilst some refugees may have lost this sense of home, some may never have experienced a secure base of this kind. Cultural bereavement may provide a helpful framework from which to understand the experiences of some refugee children experiencing emotional difficulties. From this perspective it follows that effective school-based interventions would work at the community, school and individual levels to facilitate a sense of home and secure base, minimise environmental alienation, and increase the child's personal resources to cope with the stress caused by cultural bereavement (Eisenbruch, 1983). This alternative construction of the refugee

child provides a possible framework to understand the experiences of the children in the current study. Indeed it may be that the school setting provides a context for these children to develop the psychological sense of home to which Papadopoulos (2002) refers.

1.3. Literature review

Below existing literature relevant to the experience of transferring and adapting to UK secondary schools for refugee children is reviewed. This places the current study in the context of wider knowledge in the field. The literature review is divided into four broad topic areas: refugee children in UK schools; transfer and adaptation to secondary school; sense of belonging in school, and the role of language.

1.3.1. Refugee children in UK schools

Research has found that early experiences of UK schools have a significant impact on how quickly and successfully refugee children are able to settle in the UK, with good early experiences of schooling facilitating adaptation to their new life (Hek & DfES, 2005; Rutter, 2003b). In light of these findings a number of researchers have sought to investigate what constitutes effective provision for refugee children in schools. Some of this research has been based on descriptions and evaluations of existing programmes of support in schools (Beirens, Mason, Spicer, Hughes & Hek, 2006; Clarke, 2003; Reading & Robertson, 2006). Research of this kind is valuable since it offers models of practice which other service providers may reflect upon and use to inform the service they offer. However, these programmes have been used within particular contexts and with specific groups of young people, therefore these practices may not be effective, possible or appropriate in other settings or with other groups of children.

There is a growing body of research which describes and analyses specific school based interventions aimed at supporting the mental health needs and addressing emotional difficulties experienced by some refugee children,

including: the use of drawing and storytelling informed by narrative and psychodynamic theories; group cognitive behavioural therapy for adolescent refugees; a combination of family and cognitive therapy for refugee children aged seven to eleven (Ehntholt, Smith, & Yule, 2005; O'Shea, Hodes, Down, & Bramley, 2000; Rousseau & Heusch, 2000). These pieces of research have mostly used quantitative measures (pre- and post- intervention questionnaires) to assess their success. These assessments have shown the potential for a range of school-based interventions, informed by different psychological models, to have helpful psychological and behavioural outcomes for some refugee children experiencing difficulty. What these pieces of research do not show are the reasons for the difficulties experienced and what the children themselves name as the elements of the programmes that were helpful to them.

A wide range of research has been published which reflects upon good practice for supporting refugee children in schools and offers guidelines for practitioners to follow (DfES, 2004a; Hughes & Beirens, 2007; McCorriston & Lawton; McKenna, 2005; Ofsted, 2003a; Richman, Save the Children, & City and Hackney Community Services NHS Trust, 1998; Szente, Hoot, & Taylor, 2006). Amongst other things, this literature has stressed the importance of good induction procedures in schools. In consequence government publications have outlined the features of a good induction for refugees and new arrivals (McKenna, 2005; Ofsted, 2003a). Some of this research has focused on how best to support specific groups of refugee children in schools including: those who present with special difficulties; unaccompanied refugees; those learning English as an additional language; specific age groups, and specific nationalities (Blackwell & Melzack, 2000; Blake & Ademi, 1998; Chase, Knight, & Staham, 2008; DfES, 2005; Hek, 2005; McKenna, 2005). Some research has investigated the perspective of teachers regarding the factors that facilitate and hinder the inclusion of refugee children in UK schools (Whiteman, 2005). However, the majority of research and literature in this field has not focused on specific groups of refugee children, offering instead generic guidelines regarding how best to support and induct refugee children in schools.

Practitioner discourse of this kind has served to raise the profile of the needs of refugee children and has provided accessible practical strategies to support refugee children in UK schools. However, this literature is dominated by discussion about what practitioners themselves consider to have been helpful for the refugee children with whom they work. It is possible that the factors that refugee children identify as supporting them in educational settings are different to those identified by practitioners. Future research facilitating the voice of the refugee child is needed. Furthermore, this literature has tended to highlight the broad features of schools that appear beneficial to refugee children, for example: providing a welcoming school environment; establishing positive parent - teacher relationships; adapting the curriculum to include their countries and cultures; providing a specific supportive adult to talk to at times of difficulty; meeting pupils language needs (Blackwell & Melzack, 2000; DfES, 2004a; DfES, 2004b; Rutter, 2003a; Szente et al., 2006). Whilst this is useful in offering generic guidelines to schools, literature of this kind masks the huge diversity of experiences and needs that refugee children have. Further research grounded at the individual level may provide insight into the differences and similarities in the factors that individual refugee children identify as supportive to them in school.

There is a limited amount of research that has directly involved refugee children in reflecting upon aspects of their educational experience. Candappa and Iginigie (2003) sought to investigate the social worlds of refugee children and their experience of services in the UK. Part of this research involved in-depth discussions with 35 refugee children aged 11 to 14 in two secondary schools. Specifically in relation to education, the researchers reported that most of these children identified starting school as difficult and all reported an initial period of isolation. Whilst this research touched upon the role of education and the educational experiences of refugee children, Franks' (2006) research focused specifically on investigating the views of refugee children and young people regarding their experiences of gaining access to education and what they thought would help them settle in school.

Interviews and focus groups with 106 young people included questions about specific aspects of their experiences. These included: their inclusion in school; peer support schemes; supporting refugees to share information; bullying; family inclusion officers, and homework clubs. The majority of participants highlighted how important learning English was to settling in at school and the fact that they didn't want anyone in school to know they were a refugee or asylum seeker. They also described experiencing bullying and what they thought could be done to stop it. A strength of this research is that it elicited the views of a large number of school-aged refugees in relation to specific aspects of their educational experiences and indicated how they thought practice could be improved. However, the structured nature of these interviews meant that the interviewees were restricted to sharing their experiences of education which fitted within the areas identified by the researchers. It is possible that these areas may not have been the most pertinent issues for the young people themselves.

In contrast, recent research commissioned by the Refugee Council used a semi-structured interview schedule to investigate the needs and experiences of refugee and asylum seeking children in secondary schools in England (Doyle & McCorrison, 2008). Part of this research involved interviews with 18 refugee or asylum seeking pupils, across four regions in England, about their experience of secondary school in England. Along with data from surveys and interviews with representatives from Refugee Community Organisations, representatives from secondary schools and parents/carers of refugee children, this research identified a number of barriers to the inclusion of refugee children in secondary schools. These included: bullying and racism; difficulty accessing school places; parents lack of English; the experience of trauma or flight; lack of resources for the training of school staff, and the financial difficulties experienced by parents/carers. The data also allowed for the identification of possible solutions to these barriers. These included: obtaining extended schools status to provide extra support to refugee pupils and parents/carers; schools employing home-school link workers; the use of peer mentors in school; language support for pupils, and tailored induction procedures for each refugee pupil.

Other research, which has involved refugee children themselves, has focused on specific aspects of their experience of secondary school in the UK. For example, Hek and Sales' (2002) research explored refugee children's experience of settlement in UK schools. Part of this research involved interviewing 15 refugee pupils in two London secondary schools (Hek, 2005). Hek and Sales (2002) used thematic analysis to analyse the interviews in order to identify the common factors these children recognised as aiding their settlement in secondary school. The authors identified three broad themes which emerged from the data: the presence of specialist teachers who spoke their first language; support from friends and peer group, and a whole-school attitude to refugee children which allowed them to feel confident to identify themselves as refugees (Hek, 2005). Research commissioned by the National Children's Bureau, Appa (2005) also investigated a specific aspect of refugee children's experience of schooling: whether it was preferable to place school aged refugee children straight into mainstream classes with support, or to have separate intensive language classes within a mainstream school setting for a few weeks before entering classes. This research sought the views and experiences of school aged refugees regarding accessing education and involved interviewing children in 11 schools in the UK which covered four local authorities and included children from 26 different counties. These interviews, alongside interviews with parents, carers and school staff, led to a number of recommendations for the government, local authorities and schools regarding how best to support refugee children in schools including: encouraging the integration of refugee children; facilitating language acquisition and development, and enabling access to the school curriculum.

A significant strength of the last three pieces of research discussed above is that the findings and recommendations of the research emerged from data that was elicited directly from the refugee children themselves. However, these pieces of research all aimed to identify common themes that emerged across the groups of refugee pupils, parents and professionals that were interviewed. Given both the diverse backgrounds of the children who took part in these studies and the possibility that the views of the groups

interviewed (for example, parents, teachers and children) may differ in significant ways, a methodology that is grounded at the individual level and able to draw attention to both the similarities and differences between individual cases may have added additional insight to these studies. Furthermore, these studies did not investigate the reasons why individual refugee children identified specific factors as supporting them in school. Future research is needed which is grounded at the individual level and which investigates refugee children's explanations for the factors that they identify as supportive to them in school.

Many authors have stressed the wider role of schools in relation to refugees, for example in promoting social cohesion, community-based understanding and acceptance of refugees (Maegusuku-Hewett et al., 2007; McKenna, 2005; Reading & Robertson, 2006). Reading and Robertson (2006) argue that educational institutions:

“have the potential not only to facilitate the personal adaptation of individual students, but also play a key role in the harmonious integration of immigrant communities into the economic and social systems of the host society” (p.181)

Overall there is a limited amount of research which has investigated refugee children's educational experiences from the perspective of refugee children themselves. This has been noted in a number of publications (Hek & DfES, 2005; Pinson & Arnot, 2007; Rutter, 2006). Further research is needed which elicits the views of refugee children about their experience of education in the UK.

1.3.2. Transfer and adaptation to secondary school

This research is focused on the experience of refugee children as they start secondary school in the UK and begin to adapt to this setting. In this context the term 'transfer' is used to refer to the process of starting secondary school. Transferring into a secondary school from a primary school (or another setting) presents challenges and opportunities for all children. Research has shown that some groups of children may be at particular risk of experiencing

difficulty during and after transferring to secondary school. These include: children with learning difficulties; looked after children; children whose families have low socio-economic status; girls; pupils with prior behaviour problems; pupils with a history of low academic achievement, and children who are not supported by their family (Anderson, Jacobs, Schramm, & Splittgerber, 2000; Catterall, 1998). Characteristics of the individual child and features of their wider social context (including school based factors) work together to impact upon each individual child's experience of transferring into secondary school (Anderson et al., 2000). Research has also highlighted the additional challenges that secondary school may present refugee children in comparison to their peers. Reflecting on her experience of supporting refugee pupils in a UK school, Clarke (2003) notes that these children: may arrive at any point in the school year; have limited or non-existent English; have experienced no schooling or limited/interrupted schooling; have experienced a drop in their standard of living; have a family under significant stress and strain; be suffering from depression and PTSD; be living in poverty, and may face daily uncertainty about their future in the UK.

Secondary school may also present refugee children with more challenges than primary school. In research which involved interviews with refugee pupils, parents, carers and school staff in schools across four local authorities in the UK, Appa (2005) found that there was a marked difference between the experiences of refugee children in primary and secondary schools. Specifically refugee children experienced secondary schools as: less nurturing; having poorer staff-pupil relations, and as more complicated and daunting environments than primary schools. Rutter (2006) has claimed that secondary schools may be the educational context least able to meet the needs of refugee children.

The transfer into secondary school may also be considered from a developmental perspective. It is during this phase of education that children enter adolescence where the need for belonging, social acceptance and support become increasingly important (Goodenow, 1993). This phase of development is marked by a rise in the importance attached to relationships

with peers and an increase in peer influence, alongside a decline in the influence of family (Erikson, 1968). During adolescence young people begin the task of developing a stable identity and social comparison is a vital part of the identity formation process (Erikson, 1968). Adolescent refugee children entering secondary schools are negotiating these changes in the context of the specific additional challenges that starting secondary school may present to them. In all the experience of starting secondary school may be particularly challenging for refugee children and secondary schools may be less able to respond to the needs of these pupils than primary schools. Given the potential difficulty that starting a UK secondary school may present refugee children, it seems important to investigate further the experiences of refugee children as they transfer and adapt to this setting.

1.3.3. Sense of belonging in school

The need for social acceptance, interpersonal attachment and a sense of belonging have all been recognized as basic psychological needs throughout the lifespan (Anderman, 2002; Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier, & Ryan, 1991; Maslow, 1943; Osterman, 2000). Indeed Baumeister and Leary (1995) have argued that the need to belong is a fundamental human drive. Within the context of school this sense of belonging has been defined as:

“the extent to which students feel personally accepted, respected, included, and supported by others in the school social environment.”
(p.80) (Goodenow, 1993)

Wehlage, Rutter, Smith, Lesko, & Fernandez (1989) developed a theory of school membership based on their research with students at risk of disengaging from school. Specifically these researchers postulated that in order for the individual to have a sense of school membership they must be: attached to the school; committed to the school rules and demands; display active participation in school activities, and believe and trust in the school institution. As such a sense of belonging goes beyond simply enrolling in a school; it reflects the young person's sense of fitting in within the social context of school and involves the development of reciprocal social

relationships between the young person and others (Goodenow, 1993). The development of a sense of belonging is therefore influenced both by characteristics of the person and the school context (Goodenow, 1993). Wehlage et al., (1989) hypothesized that students who do not feel as if they 'fit in' at school, perceiving themselves as outside of the mainstream culture of the school or who experience social isolation, are liable to disengage from school and drop out. In contrast a high sense of school membership was predicted to be associated with a range of positive academic and social outcomes. Since this time quantitative research conducted predominantly in schools in America has consistently illustrated the relationship between the psychological experience of a sense of belonging in school and a range of positive academic, behavioural and psychological outcomes for adolescents. The research on this topic is extensive and a review of some of the relevant literature in this field is explored below.

Goodenow (1993) found that perceived sense of school belonging was positively correlated with school motivation and to a lesser extent with school grades and teacher-rated student effort. A positive relationship has also been found between a sense of belonging, self-reported educational aspirations and measures of internal locus of control (Hagborg, 1998). Research has identified school belonging as a potential protective factor in ensuring the academic achievement of children from minority ethnic backgrounds who are at risk of school underachievement and dropout. Finn and Rock (1997) investigated the relationship between belonging and attainment in 1803 students from ethnic minority backgrounds attending US schools. Students were divided into three groups: academically successful; poor academic performance, and school dropouts. The researchers found a positive correlation between academic success and a sense of school belonging. A strength of this study was that it measured and controlled for other variables which are known to have a positive impact on attainment in school, including: self-esteem; locus of control, and other significant background factors. In doing so the researchers were more able to confidently claim that it was specifically a sense of school belonging that supported the attainment of the academically successful ethnic minority students.

Perceived belonging in school may also act as a buffer against the development of mental health difficulties in adolescents (Anderman, 2002; Kia-Keating & Ellis, 2007). In a longitudinal study based on 8,653 adolescent students from 132 schools in the US, Anderman (2002) found that students' perceptions of belonging were inversely related to depression, social rejection and school problems. The protective role of school belonging in relation to mental health has also been observed in adolescent refugees. In a sample of 76 Somali adolescents who had resettled in the US, Kia-Keating and Ellis (2007) found that a higher sense of school membership was associated with better mental health outcomes regardless of levels of past exposure to adversity. These researchers concluded that investigating ways to improve the school experiences of refugee children would be a useful effort towards the development of school-based mental health programs for young refugees.

The wide range of quantitative research investigating the impact of school belonging has highlighted the importance of the psychology of the school environment on student attainment and wellbeing, and recent research by Kia-Keating and Ellis (2007) has indicated that the benefits of a sense of belonging in school also apply to refugee adolescents. Such research encourages school based practitioners to consider the role that the school culture or ethos has on the well-being, motivation and learning of pupils. At the same time there are some limitations to the studies discussed above which future research may seek to rectify; these are outlined below. Firstly these studies all relied on correlation between variables to highlight the relationship between school belonging and a range of positive outcomes. Since correlation does not imply causation it is possible that variables other than a sense of school belonging have led to the positive outcomes observed in these studies. However, there is some research evidence that appears to show that promoting environments which foster a sense of belonging amongst pupils *leads to* adaptive psychological and mental health outcomes and that it influences school behaviour and academic achievement indirectly through its impact on motivation (Anderman, 2002; Goodenow, 1993). Furthermore interventions which have reformed the psychological

environment of schools with a view to increasing students' sense of belonging, have proved effective at increasing the motivation of adolescent students (Anderman, Maehr, & Midgley, 1999).

A stronger criticism of these studies is that they either did not include refugee children in their sample, thereby making generalising these findings to groups of adolescent refugee children questionable, or in the case of Kia-Keating and Ellis' (2007) study, they used instruments that have not been standardized on refugee populations and which have often not been standardized on the participants' ethnic group. The validity of these instruments for this group of young people is questionable and this renders tentative the conclusions drawn from studies using these measures. Furthermore, the research discussed above has been conducted in US school settings. It may be that the reported relationships are unique to the US school context. Therefore, further research is needed which investigates the experience and impact of a sense of school belonging for refugee pupils in UK secondary schools using culturally sensitive methods.

A limited amount of research exists which has used qualitative methodologies to investigate the meaning and experience of school belonging for refugee children. Via observations and focus groups, Oikonomidou (2007) investigated the ways in which seven female Somali refugees actively constructed their identities and increased their participation and belonging in their urban US high school. This research highlighted the role of language and religion in the construction of their identities in school. For example, participants spoke of the way in which their pronunciation of English words marked them out as different to other pupils in the school. This research drew attention to the practical strategies these young women adopted to increase their participation in school life. For example, they spoke of how they worked hard to eradicate their accents to avoid being seen as different to their peers. Oikonomidou's research emphasizes the resilience and resourcefulness of this group of young people and as such it challenges the perception of the passive refugee. Notably the ways in which these young women sought to increase their acceptance and belonging in school were

very similar. It is possible that the focus group methodology discouraged differences of opinion between the participants and it may be interesting to see if a greater diversity of strategies would have been identified had they been interviewed individually. Future research which takes place in UK schools, interviews participants individually, takes place in different school environments and recruits different groups of refugee children (for example different countries of origin, different gender) would add further insight into the experience of belonging for refugee children in UK schools.

Appa (2005) interviewed refugee children in schools across 11 local authorities in the UK. Data from these interviews indicated that refugee children in secondary schools experienced a greater pressure to 'fit in' to school as quickly as possible by making friends and starting to feel a part of the school, compared to primary aged refugee children. It may be that secondary aged refugee pupils experience a greater desire to develop a sense of belonging in school, and attach a greater importance to this aspect of their school life. At the same time they experience significant challenges to 'fitting in' which may be greater than those experienced at primary level. For example: they have arrived late in the school process when friendships and friendship groups are already well established; they may not be able to speak the same language as their peers and the complexity of the language spoken by peers and in the classroom may be greater than at primary level (for example in terms of the range of vocabulary used), and the secondary school environment is bigger and more difficult to familiarize yourself with than primary schools.

Overall the literature review highlights that there is a dearth of published research investigating the experience of a sense of belonging for refugee children in UK secondary schools. Given the emergence of data which seems to indicate that refugee children attach importance to fitting in at school, that a sense of belonging in school can have a significant impact on the well-being of refugee children and in light of studies which indicate that belonging in school may present refugee children with additional challenges, further research is needed to investigate the ways in which refugee children

experience and facilitate their sense of belonging in UK schools. Research of this kind may also add further insight into the wider role of school for refugee children, for example in relation to re-establishing the sense of home discussed earlier in this chapter.

1.3.4. The role of language

For refugee children in the UK whose first language is not English, learning English as a second or third language is a powerful factor in their ability to adjust to the social and academic aspects of schooling (Cole, 1998; Oikonomidou, 2007). It impacts upon the way in which refugee children come to construct their identity in this new context and begin to adjust to life in the UK (Oikonomidou, 2007). Notably research has also shown that developing fluency in English greatly improves the attainment of bilingual pupils⁴ (Demie & Strand, 2006; Ofsted, 1999). In consequence the Office for Standards in Education (1999) recommends that teaching pupils to become literate in English should be given the highest priority in schools. At the same time a large body of research has shown that schools which value and support the use of the child's first language have a positive impact on their learning (including English language learning) and attainment (Appa, 2005; Cummins, 2000; Hall, Griffiths, Haslam, & Wilkin, 2001). Overall research shows that it is important that children learning English as an additional language are supported to use and develop their first language and English within the school context.

A wide range of individual and contextual factors have an impact on children's ability and motivation to learn English as an additional language. Norton (2000) has offered the term 'investment' to describe the way in which immigrants engage in language learning. From this perspective, learning English is seen as a choice made by the immigrant based upon an analysis of the potential benefits this may provide. The young refugee women in Oikonomidou's (2007) research did indeed adopt this attitude to learning

⁴ Where fluency refers to all areas of English language development: speaking; listening; writing; and reading (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, 2000)

English. Specifically, data from interviews with the participants showed that they invested in English language learning because they considered this necessary in order to gain acceptance from their peers. With reference to learning English as an additional language in school, Cole (1998) has highlighted the inter-relationship between a student's second language learning and their overall adjustment to school, as indicated by a sense of belonging, motivation to learn and high self-esteem. From this perspective, the decision whether or not to invest in learning English as an additional language may be impacted by and impact upon refugee pupils' sense of belonging in school.

In the UK, research with primary school children learning English as an additional language has found that children are often reluctant to use their first language in school (Pagett, 2006). Pagett postulates that this may be because using their home language marks them out as different to their peers and this is undesirable for them. Research with Bosnian female refugees in US schools validates this claim (Clark, E, 2007). These young women described how they had made a conscious decision to downplay their Bosnian language in school in order to fit in. It is possible that the desire to develop a sense of belonging in school has an impact upon refugee pupils' language use in the school context and vice versa. Morrison, Cosden, O'Farrell, & Campos (2003) investigated the relationship between a sense of belonging in school and the language emphasis of schooling in fourth and sixth grade Latino students in US schools. Their research found that, in schools where lessons were taught in English, and where the school emphasized the importance of developing English language skills, children in the fourth grade who were acquiring English as an additional language experienced a decline in their sense of school belonging during their grade four year, whilst their Latino peers who were proficient English speakers did not. This indicates that a mismatch between the language proficiency of the student and the language emphasis of the school may have a negative impact on school belonging. However, this relationship was not observed in sixth grade students learning English as an additional language. By the sixth grade, the quality of their relationship with peers and teachers had the biggest

impact on the pupils' sense of belonging. From these findings, Morrison et al., (2003) concluded that the relationship between a sense of belonging in school, language use and identity was a complex one which may change developmentally. Notably this research was conducted with a sample of Latino pupils who represented the largest ethnic group in their schools. This is a very different situation to that experienced by most refugee children in UK schools, who are in the minority and in some cases may be the only person who speaks their first language in their school. It is possible that the relationship between a sense of belonging in school and language may differ for this group of young people.

Whilst research specifically investigating the impact of language on refugee adolescents' experience of secondary school in the UK has not emerged during my literature review, an overlapping body of literature exists which has investigated bilingual pupils (some of whom are likely to be refugees) experience of first language use in UK schools (Mehmedbegovic, 2007). This research has indicated that rather than view bilingualism as a social, economic *and* cognitive asset, many bilingual adolescents in London schools attribute little value to languages other than English (Mehmedbegovic, 2007). Given the impact of language on educational attainment and the overall adjustment of refugee children, the role of language in the experience of refugee pupils appears to be an area that warrants investigation in future research.

1.4. Key theoretical frameworks

The literature discussed above helps to place the current study in the context of existing knowledge in the field. During this literature review several psychological theories that appeared relevant to the current study emerged; three of these seemed particularly pertinent to the current study and they are discussed below.

1.4.1. Attachment theory

The first theory that provides a useful framework to understand the current research is attachment theory. Bowlby (1982) used the term attachment to refer to the nature of the relationship that young infants develop with their primary caregiver. He proposed that the development of a predictable, stable, secure attachment enables infants to explore the world around them fully and to go on to form healthy secure relationships with additional attachment figures. The potential negative consequences of broken or non-secure attachment relationships have since been well documented (Bomer, 2007; Gerhardt, 2004)

This theory seems relevant to the experience of refugee children during their transfer and settlement into secondary schools. Firstly, it is likely that many refugee children have experienced the loss of people with whom they were attached, either through death or simply because they left them behind when they moved to the UK. Some refugee children may have lost their primary attachment figure. This model offers a way of understanding the impact that a broken or changing attachment could have on refugee children. In addition Bowlby (1982) notes that during adolescence attachment behaviour becomes increasingly directed towards groups and institutions other than the family. For Bowlby (1982):

“A school, or college, a work group, a religious or a political group can come to constitute for many people a subordinate attachment-‘figure’, and for some people a principal attachment-‘figure’. In such cases, it seems probable, that the development of attachment to a group is mediated, at least initially, by attachment to a person holding a prominent position within that group” (p.207)

For adolescent refugees who have experienced disrupted attachments, it is possible that school may provide an opportunity to develop additional attachment-based relationships. These may include attachments to: the school as an institution; groups of peers; prominent individuals such as teachers or group leaders. This theory may offer a way of understanding the developing social relationships of refugee adolescents in school.

1.4.2. The process of acculturation

The theory of acculturation offers a way of conceptualising the impact of confronting a new culture on refugee children. Acculturation is a term used to describe the changes that groups and individuals experience as a result of contact with another culture (Berry, 1991; Berry, Kim, Minde, & Mok, 1987; Williams & Berry, 1991). Most changes occur within the non-dominant group, in this case the refugee child (Berry, 1991; Berry et al., 1987). This model suggests that the process and outcome of acculturation is determined both by individual factors and the context in which the refugee child must acculturate. During this process the individual must consider how important it is to maintain their own cultural identity, alongside assessing the value of maintaining a relationship with the dominant cultural group (Berry, 1991). It is argued that these judgements will determine the type of acculturation the individual will experience, which could be integration, assimilation, separation or marginalisation (Berry, 1991).

School is the main place where refugee children learn about the culture of the host country and where they develop their sense of identity in relation to the new context in which they find themselves (Oikonomidou, 2007; Wilkinson, 2002). As such a significant part of the acculturation process will take place in school (Tricket & Birman, 2005). School is also the primary place where children from the UK develop relationships with refugee peers. In reference to refugee youths in Canada, Wilkinson (2002) has argued that the integration of refugee children in schools is a reflection of how well refugees are integrating into wider society.

This theory draws attention to the role of the acculturation process in the refugee child's experience, including their experience of school. It emphasises the impact of individual and contextual factors on this process. From this perspective, school-based systemic factors impact upon the process and outcome of acculturation, including the amount of stress this process causes the individual (Hamilton et al., 2004; Williams & Berry, 1991).

1.4.3. Ecological Framework

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) model of human ecology emphasises the influence of the environment or context on child development. He defined the ecology of human development as:

“the scientific study of the progressive, mutual accommodation . . . between an active, growing human being and the changing properties of the immediate settings in which the developing person lives, as this process is affected by the relations between these settings, and by the larger contexts in which the settings are embedded.” (p.107)

From this perspective, the individual is seen as being actively engaged with their wider environment or context (Hamilton et al., 2004). Individuals both influence the context in which they live and are influenced by aspects of that same context. As such, characteristics of the individual will impact upon his/her experience of the transfer and adaptation to secondary school. For example, the individual's past experiences, age, gender and personal beliefs will all impact upon the relationship to the context in which he/she lives and the experiences had. At the same time, the individual's wider context will have an impact on his/her experiences. Notably this wider context refers both to features of the individual's immediate environment such as the family context, social resources (such as schools, peers, community groups), as well as to wider environmental factors such as cultural beliefs, political ideologies and dominant social attitudes.

The ecological model places the refugee child's experience into a wider environmental context and draws attention to the individual and environmental factors that can support children to overcome adversity. It encourages an approach to conducting research which is able to investigate the impact of individual factors, alongside features of the wider context and environment that interact to determine the nature of the individual's lived experience. Rutter (2006) has advocated using this model as a way of countering the tendency to homogenise refugee children and as a way to address each child's needs in the context of the wider systems in which they live.

From an ecological perspective the term 'resilient' has been used to describe individuals who resemble their peers on measures of risk or adversity, but who demonstrate positive or healthy outcomes in spite of this adversity (Masten & Powell 2003; Ungar, 2004). Literature on resilience has documented a wide range of ecological factors that correlate with healthy functioning in high-risk children, for example achieving academic success in school (Gilligan, 2007; Jackson & Martin, 1998; Ungar, 2004). However, Ungar (2004; 2008) has argued that the ecological approach to understanding resilience fails to account for the contextual and cultural specificity of resilience promoting factors and of how different people or cultures construct so called 'healthy outcomes' differently. He offers an alternative constructionist approach to understanding resilience which takes into account the individual's construction of the factors that have helped them, within their particular environment, to define themselves as succeeding in spite of adversity. This constructionist approach to resilience may offer a culturally and contextually sensitive framework from which to understand the experiences of refugees, including the factors that they identify as having helped and hindered them during their transfer into secondary school.

1.5. Rationale for the research

The rationale for conducting this research has been touched upon throughout this chapter and two specific reasons are given below. The chapter ends by outlining the way in which this research will contribute to existing knowledge and professional practice.

1. The voice of the refugee child is under-represented in existing research

Studies related to the well-being of refugee children tend to be quantitative, drawing on tools which have been constructed based on a western notion of child development. These may not be applicable to children from other cultures and for those whose childhoods have involved experiences outside of the western construction of a 'normal' childhood (Boyden & Hart, 2007; Sporton et al., 2006). With regard to education specifically, there is a volume of literature related to the education of refugees. However, this research is

dominated by practitioner discourse that attempts to examine the effectiveness of existing policy and practice, and to define good practice for supporting and educating refugee children in UK schools (Pinson & Arnot, 2007; Rutter, 2003b, 2006). There is a limited amount of research which has investigated refugee children's educational experiences from the perspective of refugee children themselves. This has been noted in a number of publications (Hek & DfES, 2005; Pinson & Arnot, 2007; Rutter, 2003b, 2006). Further research is needed which elicits refugee children's views about their education in the UK. By collecting data direct from refugee children this research will contribute towards empowering them to have their perspective heard by practitioners and policy makers. It is hoped that this research will enable practice to be further informed by the experiences of refugee children themselves.

2. The agency and resilience of refugee children is underrepresented in existing research

Research surrounding refugee children often emphasises the pre- and post-migration risks, the inherent vulnerability of this group and the discriminatory practices that these children face in the UK. Whilst there is clearly a place for research of this kind, it reinforces a view of refugees as damaged, in need and discriminated against. This encourages the notion that these young people are victims who are incapable of political and social agency (Maegusuku-Hewett et al., 2007). There is a need for research which investigates the protective processes and agency of refugee children. By investigating the individual and contextual factors that work to support refugee children in secondary schools this research aims to contribute towards addressing this gap in current literature.

1.6. Contribution to professional practice

It is hoped that, by exploring the experience of refugee children during their transfer and adaptation to secondary school, it will be possible to identify

contextual and individual factors that support refugee children during this process. In addition this research will highlight the factors that may present a challenge to refugee children during and after they transfer to secondary school. Together this information can be used to inform policy and practice in schools aimed at supporting refugee children during their transfer and adaptation to secondary school.

An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis approach will be used in this research in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the experience of transferring and adapting to secondary school in the UK for a group of young refugees. This methodology involves a detailed exploration of the personal accounts of individual participants. This will give insight into the experiences of this population. This may help practitioners within and outside of education to better understand the refugee children with whom they work and to improve their practice based on this understanding. The next chapter discusses this methodology.

2. Methodology

This chapter outlines the research design and methodology. It considers why a qualitative methodology was chosen and in particular Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). The ethical considerations made throughout this research are detailed along with issues related to the validity and reliability of this study. Details of the participants are provided and the chapter ends with a description of the research procedure.

2.1. Design

The research used a qualitative design, it was idiographic and the approach adopted was Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. Semi-structured interviews were completed with participants. These aimed to elicit individual refugee children's accounts of their experience of transferring into a UK secondary school.

2.1.1. The researcher's epistemological position

This research adopted a phenomenological perspective and is informed by hermeneutic inquiry (Smith & Eatough, 2006). From a phenomenological perspective I am interested in the experiential claims of the participants and understand these to reflect their internal beliefs and psychological constructs. I also assume that what respondents say during interviews has some ongoing significance and reality for them, and that this reality exists outside of the interview situation (Smith, 1995; 2007). Contemporary hermeneutics emphasise our role in interpreting and making sense out of the world around us (Smith & Eatough, 2006). This research accepts that meanings are negotiated within a social context and during the interview process (Smith, 1995). In consequence it is acknowledged that the meanings attributed to each participant's verbal account of his/her experiences is jointly constructed by the participant and the researcher (Larkin, Watts, & Clifton, 2006). Since this epistemological position allowed a consideration of the contextual and cultural factors that may impact upon how refugee children experience their

transfer into secondary school, this was considered a culturally sensitive research approach.

2.1.2. Rationale for using a qualitative methodology

A detailed idiographic, qualitative research methodology was selected. Given that I was interested in gaining an in-depth understanding of individual refugee children's experience of their transfer into secondary school this methodology seemed the most appropriate, since qualitative research aims to investigate in depth the social experiences of individuals and the meanings they attach to these (Willig, 2001). This was considered preferable to quantitative methodologies which more often employ a limited number of measures to investigate factors or relationships between specific variables observed in large numbers of people (Yardley, 2000). In addition, to date most studies into the experiences of refugee children employ quantitative methodologies which draw upon western models of childhood and development (Maegusuku-Hewett et al., 2007). These may not be appropriate for children from other cultures. I considered that adopting a qualitative methodology would facilitate a culturally sensitive approach to data collection and would contribute towards addressing the lack of research of this kind.

Semi-structured interviews were considered the most appropriate means of data collection since this method enabled me to gain a detailed picture of each participant's beliefs about the topic under investigation, whilst at the same time allowing me to follow up unforeseen areas of discussion that emerged during the interview (Smith, 1995). For these reasons structured questionnaires or interviews were considered to be too constraining a method for this study.

2.1.3. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

An IPA approach was used in this research. IPA is concerned with the detailed exploration of participants' personal accounts of a particular lived experience and how they make sense of that experience to such an extent that the researcher gains, as far as possible, an insider's perspective of this

experience (Larkin et al., 2006; Smith, 2004, 1996; Smith & Dunworth, 2003; Smith & Eatough, 2006). This approach is idiographic because it emphasises the importance of studying individual accounts of specific experiences (Larkin et al., 2006; Smith & Dunworth, 2003). Later the researcher engages in an interpretative process beginning with a detailed analysis of each individual's account of their experiences and later placing this analysis in relation to other participants' accounts and in a wider social, cultural and theoretical context (Larkin et al., 2006; Smith & Osborn, 2003).

When using IPA it is acknowledged that the researcher's access to the participant's experience is partial and complex since the participant's account of that experience is jointly constructed by the participant and researcher through the research process (Larkin et al., 2006; Smith, 1996). The process of interpretation by the researcher is both influenced by and dependent upon the researcher's own experiences and preconceptions (Smith, 1996, 2007; Smith, Jarman, & Osborn, 1999; Smith & Osborn, 2003). In order to get as close to the participant's world view as possible the researcher is encouraged to continually reflect upon the influence that his/her own preconceptions may have on the research process (Smith, 2007). As such I strove to adopt a reflective stance throughout this research. This reflective stance is illustrated in a statement of my perspectives and preconceptions prior to the onset of the research (provided later in the methodology section). It is presented throughout the write up of this study and in the reflective research diary which I completed throughout the research process (see appendix 9).

2.1.4. Rationale for using IPA

This research aimed to investigate the experience of refugee children during their transfer into secondary school. Given this aim, IPA was considered the most appropriate approach. The idiographic nature of research adopting an IPA approach enabled me to be sensitive to the diversity of experiences and cultural backgrounds of each participant, whilst at the same time allowing commonalities between accounts to be acknowledged. The reflective nature of IPA also enabled me to openly reflect upon my impact on the research

process. Furthermore Smith (2004) argues that the detailed, rich account of individual experiences that IPA provides enables the reader to think about how they themselves might respond to the experiences that the participant describes. In doing so the reader is helped to recognise how much they share with the participant who, on the surface, may appear very different from them. I considered that this feature of IPA may be a particular strength when researching groups of individuals who have been constructed in a negative way by wider society, which is arguably the case for refugee individuals in the UK today⁵ (Giner, 2007; Reading & Robertson, 2006; Sporton et al., 2006). I hoped that this research would bring the reader closer to understanding and relating to the experiences of refugee children.

2.1.5. Limitations of IPA

In research using an IPA approach participants attempt to communicate the nature of their experiences to the researcher via language. This rests on the assumption that language reflects an objective reality and as such this approach has been criticized for under-emphasising the constructive role of language. For example, it can be argued that the words participants use to describe the nature of their experiences provide a construction of reality rather than a description of reality (Willig, 2001). From this perspective direct access to another person's experiences via language is not possible and therefore the interview transcript merely tells us how the individual talks about their experience within a particular context, rather than about the experience itself (Willig, 2001). Alternatively it could be that language precedes and therefore shapes our experiences (Willig, 2001). IPA also relies on participants providing rich linguistic accounts of their experiences. The ability of participants to provide such accounts had to be carefully considered when conducting research with children for whom English is an additional language.

Phenomenological research focuses on understanding how the world is experienced by participants to the extent that research provides a glimpse at what it would be like to be the participant living through the particular

⁵ This was explored in chapter one

experience under investigation. However, it can be argued that this focus on the moment, the experience itself, neglects a consideration of the conditions that gave rise to the experience without which we cannot fully understand the experience itself (Willig, 2001).

2.1.6. Using an IPA approach with refugee children

Given that access to participants' experiences is dependent on their ability to articulate these, recruiting participants with strong linguistic abilities could be seen as a prerequisite for research of this kind (Smith, 2004). Indeed most published research using IPA has recruited English speaking adults (Smith, 2004). In addition when working with children, including those who have English as an additional language, questions may need to be more structured and less open than is generally the case in research using IPA (Smith, 2004). However, Smith and Dunworth (2003) argue that although children's accounts of their experiences and the meanings they attach to them may not be as detailed as those of adults they may nonetheless help the researcher to get closer to understanding their world view, and it is up to the researcher to adapt their mode of communication to enable participants to give as full a response as possible. In fact there is a growing body of published IPA research that has recruited child participants, including young children and those with special educational needs, for example Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (Smith & Dunworth, 2003). Research guidelines for conducting research using IPA with children have emerged and I observed these throughout this study (Smith & Dunworth, 2003). Smith (2004) suggests that considering whether to conduct research using IPA with groups such as children may come down to a cost-benefit analysis. I considered that the challenges of using IPA with refugee children were outweighed by the potential benefits that this research could offer; specifically that this study would provide insight into the experiences of a group whose personal perspectives in this research area have largely been unexplored.

2.1.7. Consideration of other approaches

Given the limitations of using IPA other qualitative methodologies were considered, three of these are outlined below. The reasons why these methodologies were deemed unsuitable are also stated.

Grounded Theory attempts to identify and explain particular social processes in context (Willig, 2001). It aims to develop theories that account for the social phenomena under investigation. In grounded theory the individual is one of many, and analysis is focused on moving to a group level rather than remaining at the individual level. In contrast IPA is interested in investigating the psychological essence of individual lived experiences (Smith & Dunworth, 2003). As such IPA is particularly suited to psychological studies since it returns research to the natural area of interest for the psychologist: the personal perspectives and experiences of the individual (Larkin et al., 2006). Given that this research was interested in the individual experiences of refugee children, the person-focused nature of IPA was considered more compatible with the research question. Furthermore, whilst researchers using grounded theory will place the broad themes identified across all accounts in relation to wider social, cultural and theoretical contexts, interpretative analysis of individual accounts using IPA is also able to discuss individual accounts in relation to these wider contexts (Smith & Osborn, 2003). This interpretative work may involve relating the participant's story to existing theories and literature in the field. As such the individual account is understood in relation to existing theories and literature, building upon existing psychological knowledge.

A second qualitative approach that was considered for this research was discourse analysis. Whilst IPA and discourse analysis share an engagement with the importance of context and language, IPA researchers would differ from discourse analysts in their perception of the relationship between language and cognition (Smith et al., 1999). Specifically, discourse analysts consider language to be a construction of reality, they do not consider that verbal reports can be mapped onto underlying cognitions and they question the stability of cognitions over time (Smith et al., 1999; Willig, 2003). In

contrast, research using IPA is specifically concerned with cognitions, that is the meanings or beliefs individuals attach to their experiences (Smith et al., 1999). Researchers using IPA consider that by engaging in an analytic process with verbal transcripts it is possible to say something about what the individual is thinking (Smith et al., 1999). Whilst it is acknowledged that a range of different approaches to discourse analysis exist, for example interpretative and critical discourse analysis, they remain united in their emphasis of the significant impact of language and its role in shaping our experiences (Burman & Parker, 1993). As such the assumptions on which discourse analysis rests are incompatible with the epistemological perspective I adopted in this study: specifically that language reflects the individual's underlying cognitions. Furthermore, given that the participants were interviewed in English, which they were all learning as an additional language, their ability to select the words they would use to describe their experiences was somewhat restricted. Therefore discourse analysis was not seen as the most appropriate methodology to use with this population.

Finally narrative approaches were considered. Whilst there are a range of different approaches to narrative research, all narrative researchers have in common their interest in investigating individuals' oral or written accounts of a particular event, experience or indeed of their entire life history (Andrews, Squire & Tamboukou, 2008; Chase, 2005). One approach to narrative research is narrative inquiry (Chase, 2005). There are many similarities between IPA and narrative inquiry. Both methodologies privilege the individual's narrative of their lived experience, consider it vital to investigate experiences that are important to the participant, acknowledge that narratives can express emotions, thoughts and individuals' interpretations of events, and recognise the impact of the researcher on the research process. However, unlike IPA researchers, many narrative researchers consider the context in which the individual tells their narrative to have a huge impact on the nature of the story they choose to tell, with individuals adapting their story according to the audience and purpose of their narrative (Chase, 2005). This is in contrast to the assumptions that underpin this research, which are in line with an IPA approach; specifically that what participants say during interviews has

some ongoing significance and reality for them which exists outside of the interview situation and is stable overtime. Furthermore, when it comes to interpreting narratives, narrative researchers focus on the individual voices within each participant's narrative, rather than on distinct themes within a narrative and across different peoples' accounts of the same event or experience (Chase, 2005). Whilst the starting point for IPA researchers is the analysis of individual accounts of a particular lived experience, they always attempt to identify themes within each individual's account and in most instances they go on to look for the existence of these themes in other peoples' accounts of the same experience. I considered that adopting an IPA approach in this research would enable me to both explore the individual narratives of lived experiences, as well as commonalities and differences across individuals' accounts of the same experience. I considered this second feature of IPA to reflect an advantage of using IPA rather than a narrative approach in this research.

2.2. Ethical Considerations

Prior to and during this research, I carefully attended to ethical issues the study raised. There have been many assumptions made about the potential risk of letting traumatised individuals participate in research and this has sometimes been used to justify arguments against conducting research with refugee children who may have experienced some degree of trauma (Dryregrov, Dryregrov & Raundalen, 2000). Yet studies have indicated that allowing refugee children to participate in research may have a positive rather than negative impact on them (Dryregrov et al., 2000). Key ethical considerations attended to throughout this research are outlined below.

2.2.1. Ethical Approval

Ethical approval was received from the Institute of Education Ethical Panel (see appendix 1) and from the Research Governance Ethics Committee in the local authority where the researcher was employed and where this research took place (see appendix 2). This approval was received prior to the onset of the study.

2.2.2. Confidentiality

Confidentiality was maintained in line with the data protection act (1998). Potential participants and their parents/carers were identified, approached and given information about the research by a member of staff from their child's school. I did not have access to any of the personal details of participants.

The data was collected on a digital recording device, transcribed by the researcher who then deleted the digital recording. All participants were given a culturally appropriate pseudonym and any features of the transcript which could identify the individual participant were omitted or made anonymous. The transcript data was saved on a password protected computer. Following my analysis of the transcripts they were stored in a locked cupboard in the local authority offices where I was employed.

Information regarding the confidential nature of the research was outlined on the information sheet sent to parents/carers (see appendix 4) and children (see appendix 7). A member of staff from the participating school discussed information regarding confidentiality with parents/carers and children prior to the interview and where necessary this was in the parent/carer's first language. At the start of each interview I also outlined the confidential nature of the interview, along with conditions under which confidentiality would be broken⁶.

2.2.3. Informed consent

The following procedures were followed which together ensured that the participants and their parents/carers were able to give their fully informed consent to take part in this study.

⁶ Specifically if what they said made me think that they or someone else could be at risk of harm

An information sheet about the research was sent to parents/carers (see appendix 4) along with a covering letter from the school. The information sheet was translated into the parents/carer's first language where necessary (see appendix 5 for Somali version and appendix 6 for Turkish version). An information sheet was given to all potential participants (see appendix 7). Both sets of information sheets contained all the relevant information about the study necessary for the parents/carers and children to give their informed consent. This information included the process of data collection and storage, information on confidentiality and freedom to withdraw at any time. The information sheets also offered potential participants and parents/carers the opportunity to speak to me before agreeing to participate. One potential participant took up this offer.

After receiving the information sheets all parents/carers were telephoned by a member of staff from the participating school. This staff member was familiar with the research and was able to discuss the study with the parents/carers, answering any questions they had. Where necessary the staff member spoke in the parents/carer's first language. The same member of staff arranged a time to discuss the research with each potential participant in school on an individual basis.

Following this process written consent was obtained from all parents/carers of participating children and verbal consent was obtained from all participants.

2.2.4. Debriefing

I was mindful that the interview may cover sensitive topics and of the potential emotional impact it may have on participants (Rutter, 2003). In consequence the following procedures were employed:

- I remained sensitive to the emotional affect of each participant throughout the interview;
- I informed participants that a teaching assistant (someone they knew) was available during and after their interview should they wish to talk to him;

- The interview ended with a question about how the participant had found the research experience. This provided the opportunity for participants to highlight any negative feelings they were experiencing;
- I thanked every participant for taking part and explained what would happen next;
- I sent a letter to each participant following the interview (see appendix 10). This provided information about who to contact should they wish to discuss any aspect of the research further.

2.3. *Validity and Quality Assurance*

There are well established criteria for judging the quality of research using quantitative methodologies and these criteria are sometimes applied to qualitative methodologies (Yardley, 2000). Yet qualitative methodologies attempt to answer research questions in different ways to quantitative methodologies and as such it has been argued that qualitative methodologies warrant a different set of criteria from which to judge the excellence of the research (Elliott, Fischer, & Rennie, 1999; Yardley, 2000). In consequence guidelines to review qualitative research have emerged (Elliott et al., 1999; Yardley, 2000). These guidelines were considered throughout this research and some of the key criteria outlined in this guidance are discussed below.

2.3.1. The researcher's perspective

I recognise that my own theoretical orientations and personal perspective have an impact on the research process, including the process of interpretation. Some of these key orientations and perspectives are outlined below. Elliot et al., (1999) suggest that by providing this information the researcher allows the reader to interpret the researcher's data and to consider possible alternatives to the interpretations and conclusions drawn.

I am a 27 year old white female working as a trainee Educational Psychologist. Through my training and general awareness of the experiences of refugee children in the UK today, I had a pre-existing interest in the

experience of refugee children in the UK and specifically in the capacity of schools to support the needs of this population. I have an interest in the field of Community Psychology and a belief in the value of interventions that are informed by community based needs (Webster & Robertson, 2007).

As a clinician who works with a diverse range of children I was aware of the impact of the clinician, or in this case researcher, on the nature of the stories that children chose to share. In addition I was aware of the differences between me and the research participants. I considered it important to reflect upon the potential impact (both negative and positive) that such differences could incur throughout the research process. I felt that my clinical training and professional experiences enabled me to develop a high degree of empathy with the participants, which is important when conducting research using IPA. A method like IPA which encourages and supports a high degree of reflective practice in the research process fitted well with my current practice and beliefs regarding my impact on the research.

As a trainee Educational Psychologist I consider that my primary role is to work with children and families to stimulate helpful change. I came to this research with a belief in the therapeutic value of 'telling your story' and having this carefully attended to and reinforced by an empathic listener (Melzak, 2000; Papadopoulos, 2002). The value for refugees of having someone bear witness to their story has been highlighted in other research (Griffiths, 2002; Lustig, Weine, Saxe, & Beardslee, 2004; Papadopoulos, 2002). As such I considered that engaging in semi-structured interviews with participants may allow the research interview to serve a therapeutic as well as research function. This fitted well with my views regarding my role as a trainee Educational Psychologist which was primarily to provide therapeutic interventions for children.

2.3.2. Reflexivity

Given that I acknowledge my role in co-constructing and interpreting the participants' stories, it was important that I openly reflected upon this

throughout the research process (Yardley, 2000). A reflective approach to the research was facilitated by openly acknowledging my motivations to undertake the research and personal factors that I considered important in the context of this research (see 'the researcher's perspective'). I also completed a reflective research diary throughout the study (see appendix 9).

2.3.3. Ecological validity

Research with high ecological validity is conducted in a setting that is natural to the participant. The research was conducted in the participants' own school, this ensured the research was ecologically valid.

2.3.4. Coherence and credibility

Yardley (2000) suggests that one way in which coherence can be assessed in qualitative research is in terms of the 'fit' between the research question and the philosophical and methodological perspective and approaches adopted. By providing a detailed outline of the methodologies employed and the rationale for adopting these approaches I aim to allow the reader to assess this degree of 'fit'.

In addition Elliot et al., (1999) suggest that qualitative research can be considered to be coherent when there is a clear relationship between the data and the researcher's understanding of that data, which is reflected in the research report via a clear data-based narrative. In consequence I have provided extracts from the data in chapter three to illustrate and justify the interpretations made. In addition extracts from a participant's transcript are currently included in appendix 11. Details of the analysis of this transcript following the stages of analysis outlined at the end of this chapter can be found in appendices 12 to 14. The reader can use these to contribute towards their judgement of the coherence of the narrative reflected in this research report.

2.3.5. Transparency

This research followed the guidance offered by Smith and Dunworth (2003) who suggest that researchers using IPA carefully map the process of data gathering and analysis in such a way that someone not involved in the research could follow the chain of evidence that led to the final report. By ensuring transparency in the presentation of the analysis and interpretation of data the credibility of the conclusions I arrived at can be judged by the reader. In addition I employed an independent researcher to audit the file material to consider whether the final report was credible in terms of the data collection and that a logical progression ran through the chain of evidence.

2.3.6. Situating the sample

Elliot et al., (1999) suggest that by describing the participants and their life circumstances in some detail the reader is able to assess the relevance and applicability of the findings to other groups. In line with this recommendation the context in which this research took place and descriptions of participants are included later in this chapter.

2.4. *Participants*

2.4.1. Sampling

The idiographic nature of IPA means that there is no requirement for a large sample (Smith, 2004; Smith & Eatough, 2006; Smith & Osborn, 2003). Generally research using IPA involves between six and eight participants, although research has been published using as few as one participant and as many as fifteen (Smith, 2004; Smith & Eatough, 2006; Smith & Osborn, 2003). For the purpose of this study, six participants were recruited from an all-boys' secondary school in an inner city locality. Purposeful sampling methods were used to recruit participants from this school; this involved strategically and purposefully selecting information-rich cases for the research (Patton, 2002). In addition I was mindful to use the purposeful sampling method to recruit as homogeneous a sample as possible. Homogeneity is

important because research using IPA aims to provide insight into a particular experience that a group of individuals share and for whom the research question will be most relevant and significant; the more homogenous the group the greater their shared experience is likely to be (Smith & Eatough, 2006; Smith & Osborn, 2003).

2.4.2. Inclusion criteria

The following were used as criteria to include participants:

- Refugee status had been disclosed to school and this was formally recorded in school records;
- Experienced transferring into a secondary school in the UK;
- According to school records they had attained at least QCA level 3 in English speaking and listening (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, 2000);
- Aged between 12 and 16;
- Attended or had attended the all-boys' secondary school where the research took place.

2.4.3. Context

The study took place in a non-selective, non-denominational community school for boys aged 11 to 16. The school was situated in an inner city locality with high rates of poverty and deprivation; in 2007 the number of pupils eligible for free school meals (which are based on low family income) was five times the national average. This is an ethnically and linguistically diverse school; approximately 80% of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and around 60% of pupils speak English as an additional language. The school was judged as satisfactory by Ofsted in 2007.

When pupils are admitted into this school their parents/carers are supported to complete an admission form by a member of school staff. This form includes a question about the immigration status of the family. Whilst parents are asked to disclose their immigration status at this point, they are able to decline to answer this question and if they provide an answer, this is not

checked against any formal records. Out of the 660 pupils on roll in the academic year 2007-2008, three pupils were identified in school records as asylum seekers and 15 as refugees. However the nature of the way in which immigration status is disclosed and recorded in this school means that this is likely to be an underestimate of the number of refugee or asylum seeking children on roll. Discussion with the Head of the Learning Support Unit and a Teaching Assistant (TA) (whose role involved supporting children learning English as an additional language) indicated that there were several children known to them to be refugees or asylum seekers whose parents had not disclosed this to the school and therefore who were not included in school statistics. In line with guidance from the local authority who commissioned this research, it was not possible to recruit participants known to the school to be refugees whose status had not been formally recorded on their school records.

2.4.4. Recruitment

Following ethical approval from the Institute of Education Ethics Committee (see appendix 1) telephone contact was made with the Head of the Language Support Team of the secondary school and a time to meet to discuss the research was arranged. Following this meeting a letter was sent to the Head Teacher asking for permission to complete the research (see appendix 3). A subsequent meeting was arranged between the Head of the Language Support Team and a TA who had been assigned by the school to support the research. In this meeting the research was discussed in depth, questions answered and a sample identified.

This sample consisted of 11 pupils. Of these, six pupils and their parents/carers agreed to participate in the research. Information from interviews with participants, Head of the Language Support Team and the TA were used to detail characteristics of participants (see below). For Nadif information was provided by his main teacher at the specialist provision he had attended. More background information is given about Nadif because his

educational history in the UK is particularly complex. Please note that the names below are pseudonyms.

2.4.5. Participant characteristics

1. Ajani is a year 11 pupil who was born in Afghanistan. He moved to Pakistan as a young child and went to an English school there. Here lessons were taught in Urdu but pupils were required to read and write in English. Ajani did not mention his parents during the interview, but school staff explained that they believed both of his parents were dead and that Ajani's father had been shot in Afghanistan. At 14 years of age Ajani travelled to England alone to live with his older brother, who was already residing in the UK. He started at secondary school in September 2006. This is the only school he has attended in the UK.
2. Abukar is a year 9 pupil from Somalia. He came to the UK with his mother and five siblings. His father was already living in the UK. Abukar did not attend school often in Somalia. He has attended secondary school for two years. This is the only UK school he has attended.
3. Mehmet is a year 10 pupil from Turkey. He attended school in Turkey for two years before moving to the UK with his parents and sister eight years ago. Mehmet has attended two primary schools and two secondary schools in the UK. He only attended his first secondary school very briefly because it was closed down.
4. Khalid is a year 10 pupil from Somalia. He came to the UK two years ago with his mother and 7 siblings. His father was already in the UK, although he does not live with the family. Khalid received no schooling in Somalia.
5. Mohammed is a year 7 pupil from Somalia. He moved to the UK with his mother, five brothers and three sisters in 2007, his father was

already residing in the UK. He briefly attended a UK primary school before moving to secondary school in September 2008.

6. Nadif is year 11 pupil from Somalia. He came to the UK with one of his younger sisters in 2005 and joined his mother who had lived in the UK for a year. His six other siblings have subsequently joined him. Upon arrival in the UK Nadif's mother was not aware of his correct date of birth and assigned him an age which was subsequently found to be about two years below his actual age. In consequence he was placed in the wrong year group at school. Once this mistake became clear to Nadif he refused to attend school and was referred to a specialist provision in the borough. During this time he experienced and was treated for PTSD. His age was investigated by an endocrinologist and based on this information he was assigned an age approximately two years older than had been recorded. In September 2007 Nadif began to attend the secondary school where this study took place. He was bullied at this school and by Spring 2008 he had stopped attending. He began attending a local college in September 2008.

2.4.6. A unique population

McKenna (2005) and Rutter (2003b) have argued that although there is a great deal of heterogeneity in the refugee community there are a number of common experiences that refugee children are likely to share, that are different to other new arrivals and to children settled in the UK from minority ethnic communities. These include that they may have experienced: violence and threatening situations; separation from or loss of family members; destruction of their homes; lost possessions and friends; a dangerous and stressful flight from their home country; feared discovery, imprisonment, physical and sexual abuse; emotionally detached parents or carers; uncertainty regarding legal and social rights in the UK for them and their family; speaking little or no English. This group of children are unique in that they have been forced to leave their homes and seek asylum elsewhere.

Furthermore upon arrival in the UK, refugee families face unique obstacles to rebuilding secure and fulfilling lives (McKenna, 2005). McKenna (2005) notes that until asylum seeking children and families receive a positive decision from the Home Office enabling them to remain in the UK, they continue to experience uncertainty about their future. During this time they remain dependent on the state, community organisations or family and friends to meet their basic needs. Many of these families live in poverty and this restricts their ability to access or support the education of their children (Clarke & Nandy, 2008; McKenna, 2005; Rutter, 2006). They often live in temporary housing and may be moved at short notice (Rutter, 2006). In addition refugee children and their families may experience ongoing racism, poor access to services and difficulties in communication (McKenna, 2005; Rutter, 2006). Despite the importance that refugee families and children attach to education it is often difficult to get a place in local schools, particularly when they do not arrive at the start of the school year or are over the age of 14 (McKenna, 2005; Rutter, 2003b; 2006). In consequence refugee children are more likely to be delayed in accessing schools and are often required to attend poorer performing schools that are unpopular with more settled groups of parents (McKenna, 2005; Rutter, 2003b).

The combination of these factors, associated with the experiences of many refugee children, renders them a unique group who may face particular challenges during their transfer to school and adapting to this setting. At the same time the unique experiences of this population does not mean that the results of research with this sample cannot add insight into the experiences of other children. Pinson and Arnot (2007) argue that the wider experience of refugee children in secondary school could tell us something about how inclusive and supportive our education system really is. For Pinson and Arnot (2007):

“refugee and asylum-seeking children and their integration represents a litmus test in terms of social inclusion. As the absolute stranger, the asylum-seeking child could tell us something about how we define education and its role in society.” (p.405)

Studying a group of children, who arguably face some of the greatest challenges of all children in our schools, may provide insight into the effectiveness of our current education system in terms of supporting children to adapt to secondary schools, and our ability to provide inclusive, supportive education for all.

2.4.7. The applicability and impact of the research findings

This research is based on a detailed analysis of the experiences of a small sample of refugee boys. It has been argued that research involving such a small sample renders the findings of the study unique to the participants involved. Based on this assumption the value of research employing small samples has been questioned. Yet researchers who have used IPA claim that their research should be evaluated according to the insight it provides concerning a particular topic, not simply according to the number of participants involved (Kvale, 2007; Smith & Eatough, 2006). It is argued here that the insight provided by this research is not limited to the participants who took part; generalisation of the research findings to other groups is possible and valid. Indeed Smith and Eatough (2006) have argued that the rich understandings of individual experiences that research employing IPA provides can take us closer to understanding the lived experiences of wider groups, and society as a whole. For Smith (2004) the detailed exploration of these cases can bring us closer to understanding our shared experiences as humans and can lead to the identification of universal patterns and principles in relation to the area under investigation. Indeed existing research using IPA has led to the formulation of psychological theories. For example, Smith (1999) employed IPA to investigate the psychological processes involved in becoming a mother from the perspective of three pregnant women. The data that emerged from this study led Smith to offer a theoretical model of the relational self. Findings from studies employing IPA have also been applied to populations not included in the research sample. For example, Clare (2002) studied how 12 individuals with early-stage dementia naturally attempted to adjust and cope to their changing situation. The findings informed suggestions for interventions aimed at enhancing the well-being and

self esteem of all individuals with early stage dementia. The current research findings can be used to inform practice which may be applied to groups other than those studied.

Analysis of data using IPA should be interpretative and as such researchers using this methodology should aim to relate their analysis of individual accounts to wider theories and psychological literature. There are many examples of existing research using IPA to investigate diverse phenomena, with a range of different participants, which have positioned their findings in relation to this wider context (Clare, 2002; Jarman, Smith, & Walsh, 1997; Knight, Wykes, & Hayward, 2003; Macdonald, Sinason, & Hollins, 2003; Schaefer, Ladd, Lammers, & Echenberg, 1999; Smith, 1999). As such this research aims to add to and expand upon existing psychological knowledge (Smith, 2004). In addition the findings from this study may stimulate and inform future research which may be both qualitative and quantitative in nature. Indeed subsequent research may attempt to assess the applicability of these findings to other populations.

2.5. Procedure

2.5.1. Data collection

A semi-structured interview was used to gather data (Smith, 1995; Smith & Osborn, 2003). Informed by the research question, existing research and literature in the field, I developed an interview schedule in consultation with my research supervisors (see appendix 8). The interviews were conducted on an individual basis with each participant in their secondary school. The interview was recorded on a digital recording device and each interview lasted approximately one hour. No notes were taken during the interview as this may have been distracting to interviewees (Willig, 2001). I was guided by an interview schedule rather than a set of interview questions. The flexible nature of this method enabled me to follow up on areas which appeared particularly salient to the participant and to discuss topics I had not anticipated (Smith, 1995; Smith & Eatough, 2006; Smith & Osborn, 2003).

This is particularly useful when little is known about the area under investigation, as is the case in this study. A number of authors have argued that this method supports the researcher to build rapport and develop empathy with the interviewee (Smith, 1995; Smith & Eatough, 2006; Smith & Osborn, 2003). This was particularly valuable for this research because it created the maximum opportunity for the participants to tell their story.

An interview schedule was constructed with the aim of enabling each participant to tell the story of their transfer and adaptation to a UK secondary school (see appendix 8). This schedule was informed by the research question, a review of current literature in the field, discussion with other professionals who work with refugee children and following consultation with the research supervisors. Questions were open ended and constructed in such a way that they were specific enough to encourage the participant to talk about a topic, but general enough to allow them to do this in their own way, from their own perspective and with their own emphases (Smith & Dunworth, 2003). The flexible nature of the semi-structured interview allowed me to check my understanding of participants' responses and where necessary to clarify my questions with them. This was particularly valuable given that the participants' first language was not English. The main areas of discussion in the interview schedule were: the experience of transferring and adapting to secondary school in the UK; the experience of a sense of belonging during this time, and the role language played during their transfer and settlement into secondary school.

2.5.2. Data Analysis

I transcribed interview data verbatim. In line with the research design I was interested in what was said during the interview and in coming to an understanding of the meanings the interviewee attached to the experiences they were sharing. As such it was not necessary to transcribe the non-linguistic features of speech (which would be more appropriate for methods such as discourse analysis) (Willig, 2001). An example of a section of interview transcript can be found in appendix 11.

The transcripts were analysed using IPA following the steps outlined below. These are informed by approaches described by other researchers who have used or described IPA (Smith, 1999, 2004; Smith & Eatough, 2006; Smith & Osborn, 2003; Willig, 2001) . Appendices 11 to 14 illustrate an example of these stages of analysis for one participant.

1. The text of the first interview transcript was read a number of times and the left-hand margin was used to make notes on anything that appeared significant or of interest.
2. The notes were used to develop specific themes that emerged from the data and these were noted in the right hand margin.
3. The themes were listed and clusters of themes which shared some relationship or commonality were formed. These superordinate themes were labelled and these labels aimed to reflect something of the essence of the underlying themes. I repeatedly went back to the original data to ensure that the superordinate themes made sense in relation to the transcript.
4. A list of all themes and superordinate themes was produced and where appropriate subordinate themes were listed under the superordinate themes. An example of verbatim transcript to illustrate each theme was also noted to ensure that the analysis of the data reflected and remained close to the original text. At this stage themes which did not fit well with the emerging structure of the superordinate themes and subordinate themes or which were not very well evidenced within the transcript were dropped.
5. The process outlined above was repeated with each subsequent transcript, but the subordinate themes identified from the first transcript were used to begin the analysis of subsequent transcripts. At the same time I was ready to identify newly emerging themes from later transcripts. When this occurred I returned to earlier transcripts to see if they too contained evidence of these newly identified themes.
6. A final list of superordinate and subordinate themes was identified from the data.

The themes which emerged during these stages of analysis outlined above are described in detail in the following chapter.

3. Results

Data from the six interviews were analysed following the stages of IPA discussed in the methodology section. As a result of this analysis three superordinate themes emerged from a number of subordinate themes and these are presented in Table 1. The identification of themes was based on their prevalence or pertinence in participants' accounts and their relevance to the research question.

Table 1: Emerging superordinate and subordinate themes

Superordinate themes	Subordinate themes
Needing and getting help	Needing help
	Teachers as helpers
	The helpful and unhelpful role of peers
	Support from home
	Earning help
Feeling safe and secure	Feeling scared and alone
	Being bullied
	Living in the moment
Adaptation and belonging	Identifying and managing differences between life in their home country and life in the UK
	The role of language
	Getting to know your world
	Having your voice heard
	Making a positive contribution to your world
	Thoughts of the past and of home

This chapter provides an overview of each of the superordinate themes and discusses their subordinate themes in the order outlined in Table 1. Quotes have been chosen from participants to illustrate the themes. The quotes are labelled with the participant's name⁷ followed by the page number and then the line number from the transcribed interview. An integrated summary table

⁷ All names are pseudonyms

which details where quotes for all of the themes listed above can be found in appendix 14.

A summary of the results is provided at the end of this chapter and the main issues arising from the results in relation to existing research, theory and educational psychology practice are discussed in the following chapter.

3.1. Superordinate theme: Needing and getting help

Needing help and descriptions of the ways in which participants had been helped emerged as a powerful theme across all interviews. This superordinate theme arose from five subordinate themes: needing help; teachers as helpers; the helpful and unhelpful role of peers; support from home, and earning help. Each of these is discussed below.

3.1.1. Needing help

All participants identified themselves as someone in need of help, particularly during the early stages of starting secondary school. For example, Ajani described how he thought new students had problems and therefore needed to be helped by teachers. The quote below is his response to being asked what advice he would give to teachers:

“To help new students because they have got problems” (Ajani.6.182-183)

The sense of not knowing and therefore of being in need of help emerged as particularly key for three participants. Indeed this sense of not knowing was experienced so intently by two participants that they described themselves as not knowing anything and as not being able to do anything when they first arrived at the secondary school:

“I don’t know nothing . . . because I am new there” (Mehmet.7.217-219)

“I couldn’t do anything” (Abukar.13.431)

Nadif described how this sense of not knowing had an adverse effect on his emotional and physical wellbeing:

"I used to get angry . . . A headache . . . Because you have to work and you don't understand" (Nadif.9.285-287)

3.1.2. Teachers as helpers

The helping role that teachers provided emerged as a strong theme across all interviews. In particular the role teachers played in supporting learning was identified by all participants:

"When the lesson is hard for me . . . they took me there and explained easily for me" (Abukar.4.114-116)

Apart from Mehmet, all other participants described a range of ways in which the teacher's helping role extended beyond the learning context. Examples included: protecting them from bullying; providing advice; raising their aspirations; listening to and finding solutions to personal problems; providing directions to places inside and outside of school:

"Like if I need to go to the library but I don't know the way, for example, she tell me" (Ajani.3.76-79)

In contrast Mehmet explained that the help teachers gave him did not extend beyond the learning context:

"The teachers were just in the lesson they were helping me but not outside, not other things" (Mehmet.10.308-310)

This could be because Mehmet had lived in the UK longer than other participants and therefore may have been less in need of help than them.

The helping role provided by teachers was particularly pertinent in Nadif's account. He described his difficult transition into secondary school, how he was unable to settle here and eventually left the school. In consequence he was placed in a specialist educational provision where he received a

significant amount of academic and non-academic support from a single teacher. The helping role that this teacher fulfilled emerged as a key feature of his experience and had resulted in a particularly strong relationship with that teacher:

“Only Mr Smith has helped me. He is my best friend” (Nadif.14.445)

Nadif’s need for help and the provision of a single teacher to support him could account for the particular pertinence this theme seemed to have for him.

From participants’ narratives, characteristics of the teacher-helper emerged. These are explored further in the following chapter. Characteristics included: flexibility, both in terms of when the help was given (i.e. outside of lesson times) and in terms of the type of help (i.e. help extended beyond help with learning); consistency and reliability; having a genuine interest in the young person and investing in the relationship with them:

“When I asked for help they never ignored me. After school, during the lunch time, before morning time. . . . And they still proud of me” (Ajani.2.54-60)

Two participants used the interview as a way to express their gratitude to the teachers who had helped them:

“I would like to say thanks to these teachers for helping me” (Ajani.2.49-50)

3.1.3. The helpful and unhelpful role of peers

The help peers provided to participants emerged across five interviews. Four participants described how peers had helped them to learn English. For three participants this had simply been by providing good English language role models. In this sense the help peers provided was incidental:

“Every break time I go with other English people and I was walking behind them and listening to them. How they talk. And I was practising after them, on my own” (Abukar.9.288-291)

Three participants described how peers who spoke the same first language as them had taught them English and translated English for them when they did not understand:

“There were Turkish people there as well and when I talk with them they were helping me to improve my English . . . because sometimes they were translating to me” (Mehmet.5.141-146)

Three participants identified peers as helping them to find places in the school and one participant described how a peer explained the school rules to him on his first day:

“The first person when I came here told me the rules and showed the buildings” (Khalid.8.260-261)

Whilst most participants described the helping role peers had fulfilled, all participants spoke of the adverse effect that some peers had on their experience of secondary school. This included by: bullying or avoiding them; misbehaving in class which slowed their progress in learning, and rejecting them when they asked for help. These are discussed in more detail below.

Three young people identified peers who had failed to help them or whose behaviour had been a barrier to their own learning. Abukar outlined two incidents of seeking help from peers in school during the early stages of his transfer which peers had responded to by running away from him. This rejection seemed to exacerbate his sense of being lost and alone at school:

“My first day I go to lunch there and I don’t know what to do. I just stand there looking at people eating. And I ask Somali boy ‘is the lunch free?’ And he just look at me and he run away” (Abukar.5.143-147)

Two participants described how the behaviour of peers had got in the way of their learning. For Nadif this was because he had to take time off school to recover from or avoid bullying:

“I was told like you will learn something . . . And it didn’t. . . The gangs were in school” (Nadif.2.33-37)

For Ajani the behaviour of peers in class decreased the amount of teaching he received and therefore slowed his progress in learning:

“You’ve got one hour for every lesson every week. But probably for ½ hour, 40 minutes, we spend on talking” (Ajani.9.276-278)

The experience of bullying is discussed later in this chapter under the theme ‘being bullied’.

3.1.4. Support from home

The help that family members provided participants emerged as a strong theme across most accounts. Four participants identified their parents as helping them during their transfer and settlement into secondary school. Ajani was the only participant who did not live with at least one of his parents, yet he also referred to advice his parents had given him in the past which had helped him during this time.

The major helping role that parents provided was that of an advisor, particularly in relation to education. The role of parents as educational advisors emerged in three participants’ accounts:

“My parents say to me ... respect all the teachers and get some more education” (Ajani.6.170-172)

All participants lived with at least some of their siblings and four participants identified siblings as helping them. The helping role of siblings was primarily that of supporting them to learn English. In fact, in three accounts this was the only helping role that siblings were described as fulfilling.

Abukar described how his brother had specifically taught him literacy skills:

“He teach me more things than the teacher. How to write, he start me A, B, C, D and how words come together” (Abukar.7.214-216)

Other participants explained that their siblings had bought them resources to help them to learn English:

“My big brother he buy for me a dictionary in Somali and English. He said to me read book and if you don’t know word check the dictionary” (Mohammed.10.331-334)

The young people also talked of how they were able to practise their spoken English at home by speaking in English to their siblings:

“My big brother he talk to me he say speak English” (Mohammed.10.312-313)

Unlike all other participants, the helping role of Ajani’s brother extended beyond learning English to providing advice and reassurance. This could be because Ajani was the only participant who was cared for by his sibling and not his parent(s):

“I tell my brother that I don’t want to go in this school . . . He says, don’t worry, this is your first day, then after it will get better” (Ajani.9.290-295)

Whilst most participants described the help that family members gave them, Mehmet was unique in his description of the way he helped his parents. Specifically, he explained that he knew more English than both of his parents and was able to help them read English.

“If my Dad asks me sometimes, what does this mean? . . . I help him” (Mehmet.19.627-630)

Mehmet had lived in the UK longer than any other participant and had received more UK-based schooling. It is possible that his helping role at home had been stimulated by his superior English language abilities, due to

having had longer in the UK, or perhaps his confidence had increased over time which made him more able to help his family.

3.1.5. Earning help

The role participants played in seeking out and earning help from teachers emerged as a strong theme in two accounts. Rather than help being provided by teachers as a matter of course, these participants felt they had to earn help from teachers by behaving well and helping them:

*“Because they trust me. I never misbehave in the class. . . That’s why”
(Ajani.3.92-97)*

“Like in art I was helping them, when the people paint on the table I was cleaning it” (Abukar.11.370-372)

The origin of the belief that they needed to earn help from teachers appeared to differ between the two participants. For Ajani this belief appeared to be based on his experiences in his home country:

“In my country if you react bad with teacher she not gonna help you too much” (Ajanil.5.103-104)

In contrast Abukar had based this belief on his experiences in the UK secondary school:

“I see some other boys, like me, came to EAL and misbehave and the teacher say ‘I can’t help you anymore’” (Abukar.9.277-279)

Whilst Ajani received help from teachers and expressed gratitude for it, he was unique in expressing the view that he should not have had to have sought out and earned this help. Rather, teachers should have come to him and offered their assistance:

“They should have come to new students and ask, if you want any help come to me” (Ajanil.2.33-35)

There was a sense that Ajani felt some degree of disappointment and possibly resentment for having to seek out teachers who would help him and for earning the help which he thought should have been freely offered. Unlike the other participants, Ajani had been taught in English in his country of origin; in consequence when he started at the secondary school his literacy skills in English exceeded those of the other participants. It is possible that, because his needs were less obvious to teachers than those of other participants, Ajani's need for help was more easily overlooked.

3.2. Superordinate theme: *Feeling safe and secure*

Feeling unsafe and seeking safety emerged as a key part of all participants' accounts of their experiences. This superordinate theme emerged from three subordinate themes: feeling scared and alone; being bullied, and living in the moment. Each of these is discussed below.

3.2.1. Feeling scared and alone

Feelings of fear and loneliness were features of all participants' accounts and these were particularly prevalent during the early stages of their transfer:

"When I first came here, I was scared" (Khalid.8.237)

"I was alone. A few weeks. That's hard for me" (Ajani.4.121-122)

Mehmet used the term 'stranger' to refer to himself when he first arrived at the secondary school. I felt that this self-description captured his sense both of not knowing his world (including the people in it), but also of not being known by others; he was a stranger to them as they were to him:

"When you go to a new school . . . you don't know the people, the school, teacher, you feel like a stranger" (Mehmet.7.228-230)

For Mehmet his sense of being a stranger was not simply due to being new at the school; rather it seemed to originate from having been born in a different country:

*“Stranger is like, cos I was born in a different country”
(Mehmet.17.560-561)*

In most accounts, peers were identified as stopping participants’ feelings of fear and loneliness. This was particularly striking in Ajani’s account:

“When I made friends then after I didn’t feel alone. I feel that someone is with me” (Ajani.4.153-155)

I interpreted the words ‘with me’ in the quote above as reflecting the intense sense of closeness that Ajani felt towards his friends.

Nadif was the only participant whose feelings of fear appeared to extend beyond his initial transfer into secondary school. In fact, a sense that the longer he spent at this secondary school the higher his sense of fear became emerged through his account. Nadif was bullied during his time at this school and eventually he left the school⁸. I interpreted his rising fear as a consequence of the bullying he experienced.

Whilst all participants spoke of feeling scared and alone, Nadif was the only young person to directly mention how important it was to feel safe in school. This could be because his experience of being bullied and of not feeling safe made him particularly aware of how important it was to feel safe in school. In the quote below, he is responding to me asking him what advice he would give to a new pupil arriving at the secondary school:

“First of all to be safe in school” (Nadif.5.147)

However, he was not able to identify how the new pupil could be safe.

⁸ After approximately seven months

3.2.2. Being bullied

The experience of being bullied by peers at school emerged as a strong theme for four participants and, as the previous theme began to highlight, this was a significant barrier to feeling safe in school. This was a particularly pertinent theme for Abukar and Nadif whose experience of being bullied at school was a prominent feature in their accounts.

Two participants discussed why they thought that they had been bullied, and both attributed this to being new at school:

“Why did they do that, let me remember. Yeah, they just called me ‘freshie’” (Nadif.3.69-70)

Two participants described how they had been called names by peers and Abukar explained that he had been verbally bullied by peers about his behaviour and knowledge. Specifically he described how peers had laughed at the way he tried to spell his name, taunted him for not being able to speak English and told him that he did not know how to play:

“When I was playing they were saying, ‘you can’t even play with other people, you can’t even speak English’” (Abukar.5.167-169)

As the previous quote begins to highlight, participants gave a range of examples of specific incidents of bullying they had experienced. Episodes of physical bullying were described by two young people:

“There were seven boys they attack me. . . And they beat me that day” (Nadif.2.47-54)

Abukar described how bullying had taken the form of being ignored or avoided by peers. In the quote below he describes how he tried to follow other people in his class in order to find his next lesson:

“For the lessons I go to the people and walk behind them so they can’t see me. If they see me they run” (Abukar.10.333-335)

In two participants’ accounts, the negative consequences of this bullying were clear. Nadif commented on the fear that the bullying instilled in him. He had

since left this school and I noticed that during the interview he appeared to be frightened at the prospect of ever having to return there; the fear this context evoked as a result of being bullied had not gone away. Abukar had come to believe that the taunts of bullies (which included that he could not speak English and could not play) were an accurate description of him, this was illustrated in his self description as someone who *'couldn't do anything'*⁹.

I reflected that the young people in this study were subjected to bullying at a time when they were already feeling scared and alone and that it was likely that the bullying reinforced and exacerbated these feelings. This is explored further in the next chapter. Given these participants' experiences it seems that they were right to be fearful and scared during their transfer into secondary school. However, whilst many of these young people were victims of bullying, they were not passive victims. Rather their accounts illustrated the personal agency they showed in employing a range of strategies to try to stop the bullying and therefore ensure their safety. These included: seeking help from teachers; ignoring bullies; stopping the trigger to bullying; fighting back, and leaving the school. Each of these strategies is explored below.

Three participants described the teacher's role in protecting them from bullying and two young people gave examples of going to a teacher to help protect them from bullies:

"He saw them you know. They were waiting for me . . . and the next day he gave them a detention" (Nadif.4.104-106)

At the same time Khalid described the sense of conflict he experienced regarding turning to teachers for help to stop bullying. He explained that if you were bullied you should tell the teacher, but that this was difficult to do because it could put you at further risk in school. When asked if he had ever told a teacher about bullying he replied:

"That would be hard. If you tell a teacher and the bully listens and later when you came out you would get beaten up" (Khalid.15.480-482)

⁹ This was also discussed under the theme 'Needing help'.

This young person had concluded that the best strategy to stop bullying was simply to ignore the bullies:

“Ignore them . . . If you get involved they are going to come back to you” (Khalid.7.207-208)

Abukar identified learning the skills and knowledge needed in school as helping to stop the bullying he endured. He described how he had worked hard at school and was now able to answer questions in class that his peers could not answer. His description of the bullying he suffered indicated that it was triggered by his not knowing things in class or in the playground, by working hard to increase his knowledge he had erased the trigger to his bullying:

“Now no-one can bully me. I can put my hand up if the teacher asks a question and the children don’t have the answer” (Abukar.14.448-451)

He also described how building relationships with peers had helped to earn him protection from bullying. Abukar had achieved this in two ways: the first was by making friends with other peers who had offered to protect him from bullies and the second was by doing things for the bullies themselves. These behaviours could be interpreted as earning his safety in school:

“I started to help them as well. . . . Not helping work, helping with other things. . . .When they are going outside, when the lesson finish, I tidy up their chairs” (Abukar.14.467-483)

Two participants described how they had confronted the bullies by fighting back either physically or verbally. In neither case did this stop the bullying.

Unlike the other participants, the bullying Nadif experienced lasted for some time and he was unable to stop it during the time he was at the secondary school. He described seeking help from teachers, but this was unsuccessful in the sense that the teachers weren’t able to make the bullying stop. His sense that he was unsafe in school was so intense he was unable to identify

any way that he could have kept safe in this setting; when asked how he would keep safe in the secondary school he replied:

*“No way . . . if you are in the school you have to go in the playground you know and the boys are in the playground”
(Nadif.5.156-158)*

Eventually he left the school and refused to go back. This could be interpreted as a successful strategy to ensure his safety:

“I wouldn’t never go back to that school” (Nadif.5.136-137)

3.2.3. Living in the moment

Focussing on the present and attempting to avoid thoughts of the future, the past and of his home country emerged as a strong feature of one participant’s experience. This theme was unique to Ajani but is discussed here because it was a particularly pertinent part of his account.

Ajani was the only unaccompanied refugee interviewed and he was also the oldest participant. Four participants had at least one parent who had lived in the UK for some time and one participant had himself lived in the UK for 8 years. With this in mind, Ajani’s right to remain in the UK may have been more immediately uncertain than any other participant. Furthermore his status as an unaccompanied refugee would mean that, unlike the other participants, his application to stay in the UK would have to be considered in its own right (rather than as part of a parental application) and he would have to manage the consequences of this decision alone. This background seems important, since it offers one possible explanation for why this theme only emerged in his account.

When asked about his hopes for the future, Ajani was initially unable to describe any. Through his account, it was clear that he could not imagine what the future might hold, even in the very short term:

"I'm not sure about what is going on tomorrow . . . I don't know, I mean I don't know I'm here tomorrow or not. I don't know my future.... I don't know if tomorrow I am alive or dying" (Ajani.17.557-572)

A sense of urgency emerged in his attitude to learning:

"GCSEs is the main point of our life when we leave this school. So we should learn everything when we left this school" (Ajani.7.208-211)

I interpreted this urgency as a behavioural response to his uncertainty about what the future would hold for him; he needed to make the most of every moment because the future was so uncertain.

There was also a sense that he did not want to think beyond the moment and consciously tried to avoid thoughts of the past and future. Indeed in his account he directly spoke of his reluctance to think about his country of origin and of the future:

"I don't want to think about my country. I don't want to think about what is going on, about going back, or in the future" (Ajani,16.528-531)

His desire to live in the moment could have arisen from not wanting to think about what his life would be like if he returned to his home country. His attempt to focus his thoughts on the present could be interpreted as a strategy to cope with the uncertainty he was faced with; this is explored further in the following chapter.

As previously mentioned, this strategy did not emerge in other participants' accounts. Indeed, in contrast to Ajani, two participants spoke of their hopes for the future during their interviews. These participants seemed to have a greater sense of security in what the future would hold for them:

"Time passes and you are looking at the future . . . go college, maybe go to university" (Mehmet.25.825-826)

3.3. Superordinate theme: Adaptation and belonging

Through the participants' personal accounts of their experiences emerged a sense of the journey they had made as they came to adapt to life at school and in the UK. The process of adaptation and developing a sense of belonging emerged as a two-way process; it was both as a result of the participants' impact on the world around them and the impact of this world on them. This superordinate theme arose from six subordinate themes: identifying and managing differences between life in their home country and life in the UK; the role of language; getting to know your world; having your voice heard; making a positive contribution to your world, and thoughts of the past and of home. Each of these is discussed below.

3.3.1. Identifying and managing differences between life in their home country and life in the UK

This theme emerged from the accounts participants gave of the process of coming to notice, and in some instances adapt to, differences between life in their country of origin and the life they either expected to have in the UK or had experienced since arriving here. Together, these accounts portrayed a sense that these young people experienced a process of identifying and managing the differences between these two worlds.

When they arrived at their secondary school in the UK, three young people spoke of the difference between their expectations of school life and the reality that faced them. For Ajani the difference between the secondary school in the UK and the school he attended in his country of origin shocked him:

"Everything was new for me and people were different. Different kinds of people from different countries" (Ajani.1.5-7)

Two young people described their disappointment when the UK secondary school failed to meet their expectations. Abukar expected peers to like him and he expressed his excitement at the thought of attending school. In

contrast to these beliefs, he was bullied and ignored by some pupils when he started at school:

“When I find this school I was so excited, I thought everyone would like me. But they didn’t” (Abukar.13.424-426)

Similarly Nadif’s beliefs about schooling in the UK were different to the reality he faced. Through his account emerged a sense of disappointment at how little he had learnt:

“I was told like you will learn something . . . And it is a good school for me to learn English. For my education. And it didn’t” (Nadif.2.33-35)

Abukar spoke of his wider beliefs about people in the UK, expressing his expectation that everyone would help him when he arrived here. However, his treatment by officials when he arrived in the UK led him to discard this belief:

“I thought people would help you, do everything for you so that you can speak English. It wasn’t like that. I wanted to go back” (Abukar.20.666-670)

Ajani described believing that it was against the law to lie in Europe:

“I heard in my country if you go to Europe you are not allowed to lie... that was a law. They never lie” (Ajani.15.495-501)

Through Ajani’s account was a sense that he was intent on making sure that teachers trusted and believed him; he described himself as always being honest and telling the truth. It is possible that these behaviours had emerged from his belief that he would be breaking the law if he lied.

An emerging awareness of the differences between their country of origin and the UK was a part of three participants’ accounts. Nadif described how he came to understand that, unlike his home country, school children are grouped according to their age in the UK, regardless of their academic ability. In fact, because of confusion regarding his date of birth, he was placed with children younger than him when he arrived in the UK. Before he came to understand that the UK system was different to the system in Somalia, he

accepted being placed with younger children and described how hard he worked in school. However this changed when he realised that in the UK he should be placed with children his own age; he expressed his desire to move groups and his motivation to learn declined significantly:

“My country you sit with little boys big boys, same. In this country you have to sit with your same age. And I don’t want to sit with small aged boys” (Nadif.12.385-388)

Ajani described how differently children behaved at school in the UK compared to his home country. He had noticed that his peers in the UK showed less respect towards teachers and misbehaved more in class, compared to peers in his home country. He seemed to attribute this difference to: having more freedom in the UK because it was a democratic nation; receiving less advice from police and parents; a lack of fear regarding the negative consequences of misbehaviour:

“In this country the law, the police never say to teenagers don’t do that and the parents as well. But in different countries they say don’t do that, or the police will arrest you” (Ajani.7.224-228)

As a result of his transfer into school, Abukar commented on the ways in which he had personally changed. He described himself as someone who was ‘bad’ in his home country, because he did not go to school. He had come from Somalia, a country at war, and explained that this context led him to question the value of learning and to fear going to school:

“When I was in Somalia I was bad. I didn’t go to school. . . . I thought it was nothing to me. Because fight going on and you are scared to go to school” (Abukar.7.221-230)

In contrast, he described his brother as ‘good’; he attended school every day in Somalia despite the war. It seemed that because of his brother’s behaviour he considered that his own reasons for not going to school in Somalia were unjustified; he had simply been ‘bad’. Upon arrival in the UK, his brother’s knowledge was invaluable to the family and there was a sense that this, along with the feeling of safety that living in the UK provided, led Abukar to come to

value learning. The link he made between going to school and being a good person could be interpreted as indicating that his sense of self had also changed as a result of attending school in the UK.

Abukar described his sense that when he first arrived at the secondary school teachers saw him as someone who was quiet. This seemed to cause him some distress since this was not how he saw himself, or how he had been seen by other people in the past. His transfer into school in the UK had led him to notice a change in how people saw him and this could be interpreted as a challenge to his identity as someone who was talkative:

“I just sit there and listen. They thought, he’s quiet, and I don’t like being quiet” (Abukar.3.70-72)

3.3.2. The role of language

The motivation to learn English emerged as a major theme for all participants and reflected a key way in which these young people came to adapt to their new world:

“I just want to learn. I just love to learn English” (Nadif.19.663)

This motivation was reflected via the personal agency these young people showed in learning English. Two young people described how they listened to peers in school to help them to learn English:

“Every break time I go with other English people and I was walking behind them and listening to them” (Abukar.9.288-290)

Other young people used time outside of school to learn English, either informally by speaking English with their siblings, or more formally through using books, newspapers and dictionaries to teach them to read:

“I got some books at home my brother gave it to me. It’s like a sentence and I learn from the books, newspapers” (Ajani.13.419-421)

Two young people described how helpful they had found the extra English lessons they received in school and they wanted more:

“It would have helped to have extra. I got some classes, just for few weeks. But it's not much . . . after school would be good”
(Ajani.13.409-412)

This theme also captures the ways in which these young people spoke of their first language; their accounts showed that their experience was marked by changing and sometimes conflicting attitudes towards their first language. Without exception these young people all expressed their reluctance to use their first language in school. Through their accounts emerged a sense that they saw speaking their first language in school as a barrier to learning English and therefore this was something to be avoided:

“If you speak in Somali you can't learn English. That's why I speak English” (Khalid.12.372-373)

Such was Ajani's desire to speak only English in school he avoided boys who spoke the same first language as him in lessons:

“Some boys from Pakistan, they speak Urdu. I got some classes with them, but I sit so far from them. If I sit with them I'm gonna speak Urdu with them, that's why I don't sit with them”
(Ajani.15.482-486)

The role teachers played in instilling the belief that speaking their first language in lessons was not helpful or acceptable emerged in the accounts of three participants. These young people all spoke of the ways in which teachers had discouraged conversations in class in a language other than English, either by directly instructing pupils not to speak in their first language or by moving pupils who spoke the same first language away from each other:

“My friend speak to me in Somali, but my teacher says don't talk with them don't sit together” (Mohammed.12.400-402)

These participants explained that they thought this was because speaking their first language would get in the way of their learning. Khalid explained that he thought this was because teachers could not trust that these conversations were lesson-based. Other participants thought that this was because speaking their first language would stop them from learning English. The quote below is Khalid's response to my question, "*are you allowed to speak Somali in school?*"

"No, you are just allowed to speak in English. So that you can learn English. You came here to learn English. The teachers say that"
(Khalid.12.388-391)

Abukar described how peers at school, who spoke the same first language as him, had advised him to only speak English in school because this would help him to learn and this had been reinforced by his parents. He had gone on to give this advice to other new arrivals in school:

"When Somali people speak to me in Somali, the new boys, I answer them in English. I want them to learn" (Abukar.15.499-501)

Whilst participants were reluctant to use their first language in school, five participants expressed their desire to maintain their first language. These young people spoke of the practical factors which stimulated their motivation to maintain their first language: specifically, in case they returned to their country of origin and in order that they could maintain or develop relationships with other people from the same country as them:

"If you can speak Somali you can meet Somali boys, like cousins your brothers" (Khalid.13.423-424)

Three young people expressed an emotional attachment to their first language; this was particularly pertinent in the accounts of Ajani and Mehmet. These young people described their first language as '*my language*' and '*first mother language*' respectively. Furthermore Mehmet went on to say that '*language makes you*'. I interpreted these descriptions as an indication of the personal attachment these young people had to their first language; it was something that belonged to them. I also reflected that there was a sense that

their first language was a part of who they were, a part of their identity. Therefore to stop speaking their first language would be to take away a part of their identity.

The relationship between language and belonging was expressed by two participants and explored in some detail by Mehmet who equated knowing a language with a sense of belonging in that country and as indicating to other people where you belonged:

“If you don’t speak your first language you won’t know where you belong. If I speak Turkish then they will know I belong to Turkey”
(Mehmet.22.721-723)

Mehmet went on to say that now he spoke English, he felt that he belonged in England.

A sense of conflicting attitudes towards their first language emerged across four participants’ accounts. Despite their belief that it was important to avoid speaking their first language in school, two young people explained that sometimes this helped them to learn:

“Mostly I speak English in lessons, so, just sometimes if I need help I speak Turkish” (Mehmet.21.676-678)

It seems possible that differences between the beliefs expressed by participants and their behaviour resulted in some internal conflict for these young people; they had been told and believed that speaking their first language got in the way of their learning in school and yet it seemed to help them.

3.3.3. Getting to know your world

Many participants gave examples of the ways in which their knowledge of the school, local area and in some instances the UK had increased over time and this increasing familiarity with their new world emerged as a feature of their experience.

During the interviews, all of the young people gave specific examples of things that they had not known when they first arrived at the secondary school. The most common was the experience of not knowing the English language. Whilst the participants arrived in the UK with different ability levels in terms of speaking and understanding English, they were unanimous in describing their experience of not understanding what people said and not being able to speak English when they first arrived at secondary school:

“I was so quiet. I don’t speak too much. Teachers speak too much English, but I don’t understand what she said” (Ajani.1.25-27)

The experience of not being able to speak English was so intense for Mehmet that he described himself as not being able to speak when he first arrived at secondary school:

“If you don’t know the language you can’t speak” (Mehmet.19.608-609)

For three participants, not knowing where things were in school was a significant part of their early experience of secondary school. For some this had made finding lessons very difficult:

“I had English and I had to go outside and I was looking for a boy from our class to go with him. And I couldn’t see someone. I just go to the office and they took me to the class very late” (Abukar.10.327-331)

Abukar described a whole range of things that he did not know during the early stages of his transfer into secondary school. These included not knowing how to get food at break or lunchtime, how to spell his name or hold a pen. His early experience of school was dominated by the experience of not knowing:

“At break time I go to the hole¹⁰ and I say to the woman, give me break. And she say ‘where is the money?’ And I say ‘what money?’” (Abukar.6.197-202)

¹⁰ The ‘hole’ refers to the serving area in the cafeteria

As discussed in the theme 'feeling scared and alone', many participants described their sense of loneliness during their transfer into secondary school and this was partly driven by not knowing people at school and not being known by them:

"Cos the first days you don't know no-one but after they know you, you know them" (Mehmet.14.444-446)

Through their accounts, participants described the journey they made from not knowing to coming to know the world around them. They gave a range of examples of ways in which their knowledge of their world increased during their adaptation to secondary school. These included: learning to speak the language; getting to know the layout of the school and local area; getting to know and be known by teachers and peers; developing friendships; learning school rules, and learning UK law.

The importance of getting to know national and school based rules or laws, and making sure to abide by them, emerged as a key part of the experiences of two participants. Ajani described the importance he attached to learning UK law:

"I learnt lots of law in this country . . . Like, government law"
(Ajani.15.492-495)

One interpretation of Ajani's motivation to learn UK law could be that this was driven by a fear of what would happen if he inadvertently broke the law. In addition, the importance of respecting others emerged throughout Ajani's account and there was a sense that, by learning national laws and abiding by them, he was able to behave in a way that was respectful to others:

"Just tell myself to follow all the laws, respect all the people"
(Ajani.6.169-170)

Khalid spoke of how important it had been to learn the school rules. This seemed to be driven by a fear that if he broke these rules he would be excluded from the school:

“If you don’t know the rules if you do anything you are going to get excluded for it. Get kicked out of the school” (Khalid.6.191-193)

Five participants talked of the positive consequences of their increasing knowledge of the world around them. Mohammed described how he used to be scared by the size of the secondary school, but now that he knew more about the school he was less scared by it. During the interview, I asked Mohammed if he was still scared by how big the school was, the quote below is his response:

*“No . . . Because I know everything. I know this building”
(Mohammed.15.489-492)*

Mehmet explained that life was easier in school now that he knew the school, in particular the staff and pupils:

*“When I came to this school I went to registration and I didn’t know no-one. Because it was my first day, but second day, third day, it gets more easier because you know the school, know the people”
(Mehmet.9.288-292)*

The link between knowing your world and developing a sense of belonging emerged in two participants’ accounts. For Ajani, learning about the behaviour of people in the UK and the laws of the country helped him to develop a sense of belonging:

*“First day I feel like a lone person, like I don’t feel like I belong to this country. When I learn all the laws and about all the people’s behaviours, like I feel now like I belong in this country now”
(Ajani.10.320-324)*

For Mehmet, belonging in school was something that developed over time; the longer he spent at the secondary school, the more he felt that he belonged there:

“Every day you come to this school you think that you belong to this school after the time goes” (Mehmet.14.446-448)

He identified a range of factors that had contributed to his increasing sense of belonging in school. These included: being known by other people and knowing them; knowing the school rules and 'facts' of the school, and the length of time he had been at the school:

"Knowing people. The staff, the rules, the dinner hall, maybe even the dinner hall, like that is the things, that's the facts of it that help you feel like you belong in the school" (Mehmet.14.462-465)

Indeed, Mehmet discussed developing a sense of belonging in school more than any other participant. He identified time as a key factor in developing a sense of belonging; the longer you are somewhere, the more you feel like you belong. Mehmet had lived in the UK longer than any other participant, therefore if a sense of belonging is something that develops over time it is unsurprising that this was a more pertinent part of his account than the other participants'.

3.3.4. Having your voice heard

The desire to have their voice heard emerged as a key theme in two participants' accounts. Unlike the other young people interviewed, not being noticed or listened to had emerged as part of their experience of transferring into secondary school. There was a sense that this had led them to recognise the value of telling their story to someone who cared.

Ajani explained how important it was to have your views elicited by a teacher during the early stages of transferring into secondary school. However, in reality, this had not happened to him¹¹. In the quote below, he is describing what he thinks teachers should do to help pupils when they first arrive at secondary school:

"They should ask him, 'what do you want?'"(Ajani.6.187-188)

Nadif shared the experience of not being listened to in school and the need to have his story heard and acted upon was a key feature of his account. As

¹¹ This was also discussed in the theme 'earning help'

discussed earlier in this chapter, during the interview Nadif explained that he had been placed in the wrong year group at school because of confusion regarding his date of birth. He described his struggle to get people both inside and outside of school to acknowledge his real age so that he could be moved to the appropriate year group. One teacher took the time to listen to his dilemma and, furthermore, acted upon this information. As a result of being listened to, his recorded age was eventually changed and his academic year altered. There was a sense that being listened to, believed and having his views make a positive impact on his world was a hugely important part of his experience:

“I come to Mr Smith and I tell him my story you know and he help me. And they change now my age” (Nadif.13.419-420)

Through Ajani's account the relationship between being listened to and developing a sense of belonging in school emerged:

“If the teachers help me I feel like I fit here. If they ignore me, if the students ignore me, if the teachers ignore me I don't feel like I fit in” (Ajani.12.375-378)

For both participants there was a sense that being listened to led to their needs being met (as the quote above begins to illustrate). For Ajani the relationship between belonging, being listened to and helped seemed to extend beyond the school context. In his account was a sense that being helped by the UK government, for example by receiving a free education, free bus pass and benefits, also helped him to feel that he belonged in the UK:

“I feel like the government is looking after us as well. So I belong in this country. If they don't look after us then I don't feel like I belong because they don't care” (Ajani.11.349-353)

Through Ajani's account the importance of having your personal feelings elicited and listened to also emerged. At the end of the interview he explained that this had been the first time he had shared his personal experiences with anyone:

“You are the first person I have told the difficult things. I never shared this with someone. . . I feel lighter. My head, lighter. It is good” (Ajani.19.615-620)

He described how his head felt ‘lighter’ after the interview and I interpreted this self-description as indicating both that he had contained his personal thoughts and feelings about his experiences in secondary school until this point, and also that these were a burden to him, filling up his head and weighing him down. There was a sense that the interview had provided a suitable context for him to feel able to let out these thoughts and feelings and that this was of benefit to him. This is discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

It seemed that no-one in school had asked Ajani about his feelings; conversations with teachers centred on practical school-based issues. In the quote below he is responding to my asking him why he had not talked about his experiences with someone in school:

“No one asked. No one really thinking about my feelings and you are doing this research so you must care about this, so it is good to tell you” (Ajani.19.623-626)

3.3.5. Making a positive contribution to your world

Making a positive contribution at school emerged as a theme for four participants who described their pro-social acts in school. There was a sense that as their knowledge of school increased, so too did their ability to make a contribution to this setting. For two participants, this had taken the form of helping new arrivals at school from the same country as them. Mehmet described how he was approached by other pupils in school and asked to help a boy who had just arrived:

“Someone came and told me there is a new boy and he don’t know English, nothing, like he don’t know nothing, you should help him. And I went to him. . . . I helped him in a big way” (Mehmet.12.370-378)

Abukar described how he sought out the role of helper for new arrivals in school:

“When our class has new boy I ask can I help them, can I sit next to them and help them? . . . And the teachers they give me reward for that” (Abukar.10.321-325)

For Ajani his positive acts extended beyond the school context as the quote below illustrates:

“I found money. It was late at night, about 6 ‘o’ clock at the time I left school . . . I gave to the head teacher. And after two weeks they called me in assembly and gave me certificate” (Ajani.8.259-265)

Mehmet explained that helping other pupils like him made him ‘feel good’. The positive feelings evoked by doing good were in themselves a motivating factor for helping others:

“I feel good cos I feel like happy, cos he was in the same, not the same but similar position, and I helped him” (Mehmet.13.407-409)

As the previous quotes highlight, not only did these behaviours serve a positive function for the school itself, but they also benefited participants. For example, Mehmet and Ajani had their pro-social acts acknowledged by the school with a certificate and rewards (for example being given money to spend on school resources) and Mehmet described the positive feelings evoked by helping others. In addition, these behaviours could be interpreted as helping participants to get noticed by teachers and to reinforce the positive identity for which they seemed to strive. Furthermore, some of these pro-social acts allowed participants to adopt the role of helper. This was in contrast to their early experiences of transferring into secondary school, which were marked by feeling as if they were someone in need of help¹².

¹²Also discussed in the theme ‘needing and getting help’

3.3.6. Thoughts of the past and of home

As the previous themes have highlighted, these young people's experiences all reflected the journey they made towards knowing and adapting to school and life in the UK. At the same time, through their accounts it became clear that whilst they negotiated the transfer to secondary school and came to adapt to this setting, they were also thinking of the past and of their home country.

Although participants were not asked about the past or about their home country, thoughts of this kind emerged as part of five participants' accounts. Two young people spoke of their journey to and arrival in the UK. Indeed, at the end of the interview with Abukar, he asked me if he could talk about his journey to the UK:

"You didn't ask me about the airport. I came to the airport and things happened to me and my family" (Abukar.19.611-613)

For two participants these thoughts were dominated by the ongoing conflict in their country of origin. Ajani described his struggle to understand the war:

"There is war in my country, but I don't know what people is that. I don't know about my country" (Ajani.16.516-518)

In contrast to other accounts, Mehmet spoke directly about sharing his past experiences with other people who arrived in the secondary school from the same country as him (although he did not specify what these 'past experiences' were):

"I told them my things that happened to me to other people as well and it happened to them as well" (Mehmet.24.787-789)

The emergence of stories of the past and thoughts about home seemed to reflect the ongoing significance of these for the participants.

3.4. Summary of findings

The research findings seemed to map the journey participants made from their initial experiences of transferring into secondary school and as they came to adapt to this context. A pertinent theme in the participants' early experiences was their strong sense of being in need of help which seemed to be caused by not knowing the world around them. This sense of not knowing was described by these young people in terms of not knowing:

- other people (and not being known by them);
- the school and local environment
- school and UK rules
- the English language (which exacerbated all of the above)

From this emerged feelings of helplessness, fear and loneliness which were a dominant theme in all participants' accounts.

Participants described a range of ways in which they had been helped at school by peers and teachers and at home by parents and siblings. The helping role adopted by these groups differed. Specifically parents were mainly identified as educational advisors, whilst siblings supported the participants' learning at home, particularly in relation to English speaking and literacy. The helping role of peers and teachers was more diverse. Peers were primarily identified as supporting English language learning and stopping participants from feeling lonely at school. In contrast, teachers were identified as adopting a wide range of helping roles and characteristics of the teacher-helper emerged.

At the same time findings also illustrated the ways in which the behaviour of teachers and peers had been less than helpful, at times exacerbating feelings of helplessness and loneliness. In particular some participants described how they felt they needed to earn help from teachers and most identified times when their sense of security in school had been threatened by peers, particularly in relation to being bullied. Needing to feel safe and secure in school emerged as a strong theme in all accounts and participants described

a range of ways in which they had managed feelings of insecurity and the unknown.

The process of adapting to secondary school and coming to develop a sense of belonging emerged as a key theme. This was illustrated by participants' increasing awareness of the differences between life in school and in the UK compared to their home country, alongside their rising knowledge of their new world, particularly the English language. The impact of their desire to learn English and adapt to life in the UK on their attitude towards their first language was a pertinent theme. Participants experienced conflicting beliefs about their first language, which was both viewed negatively as a barrier to learning English and also positively as a resource to help them learn; reflection of their identity; way of maintaining links with their country of origin.

Alongside the process of adaptation emerged the development of a sense of belonging which was described in different ways by participants. Learning the language, getting to know and be known by people around you, increasing familiarity with your environment and being listened to and respected by others, were all identified as supporting the development of a sense of belonging in school. Some young people linked this to helping them feel that they belonged in the UK. The need to be listened to by people around them and the motivation to make a positive contribution in school also emerged as strong themes in some participants' accounts. This seemed to support their adaptation and sense of belonging in secondary school and beyond. These findings are explored further in the following chapter and considered in the context of existing research and psychological theory.

4. Discussion

This chapter begins by discussing the research findings outlined in the previous chapter in relation to existing literature and psychological theory, before exploring the methodological issues raised during this research. The chapter ends by suggesting implications of these findings for practice in schools generally and for Educational Psychologists specifically. Finally recommendations for future research are given.

Discussion of findings in relation to existing literature

Three superordinate themes emerged in the participants' narratives. Each of these is discussed in turn.

4.1. Superordinate theme one: Needing and getting help

All participants constructed themselves as someone in need, particularly during the early stages of their transfer into secondary school, and they described the ways in which they had sought and gained help from teachers, parents and peers. Each of these sources of help is explored below.

4.1.1. The teacher-helper

The benefit of having teachers who helped them during their transfer and settlement into secondary school was described by all participants. Teachers' role in helping refugee pupils in school has already been highlighted by practitioners and described by refugee children (Blackwell & Melzak, 2000; DfES, 2004a; Fox, 2000; Franks, 2006; Hek, 2005; Richman, 1998). The findings from this study confirm that refugee children want and benefit from being offered help by teachers in school and they want this help to extend beyond help with learning. The term 'holistic mentor' coined by Chase et al., (2008) appears to fit well with the nature of the helping role participants described teachers as fulfilling, or wanted teachers to fulfil. However findings indicated that whilst all participants wanted to be helped by teachers, some felt that the only way to get this help was to earn it, for example by helping the

teacher after class. It was not clear why some participants were offered help, whilst others either had to earn it or perceived that they had to earn it. Future research may investigate further the factors which affect whether or not refugee pupils are offered help by teaching staff in school. It may also be interesting to investigate refugee pupils' perceptions of the help they are given from teachers and the way in which they gained this help.

An interesting finding from this research is the emergence of characteristics of the teacher-helper that participants valued. These included: consistency; reliability; personal investment in the relationship, and genuine care and interest in the young person. These characteristics are similar to those of the secure attachment figure described by Bowlby (1982). Attachment theory postulates that individuals will seek out an attachment figure at times of threat or distress in order to increase their sense of security. Given the feelings of fear and loneliness participants reported during their transfer into secondary school it is perhaps unsurprising that they sought out teachers who were able to provide a secure relationship of this kind. This finding indicates that the role of the teacher-helper described by participants extended beyond practical help and included supporting the development of a secure relationship, characteristic of an attachment relationship, within the context of school. Such a relationship may be particularly valuable for refugee children given research which indicates that they will have experienced broken and disrupted attachments to people and places (Melzak, 2000). As such these findings suggest that whilst the practical help teachers provide refugee children is beneficial, the way in which this help is given is also important.

4.1.2. Support from home

Parents appeared to adopt the role of an 'educational advisor' for participants. In particular this involved instilling the importance of education and encouraging them to study hard at school. This supports findings from previous research with refugee children which have highlighted the value their carers attach to education (Hek & Sales, 2002; McKenna, 2005). However, this study showed that whilst parents encouraged their children to work hard

at school, siblings were more often identified by participants as providing practical educational support (in terms of tuition and educational resources) at home, particularly with regard to developing their spoken English and literacy skills. In light of a wide range of research which has shown a positive relationship between parental support with learning at home and pupils' achievement and attainment, the government has made engaging parents in their children's learning a key priority for schools (DCSF, 2007b; DfES 2002b; DfES, 2003; Desforges & Alouchaar, 2003; Harris & Goodall, 2007). The importance of schools engaging the carers of refugee children has also been stressed (Appa, 2005; Hek & DfES, 2005; McKenna, 2005; Rutter, 2003; Szente et al., 2006). This makes the findings from this study particularly important and the apparent lack of parental involvement in the participants' learning at home is concerning. This finding indicates that more needs to be done to engage the parents of refugee children in their child's learning at home. Possible explanations for these findings are explored below.

It is possible that the participants' parents did provide educational support to them at home, but this was simply not mentioned in the young people's accounts. This could be because they perceived the help their siblings gave them as more significant or beneficial than the help given by their parents. However, existing research has shown that refugee parents face a large numbers of barriers to supporting their children's learning at home. For example, Hughes and Beirens (2007) found that until practical domestic issues such as benefits, housing and health were dealt with, refugee parents had little time and emotional energy left to support their children's learning. In addition a lack of knowledge about the education system in the UK, cultural beliefs regarding the role of home and school in teaching and learning, and having limited English language skills, can all get in the way of refugee parents communicating and engaging with their children's school and supporting their learning at home (Crozier & Davies, 2007; DfES, 2002; Doyle & McCorrison, 2008). In light of existing research, participants' older siblings may simply have been more able to support their learning at home.

Whilst no existing research has specifically investigated the educational support provided by parents and siblings of refugee children at home, research findings from studies with linguistic minority pupils, whose parents do not speak English, suggest that siblings often play a very important role in modelling, scaffolding and directly teaching their younger siblings literacy at home, and in some cases this role is played in the absence of any parental support (Gregory, 1998; Kelly, Gregory & Williams, 2001). In addition research with adult bilinguals who grew up in the UK, but whose parents did not speak English, has shown that they acted as 'surrogate parent' for themselves and their younger siblings in many aspects of their schooling (McQuillan & Tse, 1995). For example, reading and responding to letters addressed to their parents from school and making choices about their education without involving their parents. These findings highlight the important role siblings play in supporting the learning of younger children in families where parents do not speak English.

In consequence a number of researchers have called for a move beyond the paradigm of parental involvement in children's learning, advocated by the UK government, to considering a wider framework for family involvement in supporting learning at home, particularly with regard to literacy (Gregory, 1998; Kelly et al., 2001; Volk, 1999). Such a framework would recognise that, particularly in families where parents do not speak English, children are decision makers in their schooling and in the schooling of younger siblings (McQuillan & Tse, 1995). The current research indicates that engaging families of refugee children may be a more appropriate and effective way of supporting learning at home. Indeed failing to do so may mean that, in some cases, school staff are failing to engage with the primary supporters of these children's education at home - siblings. It is argued here that adopting the framework of family involvement would help schools to recognise and utilise the different skills and capabilities of family members in refugee families, including parents and other children. This may offer a more appropriate and effective way of supporting the learning of refugee children at home.

4.1.3. The role of peers

A prominent feature in participants' accounts was the impact of peers on their transfer and settlement into secondary school. For most young people peers were identified as key helpers during this time, for example they helped them to: learn English; understand school rules, and provided supportive friendships. This finding supports the results of other studies with young refugees who identified the role of peers in helping them to settle in school (Hek & Sales, 2002). At the same time many participants also described how the behaviour of peers made their transfer into school difficult and had acted as a barrier to being able to settle in this context. Unhelpful peer behaviours included: bullying; rejecting them when they asked for help, and misbehaving in class which got in the way of their learning. This supports findings from previous research which has highlighted that refugee pupils are often subjected to bullying in schools (Franks, 2006; Hek, & DfES, 2005; Hek & Sales, 2002; Whiteman, 2005). However, findings from this study suggest that bullying is just one example of how the behaviour of some children in school has a negative impact on the settlement of refugee pupils; refugee children may experience a broader range of unhelpful peer behaviours during their transition into secondary school than previous research has indicated.

4.2. *Superordinate theme two: Feeling safe and secure*

Feelings of fear and loneliness were a part of all participants' early accounts of transferring to secondary school. This finding supports that of previous research which has described the initial period of isolation and loneliness that refugee children describe during their transfer to secondary school (Candappa & Iginigie, 2003). These feelings could be understood as a reflection of the participants' sense of not knowing their new world and of the resultant social isolation. They could further be interpreted as a symptom of the loss of home and of a sense of belonging to a place that have been described by Papadopoulos (2002) and Fullilove (1996) respectively. Indeed Papadopoulos (2002) predicts that the loss of home threatens the individual's sense of security leading to feelings of alienation and disorientation. This could account for the feelings of fear and loneliness participants reported

during the early stages of their transfer, before they had re-established a secure base and sense of belonging in this new context.

4.2.1. The experience of bullying

Being bullied was a part of most participants' experience of transferring and settling into secondary school in the UK. This supports findings from a wide range of previous research showing that refugee children are often targets of bullying in school (Doyle & McCorrison, 2008; Franks, 2006; Hek & DfES, 2005; Hek & Sales, 2002; Stanley, 2001; Whiteman, 2005). Furthermore, at least some of the bullying participants described was in connection with the fact that they were not from the UK; for example they were verbally bullied about their accent. This could be understood as a form of racist bullying, and concerns about bullying of this kind targeted at refugees in school (particularly in secondary schools) have already been documented (Doyle & McCorrison; Hek & DfES, 2005; Hek & Sales, 2002; Maegusuku-Hewett et al., 2007; Stanley, 2001; Whiteman, 2005).

In line with previous research which indicates that bullying can have a range of negative outcomes for young people, the harmful consequences of bullying were described by participants in this study and included: self-blame; decreased self-esteem; a sense of powerlessness; decreased interest in learning, and fear (DCSF, 2007; Ofsted, 2003b; Smith & Sharpe, 1994). For one participant the consequences of being bullied were particularly serious: his teacher explained that, according to a psychologist, the bullying he experienced in his UK secondary school triggered PTSD. This finding indicates that, for some refugee children, mental health difficulties are a part of their experience of transferring and adapting to secondary school in the UK. Indeed aspects of this very experience may trigger or exacerbate their mental health difficulties, which may go unnoticed or inadequately addressed in school. It is argued here that whilst all children's mental health is put at risk when they are bullied, refugee children are placed at particular risk and they may experience unique negative mental health outcomes, such as PTSD, as a result of being bullied. This finding also indicates that the discourse of

trauma (discussed in chapter one) can offer an appropriate way of understanding some of the experiences of refugee children in secondary schools. However, given that mental health difficulties were a significant part of only one participant's account, the use of the trauma discourse as a universal framework from which to conceptualise the experiences of refugee children is not supported by this research.

The research findings also showed that participants were not passive victims of bullying, rather they implemented a wide range of strategies to overcome bullying and increase their sense of safety in school. These included: telling a teacher; ignoring the bullies; confronting bullies; addressing the cause of bullying, and building positive relationships with peers, including the bullies. These strategies are similar to those identified in existing research with children in UK schools (Oliver & Candappa, 2003). In addition, whilst the experience of bullying had a number of negative outcomes for participants, the findings also suggest that experiencing and personally overcoming bullying may, in some instances, lead to positive outcomes for these young people. For example, one participant spoke with pride about how he had successfully combated bullying by working hard to learn English and answer questions in lessons so that the bullies wouldn't have a reason to target him. This led him to feel a sense of agency, pride and confidence. This finding could be understood within the framework of resilience: the process of development which results from experiencing and overcoming adversity.

4.2.2. Living in the moment

'Living in the moment' involved attempting to think only of the present by avoiding thoughts of the past and of the future. This emerged in one participant's account as a coping strategy to manage feelings of uncertainty and insecurity. Previous research with refugee children and young people has identified this coping strategy in unaccompanied refugees and in accompanied refugees whose immigration status is uncertain, but not in those whose future in the UK is secure (Crossley, 2000; Maegusuku-Hewett et al., 2007; Stanley, 2000). Notably this theme emerged in the account of the only

unaccompanied refugee interviewed. In light of previous research findings, this theme may not have emerged in other participants' accounts because their future in the UK was more secure.

Notably thoughts of the past and of home did emerge in this participant's account, as well as most other young people interviewed. This finding indicates that thoughts of this kind are a part of these young people's experience and that whilst some may try to avoid them, this will not always be possible. As such, the results indicate that some refugee children may benefit from being supported to express their thoughts about the past in school and, in some instances, from developing strategies to manage these thoughts and the feelings they evoke. For example, previous research has shown that teaching strategies from Cognitive Behavioural Therapy can have positive emotional and behavioural outcomes for both primary and secondary aged refugee children in UK schools (Enhtholt et al., 2005' O'Shea et al., 2000).

4.3. Superordinate theme three: Adaptation and belonging

The process of individual adaptation to deal with the acculturation described by Berry (1991) emerged across all participants' narratives. The young people described the ways in which they had noticed differences between their home country and the UK and begun the process of adapting to these. This adaptation was described in terms of: developing social relationships; being known by other people; knowing the geography of the school and local area; knowing national laws and school rules. It was also highlighted through participants descriptions of changes in their personal beliefs and behaviours. One young person withdrew from school because of his difficulties settling into this setting. This can also be understood from the perspective of acculturation, since withdrawal from the adaptive arena is an adaptation strategy when the pressure from the environment becomes too great (Berry, 1991). According to Sternberg's theory of intelligence this is also an intelligent behaviour, since selecting another environment may be the most intelligent choice when you are unable to modify your environment to meet

your needs (Sternberg, 2005). Findings from this research support using the acculturation framework to make sense of refugee children's experiences.

For some young people, getting to know their world in the ways outlined above was linked to developing a sense of belonging in school, which supports findings from previous research (Goodenow, 1993; Wehlage et al., 1989). In particular results from the current study highlight how important it was for participants to get to know their environment, adding weight to claims that developing familiarity and attachment to a place is a fundamental human need (Fullilove, 1996; Eisenbruch, 1983). Findings indicate that making school rules and national laws explicit to refugee pupils may support them to settle in school and the UK.

As they became more familiar with their school, participants spoke of the positive experience of being able to make a contribution in this setting, for example by helping new arrivals. Previous research with refugee adolescents outside of the school context has concluded that creating the opportunity for these young people to leave a mark in their new contexts is of fundamental importance in the process of settlement (Kohli & Mather, 2003). This study suggests that this may also apply to settlement in school.

4.3.1. Language and acculturation

Some participants expressed a sense of closeness or emotional attachment to their first language and one participant suggested his first language was symbolic of his cultural identity, serving as a marker to indicate where he belonged. This finding echoes existing research (Burck, 2004). Despite this attachment, all participants avoided speaking their first language in school, particularly during lessons. Previous research has identified a similar pattern (Clark, E, 2007; Pagett, 2006). These studies both concluded that children avoided speaking their first language in school because they did not want to appear different to their peers. In contrast, participants in the current study explained that it was because they believed speaking their first language would get in the way of learning English. In this sense the young people experienced a degree of tension between their attachment to their first

language and their desire to learn English. According to Norton (2000), immigrants make a choice whether or not to invest in learning English based upon an analysis of the potential benefits this may provide. The participants in this study appeared to have chosen to invest in learning English. However, results show that this was to the detriment of investment in their first language; they avoided speaking in their first language in school because they believed that this would get in the way of learning English. In relation to the acculturation process the findings suggest that participants' negative beliefs about their first language led to a degree of assimilation in school (characterised by relinquishing one's cultural identity) rather than integration (characterised by maintaining cultural identity as well as adjusting to the larger society) (Berry, 1991).

This research finding is concerning given research which shows that supporting children to maintain and develop their first language in school has a wide range of social and academic benefits including: sustaining communication with people from the same linguistic or cultural background; enhancing the intellectual and academic resources of the individual; supporting second language acquisition (Cummins, 2000). It also indicates that some of the participants' beliefs about language learning were incorrect. Specifically, whilst participants were right in thinking that their English language learning would likely increase as a result of greater exposure to and use of spoken English, they were unaware of the academic value of developing and using their first language in school, including the fact that facility in their first language would help rather than hinder their English language learning (Hall, 2001).

For some participants the belief that speaking their first language would hinder English language learning had arisen from advice from parents, teachers and other students. With reference to teachers, this finding is in conflict with a range of good practice guidance which advocates encouraging children to maintain and use their first language in school (DfES, 2004a; Ofsted, 2003a; Rutter, 2003). Results also indicated that some parents had discouraged participants from speaking their first language in school because

they believed this might get in the way of their education, which supports findings from previous research (Cole, 1998). The research findings suggest that pupils, teachers and parents may benefit from being better informed about the benefits of supporting first language development in school.

4.3.2. Having your voice heard

This research indicates that some refugee adolescents valued being able to tell their story to a caring adult in school who understood them and who was able to support them with difficulties, both inside and outside of school. This finding supports previous research with refugee adolescents and adds validity to government and practitioner guidance which has advocated creating opportunities for refugee children to communicate their feelings to an adult in school (Blackwell, & Melzack, 2000; DfES, 2004a; Hek & Sales, 2002; Hughes & Beirens, 2007; Szente et al., 2006). The current research also showed that whilst some participants wanted to talk to an adult in school about their thoughts and feelings, they were not always presented with the opportunity to do so.

All participants reported that they had enjoyed taking part in the research interview and for some this process seemed to serve a therapeutic function in the sense that it appeared to lead to a positive change in their psychological wellbeing. For example, one participant described how his head felt *'lighter'* following the interview and explained that this was the first time he had spoken about his experiences to anyone. These findings could be understood from the perspective of psychodynamic theory which has highlighted the psychological value of supporting individuals who have experienced adversity to construct a narrative around their experiences, in particular focusing on the resilience and personal agency they have shown (Melzak, 2000). This theory has informed existing psychological interventions with young refugees. For example, testimonial psychotherapy¹³ has been used with adult and adolescent refugees, and drawings have been used to

¹³ This form of therapy involves describing the difficulties you have faced to a therapist, who transcribes what is said and asks questions about the stories told, prompting narratives of survival and agency.

support younger refugee children, to document and create a coherent narrative surrounding their migration experiences (Lustig, 2004; Rousseau & Heusch, 2000). In the context of this theory and subsequent research, it is possible that the following features of the interview process may have been helpful to participants: telling their story to a caring adult; being listened to; having their story recorded; being questioned in a way that encouraged them to notice the personal skills and agency they showed, and the positive impact their stories could have for other young people like them. Future research may seek to investigate further the psychological impact of research interviews conducted with refugee children in schools.

4.4. *Methodological issues*

Below I reflect upon the methodological strengths of this research before going on to explore some of the main methodological issues that were raised through the research process. Given the debate surrounding the applicability of using IPA with children learning English as an additional language, particular attention is paid to the applicability of this research method for the participants in this study (Smith, 2004).

4.4.1. *Strengths of the research methodology*

The idiographic nature of the study enabled the views and experiences of a group of young people whose personal perspectives have been under-represented in previous research to come to light (Reading & Robertson, 2006). Research findings did not homogenise the experiences of refugees, rather they allowed both similarities and difference in the young people's accounts of their experiences to emerge. A wide range of individual and contextual factors that impacted upon their transfer and settlement into secondary school emerged. In consequence this research has given insight into the personal experiences of refugee children as they begin secondary school in the UK and it goes some way to begin to address the lack of current research in this area.

The results show that the semi-structured interview schedule allowed the interviewees to bring up issues that were pertinent to them and which I had not anticipated. This feature of the methodology facilitated a richer understanding of the participants' experiences. For example, whilst participants were not asked about their experiences prior to entering school in the UK, all spontaneously spoke of these during the interview.

In the context of wider debates surrounding the potential risk of interviewing children who may have experienced traumatic events, I was concerned that participation in this study would not be a positive or helpful experience (Dryregrov et al., 2000). In contrast feedback from participants indicated that the interview had been an enjoyable and positive experience for them.

4.4.2. Homogeneity of sample

I sought to recruit as homogenous a sample as possible and the characteristics that participants shared were outlined in chapter two. This was important since I was investigating the shared experience of a group of young people, therefore the more homogenous the group the greater their shared experience is likely to be. However, due to a limited potential sample size I was not able to ensure homogeneity in some characteristics including: country of origin; being an accompanied versus unaccompanied refugee; cultural and religious beliefs; age. Results suggest that at least some of these factors did have an impact on the participants' narratives, for example the experience of 'living in the moment' seemed to be unique to the unaccompanied refugee interviewed. Indeed there was diversity as well as similarity across participants' accounts; such diversity may have been caused by one or some of the factors outlined above.

However, I argue here that this diversity was an enriching rather than limiting aspect of this research. A great number of similarities in the personal accounts of participants emerged in spite of their individual differences. This is a valuable finding since it suggests that refugee adolescents share many aspects of their experience of transferring into secondary school in the UK,

despite being different to each other in a number of ways, for example their country of origin. Furthermore, where differences between individual accounts did emerge, this highlighted areas where personal characteristics could impact upon the way in which refugee children experience their transfer to secondary school. These occasions were helpful in terms of stressing the heterogeneity characteristic of the refugee child's experience and in indicating areas that warranted further investigation in future research, for example investigating the impact of immigration status on the coping strategies used by refugees during their transfer to secondary school.

4.4.3. Impact of the research findings

This research has provided unique insight into the experience of transferring and settling into secondary school for six refugee boys. It is argued here that the implications of findings from this study are also applicable to groups not included, for example refugee boys transferring to other secondary schools and refugee children in general. At the same time further research investigating the applicability of these findings to other populations is necessary. In addition, findings from this study have highlighted a number of areas that warrant further investigation, and suggestions for future research are offered later in this chapter.

I was struck by my ability to relate to the experiences of the participants and I hoped that by directly quoting participants in chapter three I would enable these findings to resonate with other readers. Informed by Smith (2004), I considered that the findings from this study could bring the reader closer to understanding and relating to the experiences of refugee children. As such I hoped that the individual stories presented here might bring us closer to understanding our shared experiences as human beings, for example with regard to how we cope with change, not knowing and not belonging.

The interpretative nature of this research meant that the findings were related to wider psychological theories and research. For example the participants' descriptions of the type of help their teachers provided was related to other

research which has illustrated the important role teachers play in supporting refugee children in schools, and in the context of attachment theory. As such this research has added to existing psychological knowledge.

4.4.4. Using IPA with children who are learning English

As Smith (2004) notes, to date most research using IPA has been conducted with English speaking adults. Given that this research was conducted with children who are learning English as an additional language, the applicability of using IPA with this population is reflected upon below.

Participants were able to give rich personal accounts of their experiences and these were analysed effectively using IPA. At the same time I was aware that the participants' competence in English impacted upon the richness of the story they were able to tell. A larger potential sample size would have afforded the opportunity to ensure that the participants were homogeneous in their English language abilities and therefore had an equal opportunity to tell their story. I reflected that this would have been preferable, but was not possible given the limited potential sample size available. One alternative would have been to interview participants in their first language and use an interpreter. This was not possible in this study due to limited resources. In addition, interviewing participants in their first language can present a number of challenges. For example, interpretation is never exact and always a reflection of the interpreter's understanding of the participant's story, therefore the potential for misunderstanding between researcher and participant tends to increase (Raval, 1996; Tribe, 2007). In addition Raval and Smith (2003) argue that working with interpreters decreases psychologists' ability to achieve a mutual understanding of their clients', or in this case participants', stories. Following research with bilingual young people, Burck (2004) suggests that discussing experiences in a second language can even help people to talk about difficult experiences, because they feel more emotionally distanced from them. The impact of conducting research using IPA in participants' first or second language may warrant further investigation. This is discussed later in this chapter.

In order to limit the impact of any difficulties participants had expressing themselves in English, and in line with recommendations made by Smith (2004), I drew upon my professional training as an Educational Psychologist to modify the nature of interviews to ensure that I supported the participants to tell their story. For example, at times I re-phrased questions when they were not clear to participants, asked a greater number of questions to prompt responses, and spent time clarifying the meaning behind what participants said. This made most of the interviews more structured than is usually the case with research using IPA, a reality that has been anticipated by Smith (2004). I reflected that this could have limited the participants' opportunity to tell their story from their perspective. However, the results indicated that the semi-structured nature of the interview ensured that all participants were able to raise topics that I had not anticipated and therefore not included on the interview schedule. This suggests that the interviews remained open enough for topics pertinent to the participants to come forward. In all, the research findings indicate that it is possible to use IPA with refugee children who are learning English as an additional language without the need for interpreters, but that modifications to the way in which the interview is conducted (as described above) are necessary.

4.5. Implications

Findings from this research have a wide range of practical implications for Educational Psychologists specifically and for schools generally. Some specific ideas are provided below, before suggestions for future research are offered.

4.5.1. Implications for schools and the practice of Educational Psychologists

1. Providing a holistic mentor in school

Participants described a range of school based factors that helped them during their transfer into secondary school. Specifically, findings indicate that

refugee children in secondary schools may benefit from being assigned a specific member of teaching staff who approaches them to offer and provide help when they need it. Children want this help to extend beyond help with learning to include practical and emotional support. Results suggest that the nature of this relationship may provide the opportunity for these young people to build a secure attachment to an adult and this can help them to feel safe and secure in school. Furthermore, the experience of being known by a teacher in school can help these young people to begin to develop a sense of belonging here.

2. Being helped to know people, places and rules

Participants benefited from knowing about school rules, systems and layout. In some instances this extended to wanting to know about the geography of the local area and national laws. This may have helped them to challenge their overriding feelings of not knowing and not belonging (Fullilove, 1996). In addition, getting to know people in school and being known by them helped these young people to settle. Together these factors supported participants to develop a sense of belonging in school and in some cases to feel that they belonged in the UK. Schools which assist refugee pupils to develop this knowledge and these relationships may help them during their transfer and adaptation to school.

3. Creating the opportunity to make a positive contribution

Given that many participants sought out opportunities to make a positive contribution in school, for example by helping pupils and teachers, the findings suggest that these young people may be helped to settle in school if they are supported by school staff to make a positive contribution of this kind. Educational Psychologists have a role in outlining the potential positive psychological outcomes interventions of this kind could have for refugee children to staff in secondary schools and in supporting their implementation.

4. Using a family framework to understand and support learning at home

The findings from this research indicate that in many cases older siblings may be the primary educators of refugee children at home, particularly with regard to teaching spoken English and English literacy. This indicates that it may be helpful if school staff and Educational Psychologists work to engage the families of refugee children to understand and support learning at home. It is also possible that school-based interventions targeted at older siblings of refugees that teach them how to teach key skills (for example within literacy) to their younger siblings at home may be beneficial for both siblings. For example, it may reinforce existing knowledge in the older sibling, increase their confidence and help to develop learning skills in both children. Where appropriate Educational Psychologists could have a role in supporting schools to develop and implement interventions of this kind.

5. Highlighting the positive impact of using and developing the child's first language in school

Results indicate that in some instances children in secondary schools (including refugee children), parents of refugee children and teachers, are misinformed or unaware of the academic benefits of supporting first language development in school (Cummins, 2000). In consequence the refugee pupils in this study had come to believe that speaking their first language in school would get in the way of learning English, which resulted in their avoiding using their first language in school. Educational Psychologists have a role in making clear the benefits of supporting first language development in school to teaching staff and pupils, as well as to parents in the local community. For example through staff training and parenting groups run through the extended schools service.

6. Recording, monitoring and addressing bullying targeted at refugee pupils

The results of this study indicate that refugee children may:

- be at greater risk of being bullied in secondary school;
- experience a greater risk to their mental health as a consequence of being bullied;
- be particularly vulnerable to bullying during the early stages of their transfer to secondary school when they are least aware of what to do about it.

It may be beneficial to these young people if induction procedures in school ensure that they understand what bullying is and what they should do if they are bullied (including who they should tell in school). Failing to do so could lead to an underestimation of the amount of bullying that these young people are experiencing. More generally Educational Psychologists have a role in encouraging and supporting schools to record incidents of bullying targeted at refugee children and the nature of these incidents. Psychologists may also work in collaboration with school staff to develop anti-bullying policies and practices based on this information.

7. Supporting the inclusion of refugee children in secondary schools

Whilst participants' accounts were dominated by stories of being helped by teachers and peers and of individual agency in overcoming difficulties, most young people also spoke of experiencing some degree of social exclusion, unmet educational and psychological needs and the emergence of negative beliefs about their home language. In light of Pinson & Arnot's (2007) claim that the integration of refugee children in our schools serves as a litmus test for how inclusive and supportive our education system really is, these results indicate that there is still some work to be done to ensure that refugee children in secondary schools feel fully supported and included. Educational Psychologists may work at all levels of the education system, including: at a local authority level; whole school level; with individual teachers and children

in schools, to encourage, support and enable the full inclusion of all refugee children in UK schools.

4.5.2. Recommendations for future research

To date little research has investigated the educational experiences of refugee children based on their accounts, and even less has specifically addressed their experience of transferring and adapting in UK secondary schools. This research has contributed towards addressing this deficit. The findings from the current study highlighted a number of possible areas for future research and these are outlined below.

- Investigating the experience of transferring and adapting to secondary school amongst other populations would be beneficial in order to assess the applicability of these research findings to other groups of children and educational institutions.
- It would be interesting to conduct this research again allowing participants to tell their stories in both their first language and English in order to investigate further the impact of language on the research findings. In addition research of this kind would enable the researcher to reflect upon the impact of conducting research using IPA with and without interpreters, for example on their ability to emotionally engage with the participant.
- Findings from the current study indicate that whilst refugee pupils think that they need help and want to be helped in school, some are more likely to be helped than others. Future research may investigate how refugee pupils experience being helped in school, with particular attention to the individual (for example English language abilities) and contextual factors (for example year group) which appear to contribute towards whether or not they are offered the help they want.

- Results from the current study indicate that there may be some differences in the experiences of unaccompanied versus accompanied refugee children, as well as between those children whose immigration status is certain versus those for whom it is not. Future research may seek to compare the experiences of these different groups of refugees during their transfer to secondary school.
- This study has shown that being bullied is a part of refugee pupils' experience of secondary school in the UK. Much current research has outlined the negative consequences of bullying for children in UK schools. However, there appears to be little research which has investigated the experience and consequences of bullying for refugee children specifically, and from their perspective. Future research may seek to rectify this deficit.
- Whilst government guidance advocates supporting first language development in school, this research indicates that some teachers, pupils and parents may continue to hold negative beliefs about the use of languages other than English in school. It would be interesting to investigate further beliefs about first language use in school amongst teachers, pupils and parents, particularly in relation to its impact on learning.
- Current research in UK schools has investigated the views of parents, children and teachers (including refugee pupils, parents/carers and teachers) regarding parental involvement with learning at home and engagement with schools (Doyle & McCorriston, 2008; Harris & Goodall, 2008). Yet there is no research concerning the role different family members play, for example siblings, in supporting the learning of refugee children at home. It would be interesting to investigate this further in future research.

4.6. Reflections on the research process

I acknowledged and reflected upon the active role I played in the research process and sought to maintain a phenomenological attitude throughout. This has been described by Finlay (2008) as:

“The process of retaining an empathic openness to the world while reflexively identifying and restraining pre-understandings so as to engage phenomena in themselves” (p.29)

The perspectives and beliefs that I brought to the research were outlined in chapter two. In addition I used a reflective diary to continually reflect upon my personal experience of the research process and on my interpretation of the phenomena being studied (see appendix 9). I did this in order to move beyond my previous understandings of the phenomena and towards remaining open to the experiences of participants and the meanings these held for them.

I was aware of the power imbalance that is often inherent in the researcher – participant relationship and that as a white British female researcher, who has lived her whole life in the UK, there were many factors that clearly marked me as different to the participants. I reflected that these factors could deter participants from telling their story and inhibit my ability to understand their experiences from their perspective. In consequence I was careful to highlight to participants how important I thought their experiences and views were, alongside how little was currently known. In doing so I hoped to reinforce their role as experts in their own lives and empower them to tell their stories. I reflected that the differences between me and the participants could be beneficial since they stopped my over-identifying with participants. Specifically this could have decreased the possibility that I would interpret their stories based on my personal experiences of being through similar events to them. At the same time I was careful to reflect upon my cultural beliefs via my reflective diary and supervision to consider the impact these could have on my interpretation of the interviews. Furthermore, in order to remain sensitive to the different cultures and beliefs of the participants, I investigated dominant cultural beliefs and histories of the participants' countries of origin.

I was struck by the motivation of participants to tell their story to me. I found many of the experiences they shared highly emotive and sometimes felt that my primary role as a researcher rather than psychologist disempowered me from contributing towards immediate positive change for these children. Regular supervision was important to reflect upon the issues raised and to make sense of the experiences that participants shared.

Research findings indicated that participation in the research may have served a positive function for participants. For example, given that the experience of having your voice heard and making a positive contribution to your world was an important part of some participants' accounts, I felt that participation in this research may have created the opportunity for these young people to fulfil this need. This fitted well with my view of my role as a trainee psychologist who contributes towards making a positive difference to children's lives.

My role as a trainee Educational Psychologist undoubtedly had an impact on the way in which the research was conducted and analysed. I felt that my professional skills were helpful in eliciting the views of young people and enabling them to feel safe to express these views in the context of the interview. Furthermore, I constantly engage in reflective practice during my work and this ensured that I was skilled at reflecting upon the research process throughout.

5. Concluding comments

As I interviewed the participants about their experience of transferring and adapting to secondary school I was particularly struck by their motivation to share their stories with me and I was humbled by their accounts of the challenges they had faced and the ways in which they had coped with these. Throughout this research process I have felt privileged to bear witness to their rich narratives. Whilst each individual's experience was unique, analysis using IPA also enabled common features of this experience to emerge, both negative and positive. The young people identified a wide range of individual and contextual factors that helped them during their transfer to secondary school in the UK, as well as a number of experiences that were less than helpful. Together these have clear implications for practice in schools and for the work of Educational Psychologists. Using IPA as an approach allowed me to highlight the perspectives of a group of young people whose voice has, to date, been largely unheard and under-represented in the research literature. It also afforded me the opportunity to elicit their stories, through analysis to begin to gain an insider's perspective on their experiences and to share this with the reader. This research has brought us closer to understanding the experiences of refugee children in UK secondary schools from their perspective.

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7. Appendix

Appendix 1: Ethical approval from the Institute of Education Ethics Committee of the Department of Psychology and Human Development

Lorraine Fernandes
Programme Administrator
Psychology and Human Development
25 Woburn Square
London WC1H 0AA

Tel +44 (0)20 7612 6265
Fax +44 (0)20 7612 6304

Miss Catherine Burcham
46 Antrim Mansions
Antrim Road
London NW3 4XU



Leading education
and social research
Institute of Education
University of London

20 Bedford Way
London WC1H 0AL
Tel +44 (0)20 7612 6000
Fax +44 (0)20 7612 6126
Email info@ioe.ac.uk
www.ioe.ac.uk

15 April 2008

Dear Catherine

I am pleased to inform you that your Year 2 project has been approved by the Ethics Committee of the Dept of Psychology and Human Development and that you now have ethical approval.

Your ethics form will be kept on file. Should there be any further queries, these should be addressed to your dissertation supervisor and/ or your tutor.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Fernandes', written over a thin horizontal line.

Lorraine Fernandes
Programme Administrator
Doctorate in Professional Educational, Child and Adolescent Psychology

Appendix 2: Ethical approval from the Research Governance Ethics Committee of the local authority where the research took place

Our Ref:
CSRGF17

Date 2nd May 2008

Dear Catherine Burcham,

Re: Research Application

This is to confirm that your research proposal has been considered by the X Research and Performance Development Forum and has been approved.

We wish you well in your research study.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Research and Performance Development Team should you need any further assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Vicky X

Vicky X
Research & Performance Development Manager
Strategy, Partnerships and Performance

Appendix 3: Letter to head teacher

Dear Ms X,

I'm writing in the hope you will be willing to help with a research project on the experience of refugee children during their transition into secondary school. Data held by the Local Authority indicate that a number of pupils in your school are refugee or asylum seekers.

I am an Educational Psychologist in training working for the Educational Psychology Service in X. On behalf of the Institute of Education, University of London and in collaboration with the X Educational Psychology Service and EMA team I am about to begin this piece of research in X Secondary Schools.

This project aims to investigate the school based factors that help children who are refugees to develop a sense of belonging in school. It aims to provide insight into the experiences of these pupils and to inform school based practice to support the needs of these young people. It will entail individual interviews with 6-10 pupils who are refugee or asylum seekers. Interviews will take place in school and will last under an hour. The research will not disrupt the work of the school. I will produce a summary report of my findings which will of course be shared with your school.

The research will require informed consent to take part from the pupils and their parents/carers. With this in mind I have attached a draft letter for parents and pupils which you may be interested to look at. Pupils would also have the opportunity to talk to me about this research before they consent to taking part.

This project has received ethical approval from the British Psychological Society and is undergoing ethical approval from the X Local Authority Research department. It is supervised by Academic Researchers at the Institute of Education, University of London and by two Senior Educational Psychologists.

Clearly this letter provides only a brief introduction to this research and I am happy to meet with you or to liaise with a member of your school staff to discuss this research further and answer any questions you might have. In the meantime should you wish to contact me I have included my contact details below.

I hope very much that you and your pupils will take this opportunity to contribute towards this research.

Yours sincerely,

Catherine Burcham
Educational Psychologist in training

Appendix 4: Information sheet and consent form for parents /carers

Dear (PARENT/CARERS NAME)

We are completing research with children in Secondary Schools in X on behalf of the Institute of Education, University of London.

In collaboration with your child's secondary school we have selected your child as suitable to take part in this research and would like to offer this opportunity to them.

The research is looking at what secondary schools do to help children who are refugees, asylum-seekers or have leave to remain, to settle and achieve in school. We hope that the information collected will inform and improve practice in schools.

Your child would be asked a few questions by a researcher. This will take about 1 hour and will take place in school. Your child's education will not be disrupted in any way. The research will lead to a research report, but your child's name / details will not appear in this report.

Please contact me if you would like any other information or to meet and discuss this research further. If necessary, I can arrange an interpreter to accompany me. My telephone number and email address are included below.

Please fill in form on the next page to agree to your child taking part in this research.

I would like to thank-you in advance for taking the time to read this information, and hope that you and your child will decide to take part in this research.

Yours sincerely,

Catherine Burcham (Researcher)

Consent Form

I understand that all information collected about my child during the research will be treated as confidential and that it will not be possible to identify my child in the research report. My child's name and details will not be shared.

I understand that my child has the right to withdraw from the research at any point, and that if I or he chooses to withdraw all information collected will be destroyed and will not be used in the research.

I agree to **(Child's Name)** taking part in the research 'supporting children who are refugee / asylum seekers in school'

Your Signature

Your Name

Please return this form in the envelope provided

Thank-you

**Appendix 5: Information sheet and consent form for parents/carers:
Somali version**

Ku: _____

Waxaan dhamaystiris baaris cilmiyeed ka samaynayaa X school oo aan usamaynaayo Kuliyada Tacliinta, Jamacada London (Institute of Education, University of London) iyo Xaafada X (X Local Authority). Si wada shaqay leh waxaanu aniga iyo shaqaalaha dugsiga X School udooranay (Name of the pupil / magaca ardayga) in uu ku haboon yahay in uu ka qayb qaato baaritaankan aanuna siino firsad.

Waxa uu baaritaankani eegayaa waxyaabaha ay dugsida sare ay sameeyaan si ay u kaalmeeyaan in ay la qabsadaan dugsiga libna garaan caruuraha magan galya doonka ah ama haysta sharciga looyaqaan (leave to remain).

Baadhitaanku waxaa ku jira in (Name of the pupil / magaca ardayga) aan sualo ka weydiiyo waxyaabaha ka caawiyey in uu la qabsado dugsiga. Waxaana uu waraysigu ka dhacayaa dugsiga kama badanayso 1 saac. (Name of the pupil / magaca ardayga) tacliintiisa tani kama qasayso sinaba. Baaristani waxa ay horkacaysaa warbixin laakiin (Name of the pupil / magaca ardayga) magaciisa iyo wax kale oo shikhsi ahaantiisa ku saabsan toona ma ay ku jiridoonaa warbixinta.

Min fadlan buuxi foomka boga denbe in aad ogoshahay (Name of the pupil / magaca ardayga) **ka qayb qaato baaristan**

Hadii aad jeceshay faah faahin dheeraad ah ama in aynu kulano kana wada hadalo baaris cilmiyeedkan minfadlan illa soo xidhiidh tilifoonkayga iyo e-mail ka aan xaga hoose soo raaciyey. Hadii ay lagama maar maan noqoto in aad u baahato tur jabaan waxaan soo ka xaysanayaa turjibaan.

Waxaan jecelahay in aan hore kuugu mahad celiyo sidaad wakhti u siisay in aad akhridid macluumaadkan. Waxaanan rajaynayaa in aan raali ka tahay in uu (Name of the pupil / magaca ardayga) ka qayb qaato baaris cilmiyeedkan

Yours sincerely,

Catherine Burcham (Cimlibare)

Foomka Ogolaanshaha

Waxaan fahmay in macluamadka la uruuruyey intuu socday baadhis celmiyeedku loola dhaqmaayo siqarsoodi ah iyo in aysan sinaba udhacdoonin in laga garto baaris cilmiyeedka wiil kayga ama cida ka ah masuulka. Waxaan kaloo fahmay in magaca ilmahayga ama cida ka masuulka ahi toona lala wadaagayn cidkale.

Waxaan fahmay in ilmahayga iyo aniguba aanu xaq u leenahay inaanu markii aanu doono diidi karo in aanan ka qayb qaadano baaris celimiyeedkan iyo in aan hadii aniga iyo isaguba aanu doorano in aan ka noqono la baabin doono macluumaadka oo dhan loonana isticmaalin baaris cilmiyeedka.

Waxaan ogolaaday..... (Magaca wiilka) in uu ka qayb qaato baaris cilmiyeedkan taageeraysa caruuraha magan galyo doonka ah.

Saxeexaaga:

Magacaaga:

Min fadlan kusooceli foomkan galka lagu soo raaciyey.

Waad mahadsanthay.

**Appendix 6: Information sheet and consent form for parents /carers:
Turkish version**

Sayın

Eđitim Enstitüsü, Londra Üniversitesi ve X Belediyesi adına yapmakta olduđum arařtırmamı Name of school okulunda tamamlamakdayım. Name of school okulunda alıřanlarında iřbirliđi ile, NAME OF PUPIL arařtırmamda yer almak üzere seilmiřtir.

Arařtırmamın amacı, etnik gruplardan gelen ocukların alıřmaları ve bařarılı olmaları iin, okuların neleri daha iyi yapmaları gerektiđini bulmaktır. Bulgularımızın okullara yardım etmesini umarız.

NAME OF PUPIL'a okula nasıl alıřtıđı hakkında, benim tarafımdan sorulacaktır. Bu grüşme okulda yapılacak ve bir saatten fazla sürmeyecektir. NAME OF PUPIL'in dersleri etkilenmeyecektir. Arařtırmamın sonularını bir rapora dönüřtüreceđim, fakat NAME OF PUPIL'in adı ve detayları raporumda görünmeyecektir.

NAME OF PUPIL'in bu arařtırmada yer almasını onaylamak iin iliřikdeki formu doldurmanızı rica ederim.

Daha fazla bilgi veya benimle bu arařtırma hakkında grüşmek iin ařađıdaki telefon numaramı ve elektronik posta adresimi kullanabilirsiniz. Gerekirse, tercüman ayarlayabilirim. Bu bilgiyi okuduđunuz ve yardımınız iin řimdiden teřekkür ederim.

NAME OF PUPIL'in bu arařtırmada yer almasını onaylamanızı umarım.

Saygılarımla,

Catherine Burcham (Arařtırmacı)

Onay Formu

Bu arařtırmanın sonuçlarının gizli ve ocuęumun/baktıęım ocuęun kimlięinin saklı tutulacaęını anlıyorum. ocuęumun/baktıęım ocuęun adının paylařılmayacaęını anlıyorum.

ocuęumun/baktıęım ocuęun bu arařtırmadan istedikleri zaman vaz getikleri takdirde toplanan bilgilerin yok edileceęini ve arařtırmada kullanılmayacaęını anlıyorum.

..... (ocuęun adı) 'Etnik gruplardan gelen ocukların okullarda desteklenmesi' adlı arařtırmada yer almasını onaylıyorum

İmza

Ad ve soyadı

Lutfen bu formayı verilen zarfla geri gonderin

Tesekkurler

Appendix 7: Information for participants

Dear X

We are interested in researching what helps pupils who have arrived at your secondary school from other countries to settle in school, to make friends and to learn well. To do this we want to talk to pupils (like you) about what it was like when they first started at their secondary school and what it is like for them now. This leaflet explains a bit about this research so that you can decide whether or not you would like to take part.

What would I have to do?

You would meet with a researcher in school. This would usually be in lesson time, but could be after school if you like. The researcher has worked with lots of different young people in schools before. She would meet with you for about an hour and talk to you about your experience of school and ask you about the things that helped you when you first arrived at your secondary school.

The things that you say during the interview will be confidential which means that the researcher will not tell anyone else what you say. What you say will be used in the 'research report' which will be published for other people to see, but your name and other details which could identify you will not be included in this report.

Why should I take part?

What you and other pupils tell us will be used to write a 'research report' that will be shared with people who work in schools. This report will tell schools what pupils think they could do to help children when they first arrive at secondary school. By taking part in this research you can help to make sure that other children like you have a good experience when they first arrive at secondary school.

What else should I know?

To take part in the research you need to tell the person going through this information with you that you would like to take part. Your parents/carers have also been sent a letter about this research and they also need to agree that you can take part. If you and your parents/carers both agree that you can take part in the research you will be sent a letter to confirm this and a time will be arranged for you to meet with the researcher in school.

If you decide to take part in this research, but change your mind later that is Ok! Just let the researcher, your parent/carer or a teacher at school know that you don't want to take part anymore. The researcher will not use any of the things that you have discussed in the research report.

If you have any questions ask the person who is going through this leaflet with you. I really hope that this information is clear and that you would like to take part in the research.

Best wishes,

(Catherine Burcham, Researcher)

Appendix 8: Semi structured interview schedule

Introduction and rapport building

- Outline what we will talk about and that this will last for about 1 hour
- Outline right to withdraw
- Explain confidentiality
- And ask if they are still happy to talk to me (consent)
- Informal chat/rapport building

Transfer to secondary school

- I wonder if we could go back in time a bit and think about when you first started at this school. Tell be a bit about this time.

Prompts

- What were some of your thoughts and feelings about starting at this school?
- What if anything has been good about coming to this school? Is there any thing about coming to this school that has not been so good?
- What helped you when you first came to this school?
- What things made it hard for you when you first started at this secondary school? How did you manage to cope with this?
- Imagine there is a boy like you about to start at this secondary school, what advice would you give him?
- Imagine you had the power to go back to this time and tell the teachers and other pupils in the school what they could have done to have helped you, what would you say?

Belonging and language

- How much do you feel that you 'fit in' at this school? What is that like for you?

Prompts

- It is important to you to fit in at this school? Why is that?
- So what do you have to do to 'fit in' at this school?
- Tell be about the languages you speak and how you use them.

Prompts:

- What languages do you speak now? Was it always this way?
- What difference does speaking English make to you?
- What difference does speaking L1 make to you?
- How do you choose which language to speak?

Ending

- Is there anything that I should have asked you but didn't?
- How have you found this interview?

Prompt

- Was there anything that was good to talk about? Anything that was difficult to talk about?
- Any questions?
- Inform them that Mr X is next door if they want to talk to him about the interview. Tell them what will happen next and thank them for participation.

Appendix 9: Extracts from reflective diary

12.06.08

At the end of my interview with Ajani I was struck by his disclosure that he had '*never shared these difficult things with anybody*' and that his '*head felt lighter*'. I wondered; why hasn't he talked about these things with anybody before? Perhaps teachers have assumed that he does not seem to need help because he presents as a very contained, sensible, balanced young person. Also from his account it seems that his behaviour in school was very good and that he worked hard to learn. Perhaps he was easily overlooked because he worked hard and kept quiet. This made me wonder if the examples of advice and help he had given to teachers in school (e.g. where to put a camera to stop people smoking) could be interpreted as a behavioural response to being overlooked by teachers – this behaviour was a way to get him noticed by teachers and senior management in the school.

This interview led me to reflect upon the therapeutic value of telling your story and having it listened to by an empathic listener. The interview seemed to have served some kind of therapeutic function for Ajani. It was certainly a very positive experience for him. At the end of the interview he asked if we could carry on and talk some more. Why was this interview seemingly so enjoyable / helpful for him? I reflected that these features of the interview may have led to the positive consequences Ajani spoke of:

- ❖ I reinforced his coping skills and capacity to manage difficulties throughout the interview. I emphasised stories of success and overcoming adversity;
- ❖ The interview gave him time to reflect upon his difficulties, but also to see how he had overcome many of these;
- ❖ I placed him in the role of 'expert'. This highlighted the value and importance of his experiences;
- ❖ I suggested that his account could help other young people like him in the future. This highlighted his personal agency and gave him a sense of control over his world to make things better in the future. It also may have helped him to re-frame his difficult experiences - as a way to help people in the future;
- ❖ At the time of the interview he had made a successful transfer into secondary school, he had achieved academically and was looking to go to college. His account was one of overcoming adversity – it was one of resilience and achievement. In the course of the interview I highlighted this to Ajani and he was able to acknowledge how much he had overcome and achieved;
- ❖ He believed that I genuinely cared about his experiences and wanted to use them to help other people. He was happy to talk about his feelings in the context of a conversation with someone who showed genuine care and interest;
- ❖ I was an empathic listener who showed good listening skills and I think my comments helped him to feel understood. Counselling literature talks of '*being with*' the client and '*bearing witness*' to their story. I think

that Ajani may have felt that I was with him as he discussed the difficulties he had experienced;

- ❖ The process of telling the story of his transfer and adaptation to secondary school may have helped him to build a coherent narrative of his experiences.

I wondered if subsequent interviews would also indicate that the interview itself was a helpful and positive experience for young people, in which case this could have helpful implications for EP practice / school practice. Perhaps an interview of this kind could be conducted with refugee children in schools – as a way of reinforcing their capacity to overcome difficulties, of providing the opportunity for someone to bear witness to their story and of affirming the sense of control they have on their world.

13.12.08

As I analysed Ajani's account I noticed that he spoke a lot about the importance of being honest, of always telling the truth. Some of his behaviours in school seemed to act as a way of proving that he was honest (e.g. returning money that he had found to the school). He also seemed concerned that I thought he was telling the truth. I wondered why he seemed so preoccupied with this. To me the amount he talked about telling the truth seemed unusual / extreme.

I wondered where this preoccupation came from. Had he been lied to before, and did this have a significant impact on him? Had he been wrongly accused of lying in the past? Did knowing the laws and rules make him feel contained / safe? To keep safe and feel safe does he believe that he must always tell the truth and make sure people know that he was telling the truth?

Through analysis I noticed that he had come to the UK with the belief that it had was against the law to lie in the UK. I thought that this could also account for his preoccupation with telling the truth – so that he did not break the law. With this in mind I wondered what he thought would happen to him if he broke the law in the UK, and whether this linked to what might have happened to him if he broke the law in Afghanistan (his country of origin). I also reflected that this could be understood in the context of him being a refugee – did he think that telling lies could result in him being sent back to his country of origin?

Appendix 10: Letter to participants after the interview

Dear X

Thank-you very much for talking to me about your experience of coming to X school. It was great to meet you and to hear all of the interesting things you had to say. I hope that you enjoyed talking about your experiences as well.

The things that you told me will be very useful for my research and they will help schools to think about what they can do to support pupils when they start at secondary schools.

As I explained when we met, you will not hear from me again until I have finished my research. This will be about this time next year and I will send you another letter explaining some of the things that my research found out.

In the mean time if you have any questions or worries about anything we talked about, then it is very important that you talk to either Mr X or Mrs X (in school) who know all about this research. Or you can contact me by phone or by email and I will be happy to hear from you.

Thanks again for taking part in my research.

Yours sincerely,

Catherine

Catherine Burcham (Researcher)

Appendix 11: Extracts from Ajani's transcript with stages one and two of analysis marked

1 **Transcript P1 Ajani**

2 I. So, you got here and what was good, when
3 you first got here?

4 **P1. Everything was new for me and people**
5 **were different. Different kinds of people from**
6 **different countries. It is difficult for me to**
7 **make conversations with them, with the**
8 **people.**

9 I. So how was that for you? All of that difference,
10 all of that . . .

11 **P1. The first few weeks is different for me.**
12 **When I've got some friends they help me**
13 **every time and some good teachers.**

14 I. Right, so the first bits when you were here,
15 everything was new and there were all of these
16 different people from lots of different places, and
17 it was difficult for you to kinda talk to them.

18 **P1. Yeah.**

19 I. So in that first couple of weeks, what helped
20 you?

21 **P1. What helped? Umm the teachers should**
22 **be focused on the new pupils every time.**
23 **Because when I came, two weeks, two - three**
24 **weeks, I was so quiet. I don't speak too**
25 **much. Teachers speak too much English, but**

26 **I don't understand what she said - what he**
27 **said. So, I was so quiet in classroom.**

28 I. And when you say they should umm know
29 more, have paid more . . . do you think that is,
30 that is something you think they should have
31 done more of? They should have . . .

32 **P1. Done. Yeah. They should have come to**
33 **new students and ask, if you want any help**
34 **come to me.**

35 I. That would have helped you?

36 **P1. Yeah.**

37 I. So was there anything else, in those first
38 couple of weeks, that people in the school,
39 people at home or other pupils, teachers,
40 anything that people did that helped you to settle
41 in here a little bit more?

42 **P1. Yes, some of the teachers helped me. My**
43 **English teacher. The English department.**
44 **The EAL department. I received lots of help**
45 **from the beginning, to year 10 and end of**
46 **year 11.**

47 I. The whole way through?

48 **P1. And I would like to say thanks to these**
49 **teachers for helping me.**

50 I. you feel grateful.

51 **P1. Yes.**

52 I. And how did they help you, what did they do?

53 **P1. When I asked for help they never ignored**
54 **me. After school, during the lunch time,**
55 **before morning time. They never ignored me.**
56 **Some of the teachers if you ask for help they**
57 **say, I've got a meeting, I've got some work,**
58 **but they never ignored me. And they still**
59 **proud of me.**

60 I. Yeah, I was speaking to Mohammed before
61 you got here and he said . .

62 **P1. And Mohammed is a good person as well.**

63 I. So there were a few teachers who you felt you
64 could approach, who were always there for you.
65 Was there one person in particular that you felt
66 that you could always go to, or was it a group of
67 teachers?

68 **P1. No, its different classes.**

69 I. Different, right.

70 **P1. Different classes, different lessons help**
71 **me every time.**

72 I. And . . . they were kind of helping you with
73 your work. Anything else?

74 **P1. Work and other problems, when I need**
75 **something. Like if I need to go to the library**

76 **but I don't know the way, for example, she**
77 **tell me, you have to go straight and there is**
78 **the library. When I need some help to fill**
79 **application she say, come after school and I**
80 **will help. My coursework, other subjects and**
81 **other problems.**

82 I. So some of the teachers were invaluable,
83 really important to you when you first arrived and
84 eventually you found the teachers that you could
85 kind of trust, you could go to . . .

86 **P1. Trust, yeah.**

87 I. And umm did it take a little while to find those
88 people or did they find you?

89 **P1. I found these**

90 I. You found the people who could help.

91 **P1. Because they trust me. I never misbehave**
92 **in the class. If you check my slip with the**
93 **school I never got a pink slip.**

94 I. Wow.

95 **P1. I never speak loud with teacher. That's**
96 **why. When they ask me some question I say**
97 **true everything. That's why they believe me.**

98 I. So do you feel that some of the things that you
99 did, the way you are, that helped you to build,

100 that helped as well, it wasn't just teachers, your
101 good behaviour helped you.

102 **P1. Yeah. In my country if you react bad with**
103 **teacher she not gonna help you too much. If**
104 **you react good behaviour teacher, respect**
105 **teacher or someone else, so they help every**
106 **time.**

107 I. Apart from the teachers was there anything
108 else that helped you when you first came here?
109 Some teachers helped, what else helped you
110 when you came to this school?

111 **P1. In subjects?**

112 I. Yeah, or just to feel happier here.

113 **P1. To make me happy to come to this school**
114 **. . like I don't feel alone. When they are with**
115 **you and they help every time. Give focus to**
116 **me every time, to learn.**

117 I. How about umm sort of the things that were
118 hard, what was hard or difficult when you came
119 here?

120 **P1. umm I was alone. A few weeks. That's**
121 **hard for me. To get, to understand all the**
122 **things, hard. It take time to get, to make**
123 **friends. To learn all the law of school. Yes.**

124 I. How did you cope?

125 **P1. I feel alone and I speak with my own self**
126 **(laughs). After, after I make friends. . . Not**
127 **too much friends, a few, like me. Like good**
128 **friends. They are acting like me. Not like**
129 **different boys.**

130 I. So you picked boys to be friends with who
131 were like you?

132 **P1. Yeah.**

133 I. Yeah, so what were they like?

134 **P1. Just like, honest boys. Honest. Focus on**
135 **study. Respect teachers and other staff.**

136 I. And you made those friends after a couple of
137 weeks?

138 **P1. More than that.**

139 I. What helped you to make those friends, how
140 did you?

141 **P1. Just, if you talk with person for 1 minute,**
142 **2, 3 minutes you can know what sort of**
143 **person they are. So I speak to them two**
144 **days, three days, four days, I know he is a**
145 **good person. I understand what kind of**
146 **person he is. And I make friend.**

147 I. What difference did making friends make to
148 you?

149 **P1. What different?**

150 I. So you felt alone, then you made friends, how
151 did that change how you felt in school?

152 **P1. Yeah I understand. When I made friends**
153 **then after I didn't feel alone. I feel that**
154 **someone is with me.**

155 I. And did they stay with you?

156 **P1. Year 10, year 11**

157 I. And in the future?

158 **P. They live near me but we are going to**
159 **different colleges, so I don't know.**

160 I. Just umm, imagine that you could go back in
161 time. So you are going back to when you were
162 just about to come to this school. It is the day
163 before you started school. What would you tell
164 yourself to do or not to do? Or perhaps there is
165 another boy like you, who has come from
166 Pakistan for example, he's about to come here,
167 what would you tell him?

168 **P1. Just, just tell myself to follow all the laws,**
169 **respect all the people. And my brothers, my**
170 **parents say to me as well, to respect all the**
171 **teachers. And get some more education.**

172 I. And would you tell them, umm give them any
173 tips about how to behave in school or umm how
174 to make friends? What would you tell them?

175 **P1. I share everything with him!**

176 I. And if you could go back to the day before you

177 started at (I name the school), what things would

178 you tell the teachers to do that would have

179 helped you to have felt happy here, to settle in

180 here, what advice would you give the teachers?

181 **P1. To help, to help new students because**

182 **they have got problems. They can't speak,**

183 **they feel alone and the teacher can help**

184 **students.**

185 I. How would they help?

186 **P1. umm they should ask him, what do you**

187 **want? First from students. And then he can**

188 **tell them what problems they have got.**

189 I. So just to check, they should ask the pupil

190 what it is that they want? What it is that they

191 need?

192 **P1. They need. Yeah.**

193 I. So that they can help you, cos otherwise they

194 won't know what it is that you need. And

195 thinking about all the other pupils in the school.

196 What would you tell them they should do to help

197 people like you who have just arrived from

198 another country and it's all new. What could

199 they do to help people to feel happier and settled
200 in this school?

201 **P1. They should, they should study. Every**
202 **time they should respect all the pupils.**
203 **Because I saw some boys they came like me,**
204 **new, same year, same day, but they never**
205 **respect teachers. They threaten the teachers**
206 **and they broke the law every time. They**
207 **should take seriously, cos this is our, this**
208 **GCSEs is the main point of our life when we**
209 **leave this school. So we should learn**
210 **everything when we left this school. So they**
211 **are running from school, they don't like to**
212 **come to school. I saw lots of boys and they**
213 **came year with me, they came new in this**
214 **country, they're new. That's why.**

215 I .Why do you think they did that?

216 **P1. I don't know why. Because, I think they**
217 **have freedom in this country. They are**
218 **thinking this is democracy country, so we**
219 **should do anything. That's why they don't**
220 **follow the law. Because of teenagers, that's**
221 **what they do.**

222 I. But you want to tell them, don't do that!

223 **P1. Yeah, because in this country the law, the**
224 **police never say to teenagers don't do that**
225 **and the parents as well. But in different**
226 **countries they say don't do that, or the police**
227 **will arrest you.**

228 I. Are you saying that you think police and
229 parents should be stricter here?

230 **P1. Here yeah, for teenagers. That's why they**
231 **start smoking at small age. In my country the**
232 **teenagers never smoke because they scared**
233 **of police and parents. The parents don't beat**
234 **him, but they give him more advice. Don't**
235 **smoke its not good for health, for heart, for**
236 **your family. And other things.**

237 I. Yeah, so you would like to give that advice to
238 those pupils.

239 **P1. Yeah to those pupils. I saw some of those**
240 **boys, they are bunking from class and they**
241 **go to back of school and they smoking. And I**
242 **give one advice to school. I say if you don't**
243 **mind, if you put one camera behind the**
244 **school you can check every time who is**
245 **smoking behind the school. I give to, to**
246 **reception. When I, I get a certificate and they**
247 **gave me £300 to spend in school.**

Appendix 12: Stage three of analysis: clustered list of themes emerging from Ajani's interview with superordinate themes identified

Superordinate themes	Themes
<p>Cluster 1 Needing and getting help</p>	<p>Needing help</p> <p>Teachers as helpers</p> <p>The helpful and unhelpful role of peers</p> <p>Support from home</p> <p>Earning help</p>
<p>Cluster 2 Feeling safe and secure</p>	<p>Feeling scared and alone</p> <p>Being bullied</p> <p>Living in the moment</p>
<p>Cluster 3 Adaptation and belonging</p>	<p>Identifying and managing differences between life in their home country and life in the UK</p> <p>The role of language</p> <p>Getting to know your world</p> <p>Having your voice heard</p> <p>Making a positive contribution to your world</p> <p>Thoughts of the past and of home</p>

Appendix 13: Stage four of analysis: list of subordinate and superordinate themes from Ajani's interview with quotes provided

Cluster	Theme	Quote
Cluster 1 Needing and getting help	Needing help	<p>(P1.6.181 – 185) I what advice would you give the teachers? P1. To help, to help new students because they have got problems. They can't speak, they feel alone and the teacher can help students.</p> <p>(P1.6.187-189) they should ask him, what do you want? First from students. And then he can tell them what problems they have got.</p> <p>(P1.2.54-60) When I asked for help they never ignored me. After school, during the lunch time, before morning time... And they still proud of me.</p> <p>(P1.2.23-35) They should have come to new students and ask, if you want any help come to me</p>
	Teachers as helpers	<p>(P1.2.33-35) They should have come to new students and ask, if you want any help come to me</p> <p>(P1.2.22-23) the teachers should be focused on the new pupils every time.</p> <p>(P1.6.181 – 185) I what advice would you give the teachers? P1. To help, to help new students because they have got problems. They can't speak, they feel alone and the teacher can help students.</p> <p>(P1.6.187-189) they should ask him, what do you want? First from students. And then he can tell them what problems they have got.</p> <p>(P1.3.75-82) Work and other problems, when I need something. Like if I need to go to the library but I don't know the way, for example, she tell me, you have to go straight and there is the library. When I need some help to fill application she say, come after school and I will help. My coursework, other subjects and other problems.</p> <p>(P1.2.54-60) When I asked for help they never ignored me. After school, during the lunch time, before morning time... And they still proud of me.</p> <p>(P1.3.71-72) different classes, different lessons, help me every time</p> <p>(P1.3.79-81) When I need some help to fill application she say, come after school and I will help</p> <p>(P1.2.49-50) And I would like to say thanks to these teachers for helping me.</p>
	The helpful and unhelpful	<p>(P1.1.12-14) The first few weeks is different for me. When I've got some friends they help me every time</p> <p>(P1.9.272-280) Just have behaved better, followed the law, respected all the people... Because you've got one hour for every lesson every week. But probably for ½ hour, 40 minutes, we spend on talking and 20 minutes we learn. If we spent one hour</p>

	role of peers	<p>on education we would get more education. (P1.9.288-292) The first day, in my science class, all the boys are shouting, they throw paper at the teacher. I tell my brother that I don't want to go in this school. (P1.9.301-303) No. Its like, its like a habit. But I don't care, I study. I don't care what they do. I get education. I sit so far from these boys.</p>
	Support from home	<p>(P1.6.170-172) And my brothers, my parents say to me as well, to respect all the teachers. And get some more education. (P1.13.419-422) I got some books at home, my brother gave it to me. It's like a sentence and I learn from the books, newspapers, other things, grammar books. (P1.9.290-295) I tell my brother that I don't want to go in this school. He say why, I say the boys are reacting bad with the teacher. He says, don't worry, this is your first day, then after it will get better. (P1.9.297-299) He said today is your first day, and you got the next days is gonna change for you. (P1.16.505-507) From my brother, friends, from people who give me advice. Most came from my brother.</p>
	Earning help	<p>(P1.3.92-98) Because they trust me. I never misbehave in the class. If you check my slip with the school I never got a pink slip. . . I never speak loud with teacher. That's why. When they ask me some question I say true everything. That's why they believe me. (P1.7.202-207) They should, they should study. Every time they should respect all the pupils. Because I saw some boys they came like me, new, same year, same day, but they never respect teachers. They threaten the teachers and they broke the law every time. (P1.12.382-383) Just get on with your study and do something so the school are proud of you. (P1.2.33-35) They should have come to new students and ask, if you want any help come to me (P1.2.22-23) the teachers should be focused on the new pupils every time (P1.5.103-104) Yeah. In my country if you react bad with teacher she not gonna help you too much.</p>
Cluster 2		
Feeling safe and secure		
	Feeling scared and alone	<p>(P1.10.320-321) First day I feel like a lone person. Like I don't feel like I belong to this country. (P1.4.121-122) I was alone. A few weeks. That's hard for me. (P1.4.26-127) I feel alone and I speak with my own self (P1.4.153-155) When I made friends then after I didn't feel alone. I feel that someone is with me</p>
	Being bullied	
	Avoiding	<p>(P1.17.535-538) Because some, when, when families, friends, come to my home and they talk about Afghanistan, I say I don't</p>

	conflict	<p>want to talk about politics too much. (P1.17.543-555) But they are fighting each other like, one person says Islam is not good, the other person says Islam is good. But I say I don't want to share with you, I don't want to chat about politics, I don't want it. I. You don't want to fight. P1. Yes. I don't want to fight. Because I, some people say Islam is good and some, the Christians say, Christians is good. I don't care which is good, I just respect both of them. Both of them.</p> <p>(P1.17.557-572) I'm not sure about what is going on tomorrow. I don't know what's going on. I don't know, I mean I don't know I'm here tomorrow or not. I don't know my future.... I don't know if tomorrow I am alive or dying. But if I stay in this country I am going to continue with my education.</p> <p>(P1.7.208-211) this GCSEs is the main point of our life when we leave this school. So we should learn everything when we left this school.</p> <p>(P1.16.528-531) That's why I say I don't want to think about my country. I don't want to think about what is going on, about going back, or in the future</p> <p>(P1.18.581-584) I don't believe what is going on after one minute. No one sees what is going on tomorrow, have you seen what is going on tomorrow?</p> <p>(P1.16.528-533) That's why I say I don't want to think about my country. I don't want to think about what is going on, about going back, or in the future. I care about my country. I worry about this, why are they fighting each other. What are they getting? Killing each other.</p>
	Living in the moment	<p>(P1.15.495-501) I heard in my country if you go to Europe you are not allowed to lie... Every time you should be speak the truth. Yeah, that was a law. They never lie.</p> <p>(P1.5.103-104) Yeah. In my country if you react bad with teacher she not gonna help you too much.</p> <p>(P1.1.5-7) Everything was new for me and people were different. Different kinds of people from different countries.</p> <p>(P1.7.217-221) Because, I think they have freedom in this country. They are thinking this is democracy country, so we should do anything</p> <p>(P1.7.224-228) because in this country the law, the police never say to teenagers don't do that and the parents as well. But in different countries they say don't do that, or the police will arrest you.</p> <p>(P1.7.231-235) Here yeah, for teenagers. That's why they start smoking at small age. In my country the teenagers never smoke because they scared of police and parents. The parents don't beat him, but they give him more advice.</p> <p>(P1.9.284-285) They don't talking too much, they don't misbehave with teacher.</p> <p>(P1.12.396) This school they should arrange separate class to learn English</p>
Cluster 3 Adaptation and belonging	Identifying and managing differences between life in their home country and life in the UK	
	The role of	

	<p>language</p> <p>(P1.13.419-422) I got some books at home, my brother gave it to me. It's like a sentence and I learn from the books, newspapers, other things, grammar books. (P1.13.409-412) it would have helped to have extra. I got some classes, just for few weeks. But it's not much after school would be good. (P1.15.475-476) I speak my language and I can't learn English properly (P1.13.437) My language, Iran language. (P1.14.461) I can't forget. (P1.15.482-486) Some boys from Pakistan, they speak Urdu. I got some classes with them, but I sit so far from them if I sit with them I'm gonna speak Urdu with them, that's why I don't sit with them.</p>
<p>Getting to know your world</p>	<p>(P1.10.320-324) First day I feel like a lone person. Like I don't feel like I belong to this country. When I learn all the laws and about all the peoples behaviours, like I feel now like I belong in this country now. (P1.15.492-496) P1. I learnt lots of law in this country. I. Like police law? P1. Like, government law, made for people, for the community. What laws you have to follow (P1.1.24-27) Because when I came, . . . I was so quiet I don't speak too much. Teachers speak too much English, but I don't understand what she said (P1.12.391-393) I was very quiet. And some of the teachers spoke very fast so I don't understand what they were saying. (P1.6.169-170) Just, just tell myself to follow all the laws, respect all the people</p>
<p>Having your voice heard</p>	<p>(P1.6.187-189) They should ask him, what do you want? First from students. And then he can tell them what problems they have got. (P1.10.324) I think I don't feel like I came from different country. Because most of the peoples they are not like, they are not acting like a racist people. (P1.11.349-353) I feel like the government is looking after us as well. So I belong in this country if they don't look after us then I don't feel like I belong because they don't care. (P1.11.359-361) Like free education, you don't have to pay for school. Free bus pass, benefits, and other things . . . (P1.11.364-366) Because they respect me. The people come from different countries and they respect them. (P1.12.375-378) If the teachers help me I feel like I fit here. If they ignore me, if the students ignore me, if the teachers ignore me I don't feel like I fit in at this school. (P1.19.614-620) I have told you everything, been honest. You are the first person I have told the difficult things. I never shared this with someone. . . I feel lighter. My head, lighter. It is good. (P1.19.623-626) No one asked. No one really thinking about my feelings and you are doing this research so you must care about this, so it is good to tell you</p>
<p>Making a</p>	<p>(P1.8.242-246) And I give one advice to school. I say if you don't mind, if you put one camera behind the school you can check</p>

	positive contribution to your world	<p>every time who is smoking behind the school. (P1.8.259-266) I found money. It was late at night, about 6 'o' clock at the time I left school. And I told my brother that I found money. He told me to take it to school and give to the head teacher, and I gave to the head teacher. And after 2 weeks they called me in assembly and gave me certificate and £300. Not to me. To spend in school.</p>
	Thoughts of the past and of home	<p>(P1.16.528-533) That's why I say I don't want to think about my country. I don't want to think about what is going on, about going back, or in the future. I care about my country. I worry about this, why are they fighting each other. What are they getting? Killing each other. (P1.16.514-520) It's not only me I think most people in my country . . . some people in my country, act like me. There is war in my country, but I don't know what people is that. I don't know about my country. I was born in my country, but I lived in Pakistan. So I don't know much about my culture. (P1.16.535-538) Because some, when, when families, friends, come to my home and they talk about Afghanistan, I say I don't want to talk about politics too much. (P1.17.543-553) But they are fighting each other like, one person says Islam is not good, the other person says Islam is good. But I say I don't want to share with you, I don't want to chat about politics, I don't want it. I. You don't want to fight. P1. Yes. I don't want to fight. Because I, some people say Islam is good and some, the Christians say, Christians is good. I don't care which is good. I just respect both of them. Both of them.</p>

Appendix 14: Integrated summary table of superordinate and subordinate themes across all interviews

This table is a list of all the quotes from transcripts that reflect each of the themes that emerged during the analysis.

	Ajani (P1)	Abukar (P2)	Mehmet (P3)	Khalid (P4)	Mohammed (P5)	Nadif (P6)
Superordinate theme 1 – needing and getting help						
Needing help	P1.6.181-185 P1.6.187-189 P1.2.54-60 P1.2.23-35	P2.8.241-246 P2.16.530-532 P2.13.431	P3.7.217-219 P3.18.605-609 P3.11.349-351 P3.6.177-182 P3.4.120-121 P3.8.253			P6.9.274-275 P6.9.285-289
Teachers as helpers	P1.2.33-35 P1.2.22-23 P1.6.181 – 185 P1.6.187-189 P1.3.75-82 P1.2.54-60 P1.3.71 – 72 P1.3.79-81 P1.2.49-50	P2.4.114-116 P2.13.440-444 P2.12.389-391	P3.7.217-219 P3.10.308-310	P4.5.139-142 P4.5.137-138	P5.14.441-445 P5.6.179-180 P5.14.450-451	P6.4.104-107 P6.14.450-453 P6.14.457 P6.14.463-467 P6.14.443-445
The helpful and unhelpful role of peers	P1.1.2-14 P1.9.272-280 P1.9.288-292 P1.9.301-303	P2.9.288-293 P2.5.159-162 P2.6.197-202 P2.16.530-532 P2.5.143-147 P2.16.532-543	P3.5.141-146 P3.5.164-166 P3.6.177-182 P3.9.301-303	P4.4.119-125 P4.4.126-130 P4.6.174-177 P4.8.260-261		P6.2.33-37 P6.3.85-87 P6.20.661-662
Support from home	P1.6.170-172 P1.13.419-422 P1.9.290-295 P1.9.297-299	P2.2.210-211 P2.7.213-217 P2.17.558-566	P3.19.614-618 P3.19.632-636 P3.19.627-630 P3.18.589-590	P4.11.356-358	P5.10.311-318 P5.10.331-334	

Earning help	P1.16.505-507 P1.3.92-98 P1.7.202-207 P1.12.382-383 P1.2.33-35 P1.2.22-23 P1.5.103-104	P2.8.261-266 P2.9.277-279 P2.11.368-375 P2.14.467-483					
Superordinate theme 2 - Feeling safe and secure							
Feeling scared and alone	P1.10.320-32 P1.4.121-122 P1.4.26-127 P1.4.153-155	P2.6.67-68 P2.3.99	P3.7.228-230 P3.17.554-564	P4.8.237		P6.4.116-118 P6.5.147 P6.6.191-192 P6.5.154-158	
Being bullied		P2.13.440-444 P2.5.143-147 P2.5.167-170 P2.10.333-337 P2.13.430-443 P2.14.448-455 P2.14.467-483 P25.167-169		P4.14.447-452 P4.14.467-483 P4.7.207-209 P4.15.472-475	P5.16.512	P6.5.154-158 P6.3.85-87 P6.4.116-118 P6.2.46-54 P6.3.69-70 P6.3.75-78 P6.3.91-97 P6.5.136-137 P6.4.104-107	
Avoiding conflict	P1.17.535-538 P1.17.543-555	P2.15.478-483 P2.6.188-191		P4.7.207-209 P4.9.272-274 P4.9.277-279		P6.3.91-97 P6.5.136-137	
Living in the moment	P1.17.557-572 P1.7.208-211 P1.16.528-531 P1.18.581-584 P1.16.528-533		P3.25.825-829	P4.15.497-498			
Superordinate theme 3 - Adaptation and							

belonging Identifying and managing differences between life in their home country and life in the UK	P1.15.495-501 P1.5.103-104 P1.1.5-7 P1.7.217-221 P1.7.224-228 P1.7.231-235 P1.9.284-285	P2.13.421-426 P2.20.665-670 P2.7.221-230 P2.2.67-73				P6.11.348-355 P6.11.362-369 P6.12.385-388 P6.2.33-35
The role of language	P1.12.396 P1.13.419-422 P1.13.409-412 P1.15.475-476 P1.13.437 P1.14.461 P1.15.482-486	P2.9.288-293 P2.16.532-543 P2.15.499-503 P2.16.521-527 P2.18.580-593	P3.18.605-609 P3.19.614-618 P3.22.721-727 P3.22.735-739 P3.23.765-768 P3.20.654-656 P3.20.670-678 P3.21.682-686 P3.21.696-705 P3.22.710-712 P3.23.747	P4.1.15-16 P4.4.119-125 P4.7.229-231 P4.12.372-373 P4.12.387-391 P4.13.403-408 P4.13.409-414 P4.13.423-424 P4.13.428-431	P5.9.293-299 P5.23.750-752 P5.3.72-74 P5.12.400-405 P5.23.742-744 P4.23.764-765	P6.13.527-529 P6.19.633 P6.11.339-340 P6.20.661-662 P6.17.539-541 P6.17.542-547
Getting to know your world	P1.10.320-324 P1.15.492-496 P1.1.24-27 P1.12.391-393 P1.6.169-170	P2.6.197-202 P2.8.241-246 P2.10.327-332 P2.10.325-355 P2.2.67-73 P2.9.296-298	P3.4.120-121 P3.9.288-292 P3.9.295-297 P3.13.429-436 P3.14.444-448 P3.14.453-454 P3.14.462-465 P3.8.253 P3.4.111-112 P3.18.605-609	P4.6.191-193 P4.4.102-106 P4.6.191-193 P4.9.281-283	P5.15.487-492 P5.21.694-695 P5.22.728-729	P6.12.385-388
Having your voice heard	P1.6.187-189 P1.10.324 P1.11.349-353 P1.11.359-361 P1.11.364-366 P1.12.375-378	P2.12.389-391 P2.22.708-711				P6.13.419-420

	P1.19.614-620 P1.19.623-626						
Making a positive contribution	P1.8.242-246 P1.8.259-266	P2.22.708-711 P2.11.368-375 P2.10.321-325 P2.15.478-483 P2.22.708-711	P3.12.370-380 P3.13.407-409 P3.24.787-795	P4.16.504-507			
Thoughts of the past and of home	P1.16.528-533 P1.16.514-520 P1.16.535-538 P1.17.543-553	P2.19.611-613 P2.19.628-629	P3.24.787-789	P4.11.343-345		P6.18.602-604	