

Pupils With SEMH Needs' Experiences Of a Successful Transition To Secondary School. A Grounded Theory Study.

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Abstract

The transition from primary to secondary school is recognised as a pivotal point in children's educational journey's (West, Sweetling & Young, 2010). Children show an initial decline in their general well-being and educational attainment rates following this transition. However, the vast majority of children adapt to their new secondary school contexts (Andersen, Jacobs, Schramm, Splittgerber, 2000). Some children are more vulnerable to maladjustments during this pivotal stage than others. Amongst the vulnerable groups are children with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs (SEMH) (Hughes, 2013, DFE, 2016). Studies which focus upon understanding the transition experiences of pupils with SEMH needs, from the pupil's perspective are lacking (Dolton, Adam, & O'Reilly, 2019).

This research explores factors which contribute to facilitating a successful transition from year 6 to year 7 for pupils with SEMH needs.

This grounded theory study adopts a symbolic interactionist and critical realist epistemological and ontological position. Participants comprised of 6 year 8 pupils with SEMH needs. Findings from this study resulted in the development of the conceptual theory '*The clockwork theory of secondary transition for children with SEMH needs*'. This theory comprises three core categories which are: the need for '*early intervention which promotes the development of trusting relationships*'; '*the need to distance current from primary schooling experiences*' and the need to have a '*sense of choice and agency*'. The clockwork theory is discussed in relation to psychological theory and the implications for future Educational Psychology practice along with consideration of the possible implications and limitations of the study are explored.

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1. Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 *Overview of chapter*

This chapter outlines the rationale for the current study. Consideration is given to critical factors pertinent to aid an understanding of the Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Needs of Children and Young People (C&YP). Existing literature and theoretical perspectives relevant to the understanding and exploration of SEMH needs and primary to secondary school transitions are drawn upon and considered throughout. Issues and challenges related to changing definitions for SEMH within a historical, educational context are also considered and outlined. An overview of the specific legislative, national and local contexts within which this research was conducted is summarised. Finally, an exploration of the researchers' position and the role of researcher reflexivity are outlined.

1.1.1 Research Focus

This research explores the experience of transition from primary to secondary mainstream school for pupils identified as having Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) needs. The main aim of the study was to explore and explain factors which contribute to facilitating successful transitions from primary mainstream schools to secondary mainstream school settings. The voice of the pupil has been given priority as the research aims were initially to gain an understanding of what pupils with SEMH needs experienced as positive contributing factors allowing for successful transitions from year six to year seven.

1.2 SEMH

1.2.1 Definitions

There is a lack of consensus around definitions of terms for SEMH difficulties and needs (Frederickson & Cline, 2009; Taylor & Brown, 2012). Terms previously used amongst health and care professionals to describe what we have now come to understand as SEMH needs included; Social Emotional Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD) and Emotional disturbance (National Mental Health and Special Needs Coalition, 1999), amongst other terms. Previously, such definitions have been described as somewhat transient and fluid (O'Connor, Hodkinson, Burton and Torstensson, 2011). The shift in definition of children and young people (C&YP) with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) to include less emphasis on behavioural aspects and more attention to emotional and mental health aspects of pupils with additional needs has been a fundamental development within the SEND reform Code of Practice, (DfE, 2015).

As a direct result of the implementation of the (CoP, DfE, 2015), the term SEMH within educational contexts has widely replaced previously used terminology. Fundamentally, the introduction of the term SEMH as defined within the CoP, (DfE, 2015) retains key elements of previous terms used. However, this recent definition now recognises the all-important mental health aspects of need. This has drawn practitioners' attention to possible underlying social, emotional and mental health difficulties which can collectively impact upon C&YP's personal, social and educational development and experiences.

Terms have therefore progressively developed in line with broader global and local contextual factors. This has influenced and enhanced how we have now come to understand needs which contribute to C&YP's SEMH well-being.

1.2.2 Definition of SEMH Needs according to the SEND CoP, (2015)

The DFE (2015) state,

“Children and young people may experience a wide range of social and emotional difficulties which manifest themselves in many ways. These may include becoming withdrawn or isolated, as well as displaying challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour. These behaviours may reflect underlying mental health difficulties such as anxiety or depression, self-harming, substance misuse, eating disorders or physical symptoms that are medically unexplained. Other children and young people may have disorders such as attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactive disorder or attachment disorder”. (DFE/SEND CoP, 2015, p.12).

The above definition of SEMH needs outlined within the CoP, (2015), (section 6.32), is the one which this researcher will adopt throughout the current study. This definition recognises that C&YP with SEMH needs can experience difficulties which present in wide and varied ways.

SEMH needs are also understood as affecting individuals' abilities to access learning experiences due to difficulties on different levels being: "personal, verbal, non-verbal and work skills", (SEBDA, 2006, p.6). Definitions of SEMH needs are therefore varied and encompass a wide range of factors. Additionally, the presentation of SEMH difficulties and associated internal and external responses exhibited by C&YP can often "fluctuate"

“(Conway, Pezic & Reilly, 2014). Such fluctuations and range in presenting issues can pose additional challenges for professionals aiming to understand and meet the needs of pupils identified as having SEMH difficulties. These factors and the vast and varied ways by which SEMH challenges may impact upon individual C&YP inevitably contributes to a lack of homogeneity amongst C&YP with SEMH needs as a group.

1.3 SEMH and Mental Health

The definition of positive mental health as outlined by the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2014), highlight key indicators of positive states of well-being. Indicators include consideration of how individuals manage and respond to "normal" life stressors, their abilities to fulfil their potential, make positive contributions to their own communities and abilities to work productively, (WHO, 2014, p.1). More specifically geared at defining positive mental health of C&YP, the Mental Health Foundation (2007), define mentally healthy C&YP as those who, "*develop psychologically, emotionally, creatively intellectually and spiritually; initiate, develop and sustain mutually satisfying personal relationships; use and enjoy solitude; become aware of others and empathise with them; play and learn; face problems and setbacks and learn from them.*"

(Mental Health Foundation, 2007, p.1)

SEMH, as a distinct category, is not recognised or listed within the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSMV 5, 2013). This may be because, as mentioned earlier, SEMH is an umbrella term. Similarly, within the DSMV 5, difficulties which are broadly identified as SEMH related are recognised under the umbrella terms of "Trauma and stressors, anxiety and depressive disorders" (DSMV 5, 2013).

Neuropsychiatric conditions are cited as the leading cause of disability experienced by C&YP internationally (WHO, 2019). Neuropsychiatric conditions also affect C&YP in various ways. Some of the listed symptoms used to identify such conditions also include those categorised as SEMH related. For example, attention deficit disorders, mood changes, eating disorders, depression, anxiety, and substance misuse are all listed as neuro-psychiatric conditions which affect children, young people and adults. (Shenton and Turetsk, 2010). Mental health aspects of need and social, emotional well-being are therefore inextricably linked in ways which cannot often be viewed in isolation.

Prior to the 2015 CoP (DFE, 2015) the need, across health and education to further prioritise the SEMH needs of secondary aged pupils within the school context specifically, has been highlighted. For example, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE, 2009) published guidance aimed at supporting secondary schools to promote the social and emotional well-being of pupils. Such initiatives largely reflect legislative guidelines and priorities, as discussed in the following section.

1.4 Legislative guidance and the SEMH population

Approaches aimed at promoting the well-being of C&YP in ways which support their potential to be: healthy; enjoy life; make a positive contribution and succeed, have been developed through the Green paper Every Child Matters Agenda (ECM, DfE, 2003). The ECM agenda (DfE, 2003) emphasised the connection between better academic outcomes and engagement and the SEMH well-being experienced by C&YP. The outcomes placed much emphasis on the need for legislative and public services to consider and address broader contextual factors affecting the well-being of C&YP. Consequently, this triggered

the design and implementation of a range of Government initiatives to better support C&YP who we now recognise as having SEMH needs. These include:

- The social and Emotional Aspects of Learning Programme (SEAL) (DCSF, 2007)
- Targeted Mental Health in Schools Programme (DCSF, 2008)
- Improving Access to Psychological Therapies Programme (IAPT, DoH, 2008)

As the legal basis for the implementation of the ECM agenda (DfE, 2003), the Children's Act (DFE, 2004) further emphasised the need for services to ensure that C&YP's health and well-being are recognised and prioritised further. Within the National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services (DFES/DOH 2004), parliament also outlined a ten-year initiative aimed at developing and maintaining nationwide good quality services to support the mental and emotional health and well-being of C&YP (DFES/DOH 2004). Superseding the ESM agenda is the Children and Families act (2014). Part three of the Children and Families Act (2014), is specifically aimed at ensuring that the needs of C&YP with SEND are fully recognised and comprehensively addressed within educational and health care contexts. Emphasis is given to a focus on ensuring that C&YP and their families are included in the planning and implementation of care and support with added emphasis upon professionals adopting a joined-up approach across settings. Outlined within this legislation are duties placed upon schools to ensure that children's needs are recognised and adequately met in ways which allow them to achieve and maintain improved outcomes.

The essential need for ensuring positive well-being and successful outcomes for C&YP nationwide is further outlined within the United Nations Convention on the rights of the child (UNICEF, 2009). Specific to supporting SEMH needs are the rights outlined in UNICEF's, Article 24 which stipulates C&YP's rights to; high-quality health and care

provisions and rights to information about and adequate access to services which promote positive well-being. Article 39, (UNICEF, 2009), also recognises and outlines the rights to sufficient and effective support, aimed at promoting the recovery of C&YP who have experienced trauma, abuse or neglect.

Within the United Kingdom (UK), Scotland and Ireland, there is a continued emphasis on and attention to recognising and supporting SEMH needs of C&YP. Despite this, nationally, statistics have consistently demonstrated a rise in the prevalence of C&YP who have been identified as experiencing difficulties with their SEMH well-being, (DfE, 2016, DoH 2015).

A fundamental aim of the SEND CoP (DfE/DoH, 2015), was to significantly enhance communication and collaboration practices between all C&YP's services. This resulted in the introduction of a task force commissioned by the Government for the purpose of identifying and addressing possible barriers that C&YP faced when aiming to access mental health and well-being services (DoH, 2015). This also aimed to improve the organisation of and development of appropriate commissioning of provisions within mental health services specifically aimed at meeting the needs of C&YP (DoH, 2015).

The Green Paper (2017) outlines national strategies and proposed measures which will take place to support the mental health needs of C&YP from early years by 2020. This includes an enhanced emphasis upon meeting the needs of YP aged 16 plus (DoH & DfE 2017). Measures and initiatives to support the SEMH needs of C&YP have been further evident through the implementation of recent additional government-led initiatives. These include "Mental Health Portfolio groups" aimed to improve mental health support practice in 16 plus institutions, and the implementation of Mental Health Practitioners and

ambassadors within schools (DoH/DfE 2017 p.34; Marshall, Wishart, Dunatchik & Smith 2017).

2016 saw the publication of "Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools" (DfE, 2016). These Government guidelines are aimed at supporting the management of SEMH needs within the school context. Highlighted within this document are a range of evidenced-based advice and strategies aimed at promoting positive mental health, identifying pupils at risk of mental health challenges and preventative mental health-based interventions. This advice also focuses upon helping schools to develop pupils' levels of resilience and the promotion of targeted support for pupils at risk of SEMH difficulties with a focus upon promoting the voice of the child and systemic approaches to support. This reflects the need for improved multi-agency teamwork to support positive outcomes for children with SEMH needs as outlined within the CoP (DFE, 2015).

1.5 *Impact*

1.5.1 Attainment in school

Students who present with difficulties which impact upon their abilities to regulate their emotional and behavioural responses in social contexts have been identified as being at a higher risk of exclusion from schools (Jull, 2008). SEMH difficulties are therefore recognised as factors which inevitably affect C&YP in ways which impact upon their level of engagement (DfE 2016, WHO 2001). This influences upon these pupil's educational attainment and level of skills acquired, (DfE/DOH 2017; DoH 2015; Young Minds 2017; SEBDA 2006).

Research has also revealed that in comparison with their peers, C&YP who have emotional difficulties are more likely to experience additional challenges and longstanding academic difficulties and are also more likely to disengage from education and schooling altogether (DfE, 2012). Such pupils are also identified as more likely to be missing or lost within the educational and welfare systems. This is particularly the case during key educational transition stages, (Visser, Daniels and MacNab, 2005). C&YP with SEMH needs, therefore, contribute significantly to the current number of C&YP categorised as "Not in Employment, Education OR Training (NEET) (SEBDA, 2010).

1.6 Social and emotional development and adjustment: Theoretical perspectives.

The focus of this research is to explore C&YP's experiences and perspectives of factors which support and facilitate successful transitions from year 6 to year 7. This research will, therefore, draw upon resilience and systemic perspectives as approaches to understanding SEMH adjustment and needs. The emphasis on these particular perspectives to support this research is borne from the previously outlined recognition and subsequent view adapted of SEMH needs often encompassing internal and contextual factors simultaneously. As the researcher, this reflects my understanding of the impact of C&YP's; wider contextual factors on their SEMH development, ways of presenting and psycho-social well-being and adjustment.

1.6.1 Resilience and protective factors

Resilience theory offers insights into the difference between C&YP who appear to have the capacities to cope with and bounce back despite adversity, and those who manage

less well under equal or similar circumstances Rutter, (1985). Fundamental to resilience theory is the idea of the existence of protective and risk factors (Rutter, 1987). Protective and risk factors pertain to influences specific to C&YP's contexts. These factors can either help to promote C&YP's levels of resilience (protective factors) or act as risks which may enhance C&YP's vulnerabilities to poor and adverse outcomes (risk factors). The experience of cumulative risks is understood as contributing significantly to the adverse psychological and social development of individuals (Rutter, 2006, Garmezy, 1987).

This research aims to explore the experiences of transitioning from primary to secondary school for pupils with identified SEMH needs. From the perspective of resilience theory, SEMH needs are understood as occurring due to the experience of cumulative risk factors which can make individuals more susceptible to developing SEMH difficulties (Brown, Khan and Parsonage, 2012). While there is a level of ambiguity around definitions of terms and ways of measuring risk and protective factors (Shean, 2015), some argue that school and other life transitions which require psychological and social adjustments are experienced as traumatic events. Such events are, therefore, sometimes experienced as risk factors (Jindal-Snape & Miller, 2008). It is widely recognised that C&YP who present with disorders which impact upon their abilities to psychologically adjust known as psychological adjustment disorders such as anxiety, and conduct disorders which encompass disruptive tendencies are less likely to experience successful transitions from primary to secondary school (Rice, Frederickson, Shelton, McManus, Riglin, & Ng-Knight, 2015). Transitions, therefore, pose as a recognised risk factor which often directly impacts upon C&YP with SEMH needs. Additional risk factors particularly significant to C&YP with SEMH needs include familial adversity, trauma, cognitive and attention difficulties, and social disadvantage (Brown, Khan, Parsonage 2012). Positive educational experiences, educational attainment and a sense of belonging to a community such as a school are

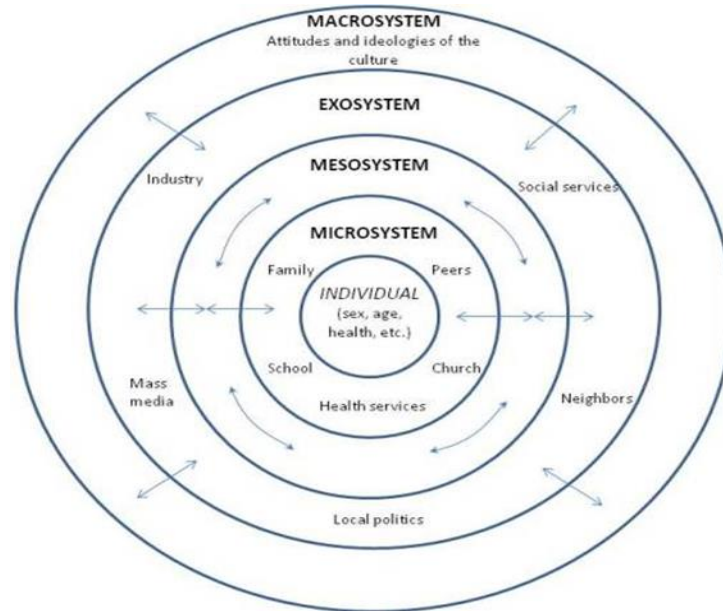
regularly cited as protective factors which contribute significantly to enhancing the mental health of C&YP (Vaz, Parsons, Falkmer, Passmore, & Falkmer 2014, DFE 2001, DFE 2016). This illustrates the fundamental role of the school experience and the school community in promoting the SEMH needs of C&YP.

Protective and risk factors are therefore arguably highly reliant upon and reflective of factors related to the combination of C&YP's individual, social, environmental and cultural contexts (Ungar, 2013, Garmezy, 1984). This is further recognised and stipulated by Garmezy, 1984, who distinctly states that resilience factors are strongly influenced by individual, familial and support factors, (Garmezy, 1984).

1.6.2 The Eco-Systemic Perspective

Garmezy's systemic approach to resilience and the impact of cumulative factors upon social and psychological well-being reflect eco-systemic theories. The links between social, individual and broader contextual factors which help and contribute to the experience and outcomes of C&YP are also widely recognised within Eco-systemic theories of development. Bronfenbrenner (1979; 2005), proposed that a pupil's more comprehensive system consists of sub-systems (see figure 1). By gaining a comprehensive understanding of the macro, exo and meso systems around the pupil's microsystems, and by considering and understanding the impact that these factors may have upon each other and upon the experience of pupils, professionals are better able to understand and address these pupils needs, (Kelly, 2008).

Figure 1: Bronfenbrenner's Eco-systemic model



Adapted from Bronfenbrenner (1979).

As illustrated in figure 1, with the use of arrows sitting across systems, contextual factors interact and contribute significantly to pupils' individual experiences. Schools are a fundamental part of C&YP's microsystems. When thinking about the factors which contribute to the development of SEMH needs from an Eco-systemic perspective, it is, therefore, essential to consider C&YP's development on an individual *and* broader contextual holistic level. When considering SEMH development, an eco-systemic perspective prompts us to consider how collective contextual factors impact upon the individual C&YP's worlds. These factors then impact upon and shape C&YP's experiences, responses and perceptions. Adopting an eco-systemic perspective essentially prompts theorists to consider how systemic factors interact to shape the individuals SEMH development across time and across settings.

1.7 *Transition: A challenging time for all.*

As identified within resilience theory, transitional periods and the impact of school experiences can pose as risks factors. Additionally, the transitional stage from primary to school secondary school is identified as a difficult and challenging time for children in general (West, Sweeting, & Young, 2010, Simmons, Burgeson, Carlton-Ford & Blyth 1987, Walsh-Bowers 1992). Further research also strongly suggests that following the year 6 to 7 transition, students' attainment and levels of emotional well-being typically decrease (Andersen, Jacobs, Schramm, Splittgerber, 2000).

This stage is further complicated by the fact that children transitioning from primary to secondary school are often experiencing change and transition on simultaneous levels. For many children, unique to this transitional stage are the complexities of managing the vast changes in their social context including; school setting, meeting new staff and peers, additional academic pressures possible issues around identity and confidence and changes to their daily school routines. These factors combined with changes typically occurring at the biological and neurodevelopmental level are further complicated by the influence of puberty (Simmons et al. 1987). This adds an additional level of complexity to consider during the primary to secondary school transition phase.

It is therefore not surprising that evidence suggests a correlation between the psychosocial well-being of adolescence transitioning from primary to secondary schools, their long-term psychosocial well-being in later adult life and negative impacts upon overall educational attainment levels (West et al. 2010). This suggests that a smooth transition from primary to secondary school can, for some be a positive indicator of future psychosocial wellbeing or psycho-social disruption.

1.8 *Transitions in policy and legislation*

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted, 2002), deemed transition practices from primary to secondary schools across a significant number of Local Authorities in the UK as inadequate. This highlighted the need for schools to develop and sustain adequate and robust transition processes aimed at meeting the diverse needs of all pupils.

Within the CoP (DFE, 2015 section 3.13) multi-agency collaboration and the need for "integrated educational provision" encompassing health, and social care is strongly advocated. With regards to transitions, the CoP (DFE, 2015) recommends that primary and secondary schools liaise to support transitions in order to adequately prepare for meeting the students' needs on arrival by sharing pupils' information prior to pupils transitioning.

1.9 *Transitions involving pupils with SEMH*

Within the year 6 to year 7 transitional stages, children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities are particularly vulnerable (Hughes 2013, West et al. 2010, Andersen, Jacob & Schramm 2000, Newman and Blackburn 2002, Vaz, et al. 2014). Departmental advice to schools about ways to support children with SEMH needs within the school setting identify the transition from primary to secondary school as a "difficult" life change for C&YP with additional needs (DFE 2016, p:10). Children identified with SEMH needs are, therefore, at higher risk of experiencing this specific life change as particularly challenging.

The requirement of transition support tailored to the unique needs of children identified as having SEN is widely recognised and advocated (DFE, 2016). Despite this, research into transition experiences and studies which aim to ascertain the voice and perceptions of children with SEMH needs has historically been described as lacking (Feeney & Best, 1997, Galton 2000). This "lack" remains current (Dolton, Adams, O'Reilly 2019).

1.10 *Successful Transition: Definition.*

Definitions of indicators of successful transitions vary. The way by which we define a successful transition is therefore dependent upon the areas and associated outcomes examined. Successful transitions can be determined through various indicators, Van Rens, Haelermans, Groot, Maasen, & Brink (2017). These include attention to academic, social and behavioural outcomes which can all be used as appropriate measures.

This researcher recognises that definitions of the term "successful transition" will, therefore, differ according to the subjective views, experiences and outcome focus of different people within different contexts. Within this research, the term successful transition will be adapted from recent and relevant literature in the topic area.

Various underlying dimensions can be used to define a successful primary to secondary school transition (Rice et al. 2015, Van Rens et al. 2017, Evangelou, Taggart, Sylvia, Melhuish, Sammons & Siraj Blachford, 2008). Evangelou et al. (2008) identified several key indicators to measure and define what a successful transition is¹.

Within the current study Evangelou et al's. (2008) dimensions will be used as the definition of what a successful transition is. Namely, children who demonstrate having experienced

¹Areas to examine to define a successful transition at this age phase are: Improved friendships, raised self-confidence, raised self-esteem, sustained interest in school and successful adaptation to the school routines including adaptation to reasonable adjustments made and implemented to support pupils.

a successful transition are defined as those who display the signs of successful social and institutional adjustments within the school setting whilst maintaining an interest in the school curriculum. It is however recognised that this definition comes with limitations as it can be viewed as seeing the level of success of transitions as a product of predominantly within child factors. Therefore, it's important to note that within this study, school-based systems and adjustments made to support pupils will also be deemed as important factors relating to successful transitions for pupils with SEMH needs. These factors were therefore discussed during the recruitments phase for the current study ² as it was essential to ensure that all participants met these criteria. This research will, therefore, focus specifically upon the above-listed factors when examining SEMH adjustment. This reflects the researcher's main area of interest, which is to examine the lived and expressed experiences of C&YP with SEMH needs. For this reason, when defining what a successful transition is, less emphasis will be given to academic attainment and more given to SEMH related factors, challenges and possible SEMH adjustments made by C&YP in the process of transitioning successfully.

1.11 *National Context*

1.11.1 The early secondary phases of education

Nationally, children between the ages of 11-15 years old were identified as the age range with the highest percentage of statements and Education and Health Care Plans (EHCP's), (DFE, 2017 p.4).

Currently, 42 per cent of children aged 11 to 15 in receipt of EHCP's eventually transitioned to special schools with 0.8 per cent transitioning to alternative provisions such

² Details of the related discussions about participant profile and suitability are discussed and outlined in the methodology chapter under "recruitment strategy".

as Pupil Referral Units (PRU's) and specialist provisions for children with SEMH needs within SEMH schools (DFE 2018).

The highest percentage of exclusions occurring between 2015 and 2016 were exclusions of children within the early secondary phases DFE (2017a). Within secondary settings, pupils with SEN received nearly half of all permanent and fixed-term exclusions in the UK. Children with an EHC plan or those with a statement of SEN received the highest amount of fixed period exclusions and were six times more likely to be excluded than those with no SEN, DFE (2017a).

Nationally 193,657 children with SEND have SEMH identified as a primary need, (DFE, 2018-2019, DFE statistics, 2018). A common reason recorded for exclusions in 2015/16 within, primary, secondary *and* special schools was "persistent disruptive behaviour" (DFE, 2017a, p. 5). This accounted for 34.6% of the total number of permanent exclusions in the UK and 27.7% of fixed-term exclusions across settings, (DFE, 2017a). "Persistently disruptive and disturbing behaviours" are often terms used to describe behaviours of children with SEMH needs, (DfE, 2014a, 2014b, 2016, SEBA, 2006). Examples of persistent disruptive behaviours referred to include; persistent open verbal and non-verbal defiance, persistent aggressive behaviours towards staff and/or peers, including verbal abuse and threatening behaviours (DfE, 2014).

Many C&YP with identified SENDs displaying needs associated with SEMH difficulties are therefore at a significantly higher risk of exclusion from schools than their peers. National data does not yet account for a substantial number of C&YP in the UK who have existing, yet unidentified SEMH needs. Therefore, many C&YP with SEMH needs remain under the radar (Stallard, 2011).

1.11.2 Local context

The Educational Psychology Service (EPS) setting, which this piece of research was conducted within a fully traded service in a diverse greater London borough. Recent statistics show that 17.9% of pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) attend schools within this borough (DFE, 2018). This is higher than the London average of 14.9% (DFE, 2018). Within this borough, of the SEND population in schools, 3.1% had a statement of SEN or Educational, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)³.

These specialist provisions are where schools, refer to when faced with C&YP who have additional needs which impact upon their capacities to thrive within mainstream settings. This contributes to needs which many mainstream schools feel ill-equipped to meet and manage effectively. However, there are also many C&YP within the borough with SEMH needs who are placed in and remain within mainstream settings.

2. Chapter 2: Literature review: A rationale.

2.1. *Grounded theory and literature reviews: A question of preferred stages of process?*

There are differing opposing views around the use and purpose of literature reviews specific to Grounded Theory (GT). According to Glaser and Strauss (1967) by conducting a literature review before data gathering and coding researchers' can inadvertently

³This borough has the following specialist educational provisions; One therapeutic PRU (KS 2 and 3), one primary PRU, two secondary PRU's, one SEMH school for C&YP aged 11 plus for pupils who have EHCP's for SEMH needs. EP hours purchased by these and mainstream provisions have consistently risen annually.

position themselves in alignment with existing literature and existing findings, (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This approach can arguably result in biases towards established knowledge.

2.1.2 Data and the purpose of GT methodology

Through GT, researchers can take a highly exploratory approach (Starks and Trinidad 2007; Robson, 2011; Charmaz, 2009). The researcher explores the collected data and develops a theory which comes exclusively from the data collected (Robson, 2011). Therefore, a theory is based upon the reported experiences as expressed by the participants. Theory development within Grounded Theory techniques are accordingly highly informed by, and inevitably shaped throughout the process of data collection and data analysis. Contrary to alternative research approaches, Grounded Theory does not require the researcher to base their conclusions upon existing knowledge. As the aim and process of utilising a Grounded Theory methodology are to develop theory from data, being in a position wherein one can potentially become influenced by previous opinions, theories and ideas could, for some pose as problematic.

2.2 Arguments for and against conducting literature reviews before data gathering.

While Glaser and Strauss (1967) comprehensibly warned researchers that literature searches conducted before data gathering could result in biases with researchers inadvertently veering their ideas towards those which they have reviewed,

Strauss and Corbin (1998) however, later agreed that literature reviews should be used as the bases by which to form professional knowledge and understanding. They advocated

for literary research reviews as a tool to enhance the researcher's sensitivity to relevant existing literature. This view is supported by Dey (1993) who viewed and termed information from literature reviews as "accumulated knowledge" (p. 84). According to Dey (1993), this "accumulated knowledge" can be used in ways which inform the researcher about existing gaps in research areas thus informing the researcher about subjects for further exploration and study, specific to an explored phenomenon.

The influence on proposed research of pre-existing literature regarding the studied phenomenon is highly dependent upon how the researcher uses the pre-existing information gathered. Urquhart (2007) makes a strong argument for the inclusion of a literature review prior to data gathering. Principally, Urquhart argues that researchers can remain "self-aware" in ways which do not result in biased views informed by the findings of others influencing ideas. This arguably minimises the likelihood of existing prevailing ideas imposing upon the data and subsequently generated theory. Researchers' ensuring awareness of biases will consequently contribute to the maintenance of both credibility and reliability of their study (Atia & Edge, 2016). This also highlights critical and fundamental issues around the importance of researchers' adopting a reflexive stance throughout the research process.

In relation to the present research study, the latter perspective proposed by Dey (1993, and the views of Atia & Edge, 2016) support the rationale which underpins this researcher's decision to conduct a literature search prior to data gathering and analysis.

2.2.2 Rationale for literature review pre-data analysis

The rationale for this literature search and the review which follows was to inform this study by providing the researcher with an initial overview of:

- Relevant and already existing research related to the exploration of factors which contribute to successful secondary school transitions within UK educational contexts.
- To aid the researchers' understanding of the current research context.
- To identify gaps in research in the area of transitions from year 6 to year 7 for children with SEMH needs.

Chapter: 3 Literature Review

3.1 *Rationale for researcher's interest and positioning*

My researcher position draws strong influence from my previous professional training and experience as a primary school teacher before re-training and working as a counsellor. As a counsellor, I worked across a range of mainstream and specialist educational settings with C&YP experiencing various SEMH challenges. I also had a crucial role in managing and co-ordinating transitions from mainstream primary to mainstream secondary settings for year 6 pupils' with SEMH needs within an inner London primary school. This longstanding interest and commitment to supporting SEMH needs of C&YP and the experience of supporting year 6 to year 7 transitions along with experiences gained whilst completing the doctorate programme have been the collective catalyst driving my current interest and subsequent research question. I aim to adopt a strength-based EP approach. This informed the rationale for exploration of factors which *promote successful* transitions for children with SEMH needs.

Consideration of how my professional background and subsequent positioning may impact upon the process of the research is fundamental within the research process (Attia & Edge 2017). I, therefore, recognise and am aware of the need to maintain a reflexive practitioner stance. Prospective reflexivity entails remaining aware of the effects of the researcher on the research (Cole & Masny 2012, Attia & Edge 2017). Retrospective reflexivity requires attention to the impact of the research on the researcher (ibid).

3.1.1 Summary

A negative transition from year 6 to year 7 can have a detrimental impact on the long-term psycho-social development of all pupils (West et al. 2010). This inevitably shapes pupils' future educational engagement and attainment informing their long-term life chances and outcomes. Although some research has been conducted to explain the needs of C&YP with SEN during key transitions, there does not currently seem to exist a distinct research base aimed specifically at explaining or exploring the; views, experiences and needs of children with SEMH difficulties around the transitional stage from year 6 to year 7. Similarly, views regarding what factors facilitate a successful transition from primary to secondary school from the perspectives of pupils with SEMH needs also appear to be unexplored as a phenomenon.

3.2 Chapter overview

Fink, (2005, p.3) defines a literature review as "*a systematic, explicit and reproducible method for identifying, evaluating and synthesizing the existing body of completed and*

recorded work". Fundamentally, literature reviews facilitate researchers in the process of identifying gaps in the existing literature which allows for a more comprehensive overview of relevant and current studies.

Within this chapter, key issues relevant to Grounded Theory and the differing perspectives on the appropriate use of literature reviews are outlined. The literature review question is presented with an outlined rationale for the literature review aims and purposes.

The search strategy and search terms used are outlined with details of databases, inclusion and exclusion criteria adopted and a critical appraisal of identified relevant literature are outlined. Throughout, related links across studies are highlighted. Gaps in the literature relating to factors which contribute to successful year 6 to year seven transitions for children with SEMH needs are highlighted. Finally, by drawing upon identified gaps in the literature, a concise rationale for the current study is outlined.

3.2.1 Literature review question

To provide an identified and precisely defined focus for literature reviews, Gough (2007) stipulates the essential need for a clearly identified review question. This literature review was conducted to explore and answer the following question:

"What does existing published literature tell us about influences and factors which impact upon positive primary to secondary transitions for C&YP with SEMH needs?"

A systematic literature review was conducted to answer the above question. The main focus of the review was to gain an overview of and decipher what existing published literature tells us about the following:

- C&YP's experiences of primary to secondary transitions

- Factors influencing transition experiences and successful transitions for the identified participant groups.
- Exploration of support and interventions aimed at enabling successful primary to secondary transitions.
- Details and evaluations of what contributes to and make a successful transition.

3.2.2 Details of literature search

The initial systematic literature review was conducted in January 2018. The researcher used EBSCO host to identify a range of databases pertinent to the study area. Several search terms were identified and used to identify recent and relevant literature within the specified area of study. Please see table 1 for the inclusion and exclusion criteria applied to this search. Search terms are outlined in the relevant table in appendix 1. Abstracts of identified literature were also read. These helped to form the decisions of use based upon stated inclusion and exclusion criteria outlined in table 1.

3.2.3 Databases Searched

Databases searched through EBSCO were: ERIC, CINAHL, PsycINFO, Psychology and Behavioural Sciences Collection, PsychARTICLES, MEDLINE, SocINDEX with full text from PsycBOOKS, PEP Archive, Library, Information Science and, eBook Collection, via EBSCOhost, Academic Search Index, Supplemental Index, Directory of Open Access Journals, Social Science Open Access Repository, Research Starters, Journal, Education Source, Tavistock & Portman Library Catalogue, Tavistock and Portman Staff Publication Online, Routledge Handbooks Online.

3.2.4 Search dates: sources, limiters and expanders applied.

Table 1: Inclusion criteria

| Inclusion Criteria | | Exclusions |
|--------------------|---|---|
| Participants | School aged children/pupils/ | |
| Demographics | United Kingdom (UK) | Non-UK |
| Language | English | Non-English |
| Area of study | Full primary to secondary transition, mainstream school setting. | Non year 6 -7 transitions and transitions to specialist schools and dual registered arrangements. |
| Publications | Articles published in peer reviewed journals. | Non-Peered reviewed |
| Dates/Time span | Published after 1999 | |
| Research Design | Qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods ⁴ empirical studies. | |

The Inclusion criteria encompassed papers related to EP practice within schools. Limiters applied listed: Text available in existing library collection; staff publications online; articles published in peer-reviewed journals⁵; language- English.

⁴ Empirical studies define research which is based upon observed and measured events, experiences and trends. Knowledge which informs empirical research is resultant from experiences as opposed to deriving from theory or belief. Empirical studies outline: a research question, with relevant introduction; methodology; results and discussion components.

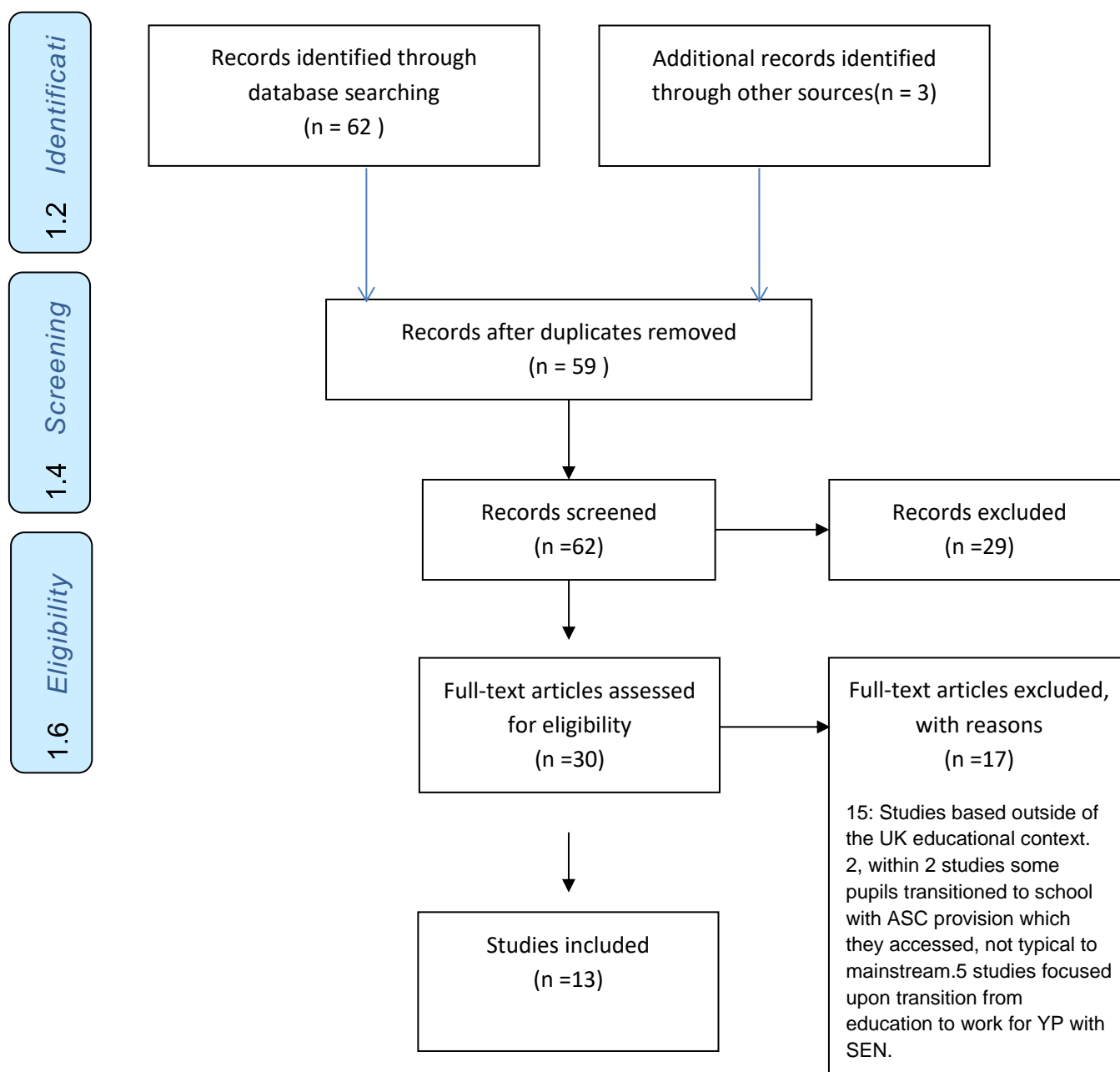
⁵ Search was limited to peer reviewed studies as the peer review process is deemed by the researcher as the most reliable measure by which to begin to weigh the evidence and quality of literature, as supported by Xuan, Donk, &

Expanders applied included: '*apply related words*' with searches within the abstract of the text. Identified search dates for published literature were 1999 to 2018. This is because terms previously used amongst health, education and care professionals to describe what we have now come to understand as SEMH needs first became named and termed within the literature from 1999. This is evidenced by the launch of programmes to support social and emotional needs such as the Healthy Schools Programme (DoH & DCSF, 2007). These changes brought into light terms such as; Social Emotional Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD) and Emotional disturbance (National Mental Health and Special Needs Coalition, 1999, DfES & QCA, 1999).

3.2.5 Prisma diagram

The PRISMA Diagram (Moher, Liberati & Tetzlaff & Man, 2009) has been used to outline details of the systematic process adopted during this literature search

PRISMA 2009 Flow Diagram



From: Moher D, Liberati A, Tetzlaff J, Altman DG, The PRISMA Group (2009).

PRISMA Flow chart From: Moher D, Liberati A, Tetzlaff J, Altman DG, The PRISMA Group (2009). Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses: The PRISMA Statement. PLoS Med 6(7): e100009 doi:10.1371/journal.p

3.2.6 Appraisal tools

Methodological quality was assessed using two appraisal tools; Gough's Weight of Evidence (WoE), (Gough, 2007) and the seven principles outlined within the TAPUPAS framework (Pawson, Boaz, Grayson, Long & Barnes 2003).

Gough (2007) describes "Weight of Evidence" as a tool to inform researchers decisions made around literature and its usefulness to studies. Through adopting this approach, researchers can rate the appraised literature according to quality and relevance in relation to the review question. Within the current study, this form of appraisal is adopted.

Literature is categorised and rated as; low, medium or high. Gough (2007) proposes the use and application of TAPUPAS (Pawson et al. 2003) as a measure by which to rate the WoE. These ratings are therefore measured and judged against the following elements:

Transparency

Accuracy

Purposivity

Utility

Propriety

Accessibility

Specificity

(Gough, 2007)

The current study has utilised the above areas of judgments which were then used to give an overall rating for each identified and included study. For an outline of how evidence is weighed according to Gough (2007), please see Appendix 2. For a full breakdown of how the literature for the current study was rated, please see appendix 3. A summary of how each of the included papers were judged, how they informed the review process of the current study, and rationales behind judgments can be seen in appendix 4.

These appraisal tools were chosen as the articles found and selected for this literature search process used qualitative, quantitative and mixed methodologies. The combination of the use of the two selected appraisal tools was therefore deemed by the researcher as highly appropriate as they allowed for rigorous and comprehensive appraisals, hence fostering an appraisal approach which promoted vigor and transparency.

3.2.7 An Overview of literature

Through an examination of the existing research concerning their relevance to the above four formulated literature review sub-questions 13 papers which helped to answer the review question were identified. By grouping, the studies based upon the focus of the research outlined, four threads which encompassed the body of the literature which were relevant to answering the literature review question were identified and grouped in order of relevance. These correspond with the four identified and outlined areas which emerged in response to the literature review question as outlined on page 26:

- Pupils experiences of primary to secondary transition.
- Factors influencing transition experiences and successful transitions for pupils with SEN.

- Support and interventions aimed at enabling successful primary to secondary transitions.
- What contributes to a successful transition?

Literature has, therefore, been organised into four categories to reflect relevance to these key identified areas of research focus. Table 2 has been devised to illustrate the relationship between the four identified threads/categories in relation to the review question and four outlined subcategories.

Table: 2 Links between literature and review questions.

| Literature focus based upon literature review sub question (as listed in page 5). | Subcategory appointed based upon study focus. | Author/s and date |
|--|--|---|
| C&YP's experiences of primary to secondary transitions | Category 1: Pupils Experiences of Primary to Secondary Transitions | Tobbell (2003) Sancho and Cline (2012) |
| Factors influencing transition experiences and successful transitions for the identified participant groups. | Category 2: Factors influencing transition experiences for pupils with SEMH related needs. | Maras and Aveling (2006) Lyons and Woods (2012) Neal, Rice, Ng-Knight, Riglin and Frederickson (2016). Maras and Aveling (2006). |
| Exploration of support and interventions aimed at enabling successful primary to secondary transitions. | Category 3: Support and interventions aimed at enabling successful primary to secondary transitions. | Humphrey and Ainscow (2006.). Qualter, Whiteley, Hutchinson & Pope Bloyce and Frederickson (2012). Bloyce and Frederickson (2012). |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| Details and evaluations of what contributes to and makes a successful transition. | Category 4: What contributes to a successful transition? | Evangelou et al Gillison et al (2008). West et al (2010) Bailey and Baines (2012). Rice, Frederickson, Shelton, McManus, Riglin and Ng-Knight (2016) |
|---|--|--|

What follows is a sequential review of the literature with a focus upon exploring answers to the literature review sub-questions. Studies within each category are discussed in date order to ensure that the reader gains a sense of the chronology of emerging themes and trends.

3.3 *Category one: Pupils experiences of primary to secondary transitions.*

Much attention has been given to the need to promote the voice of the child within educational psychology research and practice (Flutter 2007, CoP 2015, Van Rens, Haelermans, Groot, Maasen, and Brink 2017). Van Rens and colleagues (2017) make explicit links between smooth transitions from primary to secondary schools and the need to promote the voice of the child. They view the promotion of the child's voice as a means to advance professionals' understanding of the complexities specific to transitions. Despite this, children with additional social and emotional needs have been described as one of the most disempowered groups of pupils' who are also recognised as a group whose

voices are seldom heard within the literature (Dalton, Adams, O'Reilly 2019, Mc Enteggart, Desmond & Vahey 2015).

Although legislative changes recognise and endorse the active voice and inclusion of C&YP with particular attention to promoting the voice of C&YP with SEND (CoP 2015) it is documented that research which reflects the voices, of C&YP with SEMH difficulties is currently "underdeveloped" (Nind, Boorman & Clarke, 2012). This gap in the literature was further confirmed by and reflected within results of the current literature search as there were only two papers which focused upon the voice of the child. Neither were based explicitly upon the experiences of SEMH populations. As highlighted previously, the current study specifically aims to elicit and focus upon the voice of the child. Experiences and perceptions of children transitioning from year 6 to year seven are therefore deemed by the researcher as a highly appropriate starting point when aiming to identify relevant literature exploring factors which contribute to a successful secondary transition.

3.3.1 Tobbell (2003)

A qualitative, retrospective study by Tobbell (2003) investigated pupils' experiences of the primary to secondary transition. The sample consisted of 30 female pupils in year 7. Semi-structured interviews were conducted over five focus groups with participants during the final term of their time in year 7. Through thematic analysis, Tobbell (2003) identified a total of five key emerging themes which encapsulate participant's experiences. Identified themes were: the importance of school as a community; difficulties around being expected by staff to act like adults despite feeling childlike; ideals and ideas around what makes a good teacher; and experiences of feeling lost whilst trying to navigate their way around

what are often huge buildings in comparison to smaller primary settings. This study draws heavily upon the eco-systemic model (Bronfenbrenner, 1999) and Vygotskian social-cultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978) as key theoretical frameworks. Perspectives on how professionals and participants can begin to make sense of secondary school transitions and the impact which this transition may have upon pupils have been discussed in relation to these two key theoretical models.

From an eco-systemic perspective, the experience of the child can be understood as the product of the interactions between internal, wider environmental and systemic factors within their contexts. The emergence of factors related to pupils experiencing "school as a community" and factors around a sense of belonging which can be deciphered from the emergent theme of "feeling lost" can thus be explained from an eco-systemic perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1999). The school context is an integral part of pupils' proximal contexts.

Vygotsky (1978) highlights the importance of the impact of the learning relationship.

Vygotsky's social-cultural theory reminds us of the importance of language and discourse and applies this to understanding what facilitates a sound learning experience. Tobbell (2003) makes reference to this model in relation to offering an explanation for the emergent themes related to the above listed: "adult or child" (i.e. language use between student and teacher and the way that this may impact upon the relationship); "what makes a good teacher" and "learning experiences". Further reflecting Vygotskian sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978), this study suggests that optimal conditions for learning are highly reliant upon pupils' perceptions of the learning relationships. Vast differences in pupils and teachers' perceptions of the teacher-pupil relationship may also impact negatively upon pupils' experience of the learning environment.

Within this study, Tobbell demonstrated transparency related to the methodological selection and process of analysis. Ethical considerations and researcher reflexivity were also clearly demonstrated. The overall WoE for this study was, therefore rated as high. A strength of this study lies in the author's use of two recognised theoretical frameworks which are highly relevant to the educational psychology context.

There is a growing evidence base which suggests gender as a key determining factor which shapes pupils' experiences of transition and psychological well-being during the primary to secondary transition. For example, Jordan, McRorie & Ewing (2010) within an Irish context, Andersen et al. 2000, (Australian study) and Benner and Graham 2009 (US study). This highlights a potential limitation of this study as this study consisted of only female participants. This considered it might prove difficult to fully apply and generalise this study across male populations and settings.

3.3.2 Sancho and Cline (2012)

Sancho and Cline (2012) draw heavily upon existing theoretical approaches of school belonging. A focus on supporting mental health and behaviour in schools specifically identifies the development of a sense of belonging as protective factors supporting C&YP within the school context (DFE, 2016). The promotion and establishment of a sense of belonging are regularly cited as a key component to facilitating positive secondary school transitions and academic achievements (Resnick, Bearman, Blum, Bauman, Harris and Jones (1997), Walton, Cohen, Cwir & Spencer 2012, McLaughlin & Clarke, 2010). Initially highlighted by Hegarty Sauer-Lynch, Patusky, Bouwsema & Collier, 1992), and later adapted by Goodenow and Grady (1993), a sense of school belonging encompasses pupils feelings of being "*personally accepted, respected and supported by others*" within the school community (Goodenow & Grady, 1993, p. 61). More recent developments in

theories of school belonging highlight the importance of pupils feeling supported and feeling that they identify with the climate of the school in its entirety.

Participants for the Sancho and Cline (2012) study were selected using non-randomised means. Five focus groups conducted with groups of 6 pupils' pre-transition in year six were initially conducted. Data from these initial interviews were used to inform the selection criteria for subsequent participants. A total of 10 participants were interviewed post-transition in year 7. Interviews were designed to elicit the extent to which participants felt a sense of belonging within their secondary school contexts.

Details relating to the methodological approach used in this study are somewhat unclear. This was apparent as although the authors cite IPA (Smith 1996) as the chosen methodology it later goes onto refer to thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke 2006).

Sancho and Cline (2012) identified: 'school context' 'pupils' 'descriptions of belonging' and 'growing independence and maturity' as three key themes relevant to understanding how pupils' make sense of their secondary transition experiences.

In line with theories underpinning "school belonging" (Hegarty et al. 1992; Goodenow & Grady, 1993), Sancho and Cline concluded that factors pertinent to facilitating better secondary school transitions could be located within an examination of pupils' sense of belonging. This includes the "development of friendships"; relationships with the form group; feeling listened to by teachers and a sense of peer acceptance, (Sancho & Cline 2012, p.71). Data also suggested a correlation between the promotion of pupils' sense of belonging with enhanced levels of psychological well-being and the promotion of positive attitudes to learning.

This study was rated an overall WoE of medium. This rating reflected a low rating for soundness of study due to a lack of clarity relating to the methodology used. A possible limitation of this study is based around the design as the interviews were designed specifically to examine and elicit explorations of belonging within the school context. The themes, therefore identified by the authors closely resemble the interview schedules. It is therefore unclear if there was an inductive element to the study and to what degree the findings mainly reflect the theoretical stance of the authors.

3.4 *Category Two: Factors influencing transition experiences for pupils with SEMH related needs.*

3.4.1 Maras and Aveling (2006)

Maras and Aveling (2006) devised a longitudinal qualitative case study to explore participants' perceptions and experiences before and after the transition from primary to secondary school. The sample group included three children with "*Non-specific behavioural and emotional difficulties*" (Maras & Aveling 2006; p. 196). The sample also included one child identified as having an Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC) and one child with Down syndrome.

According to this study, factors impacting upon primary-to-secondary transition, which proved significant to participants, were related to communication between settings. This included pupils wanting pre-notice about what to expect from the settings before the transition. This study also highlighted that participants expressed concerns about the academic workload and content. This study demonstrated a wide and varied range of identified needs amongst pupils with SEN during the transition period. However, it is

important to remember the level of heterogeneity present amongst and within SEN categorisations.

Differences between the support offered to pupils with SEN transitioning from year six to year seven were also highlighted within this study. Authors concluded that identified key factors which contributed to participants experiencing successful transitions were namely:

1. SEN pupils experiencing continuity of support across settings.
2. A setting wherein participants had access to a designated support provision within their secondary schools.

These factors, in conjunction with consistent and effective communication between school support services; staff; parents/carers and pupils were collectively viewed as factors which contributed to successful transitions. Emphasis was also put-upon practitioners ensuring support was specific to the individual participant's needs. This study was given a high WoE rating. This was due to appropriateness of the methodological approach used varied characteristics of the sample group and the emphasis upon gaining the views of participants, pre- and post-transition.

3.4.2 Lyons and Woods (2012)

Using a mixed-methods case study, Lyons and Woods (2012) investigated the impact of an established transition programme called the Transition Pyramid Club (Ohi, Mitchell, Cassidy and Fox, 2008). The authors recognise and identify pupils with social and emotional difficulties which leave them more susceptible to withdrawal, social anxiety and shyness as a vulnerable group during the transition process. This and the study discussed by Maras and Aveling (2006) were the only two UK based studies which identified needs

that could be broadly categorised into SEMH descriptors. This study also overlaps with categories 2, 3, and category 4 looking at interventions for secondary transitions and the SEN population.

Established in 2007, the Pyramid Club was devised specifically to support shy, anxious and withdrawn pupils through two identified transition phases being from year 3 to 4 and primary to secondary transition. The programme is delivered over ten 90-minute weekly sessions. Included in the programme are specific interventions aimed to support pupils to engage in social skills activities actively. The aims are to enhance pupils' resilience, self-esteem and confidence through offering opportunities to rehearse key social skills and discuss anxieties related to secondary transitions.

Transition clubs are facilitated by transition club volunteers who have been trained specifically to deliver the programme. For this study, 9 of the ten planned sessions took place, five within year 6 and 4 post-transition when participants were in year 7. Lyons and Woods carried out case study evaluations for the nine participants. Pre and post measures of participants' social and emotional well-being and social and interpersonal functioning were taken using SDQ scoring (Goodman, 2001). Participants were from three different primary schools and had been identified by school staff and Pyramid Club coordinators as experiencing challenges with anxiety, shyness or social withdrawal. A robust selection criterion was adopted to identify participants. Measures used were; whole class social-emotional needs screening using SDQ's, and Social Competence Inventory measures (SCI Rydell, Hagekull, & Bohlin 1997). Additionally, a multi-agency meeting to discuss needs, the inclusion of and suitability of potential participants was held. Consequently, pupils who were identified through the screening process as being at risk of social isolation, withdrawal, shyness or lacking confidence in their transition to secondary

school were invited to participate. This was followed by the dissemination of written invitations to participants and their carers.

Qualitative and quantitative data from this study highlight the variable benefits experienced by participants. Quantitative improvements in participants' social and emotional well-being were indicated through higher SDQ scores post-intervention. However, these results varied across participants with some showing significant improvements and others experiencing marginal improvements. SCI scores post-transition was also variable with some participant's scores showing a significant decrease in areas related to pro-social skills such as initiating conversations and contact with peers. This is key as the targeted participant group were already experiencing social anxiety and shyness. One would, therefore, argue that this intervention did not adequately support the needs of the target participant group. This suggests a gap in research related to secondary transition intervention and what works for children with these identified needs.

Qualitative data analysis indicated that participants strongly valued and were reported to have benefitted from opportunities offered throughout the Transition Pyramid intervention. Participants' and parents pre-transition concerns being addressed were highlighted as key benefits supporting successful transitions. Authors highlight the importance of the implementation of transition support interventions which fundamentally offer pupils' ample opportunities to develop their resilience as key to improved post-secondary transition outcomes. This study was given a high overall WoE due to the effective use of Pre and post measures of participants' social and emotional well-being and social and interpersonal functioning to demonstrate impact through data.

3.4.3 Neal, Rice, Ng-Knight, Riglin and Frederickson (2016).

Similar to Lyons and Woods (2012), Neal et al. (2016) explored universal transition interventions, and the impact of these upon the: psychological; social; emotional and educational well-being of shy and anxious pupils. As part of a large-scale longitudinal study, the authors aimed to identify the extent to which universal secondary transition interventions and strategies employed by primary schools' impact upon participant's levels of anxiety. This study investigated the association of transition strategies and "post-transition anxiety, whilst controlling for anxiety" pre-transition.

Through comparing outcomes for pupils' with and without SENs, this study explored the impact of existing mainstream transition support interventions. The study also aimed to ascertain support mechanisms which contributed to positive transitions for children with SEN. Data collection was aimed at identifying transition intervention and approaches used to prepare participants for transition during their time in primary school.

Based upon schools' responses, Neal et al. (2012) categorised existing intervention strategies self-reported to be used by schools into three theoretical strands. Identified strands were interventions which deployed strategies based upon cognitive; behavioural or systemic approaches. Strategies were broken down further, and four cognitive, eight behavioural and five systemic strategies were finally identified as key support strategies used. Data collection also entailed the use of questionnaires designed specifically to identify whether schools used specialised strategies to support pupils with SEN.

Hierarchical regression analysis was adopted in order to ascertain transition strategies used and their association with pupils self-reported anxiety measures.

Participants comprised of 861 pupils' (311 male and 310 female) across nine non-selective secondary schools. Of the sample group, 14.3% of pupils included were on schools SEN registers at the time of transition and throughout the study. Measures of school and

generalised anxiety were collected for all participants prior to selection. This data was collected using the "Screen for Child Anxiety Related Disorders" scale (SCARED, Birmaher, Kheptrapal, Brent, Cully, Balach, Kaufman & Neer 1997). Anxiety as a marker for measurement was specified as the authors' recognised increased levels of anxiety as universal across pupil populations during the secondary transition. This study confirmed that pupils with SEN experience increased levels of anxiety in response to changes and transition in comparison to their peers.

Neal et al. (2012) concluded that in comparison to typically developing pupils, pupils with SEN were likely to need differentiated and personalised transition intervention approaches. However, one may argue that all pupils require an element of differentiation in order to ensure system-level inclusion across settings. This study was given an overall WoE rating of high due to relevance; the longitudinal design; follow up data and large sample size.

3.5 Category Three: Support and interventions aimed at enabling successful primary to secondary transitions.

3.5.1 Humphrey and Ainscow (2006)

Aimed specifically to support at-risk pupils', Humphrey and Ainscow (2006) used and evaluated the effectiveness of the Transition Club programme. Transition Club is an existing intervention originally devised by a secondary school.

Participants for this study attended the 'Transition Club' for six weeks in the summer term of year 6. The sample group consisted of 38 year six pupils who were underachieving in the areas of literacy and numeracy. The programme also entailed participants attending secondary school settings three times per week to take part in differentiated literacy and

numeracy-based lessons. The inclusion of three days of attendance at a secondary setting was also devised to support participants' levels of self-confidence and enhances their social skills. The focus for intervention was to enhance pupils'; psychological adjustment; school participation and learning during the transition. Data was collected via the combination of participants engaging in focus groups and completing self-reports via questionnaires. Data also consisted of information taken from the researcher's observations of the 'Transition Group' whilst in progress.

This study concluded that participants benefitted from involvement in the Transition Club. Participants' enhanced enjoyment of learning and enhanced feelings of belonging were reported markers experienced and recorded. One of the possible limitations of this study is evident within the researchers' choice of data source. This is because the participant's behaviours and expressed attitudes may have been inadvertently impacted by the presence of the researcher observing them during their time in the Transition Club; therefore, impacting upon self-reported measures.

3.5.2 Qualter, Whiteley, Hutchinson and Pope (2007).

Drawing upon theories of Emotional Intelligence (Salovey & Mayer 1990), Qualter et al. (2007) highlighted possible links between pupils' level of Emotional Intelligence and how pupils' managed secondary school transitions.

Adapted from Gardner's original theory of 'personal intelligence' (Gardner 1983), Emotional Intelligence pertains to individuals' innate predispositions which allow for them to display a level of self-perception. Emotional intelligence includes consideration of an individual's abilities to regulate the emotions and feelings of themselves and others. Key to

high levels of emotional intelligence is an individual's abilities to socially navigate these feelings and emotions in ways which guide their reactions, thinking processes and actions within social contexts. It is argued that higher levels of emotional intelligence correlate with enhanced abilities to manage stressful life events (Petrides, Frederickson & Furnham, 2004).

Qualter et al. (2007) conducted a quantitative study aimed to explore the impact of pupils' levels of emotional intelligence on pupils' coping skills adopted to manage secondary transitions. Participants entailed two, year seven cohorts of students within one secondary school. Data were collected on two consecutive academic years 2002-2003 and 2003-2004. In the first cohort data for 191 pupils were collected and 170 collected in the second cohort comprising a sample of 361 in total. One cohort participated in an intervention aimed at enhancing pupils' levels of emotional intelligence. The other group was a control group and thus did not have the intervention. For the group who received the intervention, the teachers of that cohort also attended and facilitated the intervention. Pre and post measures were collected gathering data relating to participants' emotional intelligence; cognitive abilities; academic performance; measures of self-concept; school reported concerns; attendance and general abilities. This data was collected using specific evidence-based measurement tools⁶.

Findings of this study suggested a correlation between pupils with high and average emotional intelligence levels; fewer recorded staff concerns and higher grades (Qualter et al. 2007). The study concluded that pupils with higher emotional intelligence levels were better able to manage secondary transition experiences. Thus, suggesting that through

⁶Measures used were; The Bar-On EQ-iYV (Bar-On and Parker, 2000) used to measure pupils' emotional intelligence, the self-Perception Profile for Children (SPPC; Harter, 1985) to measure self-perception. School reports of concerns and school attendance were measured via school database logs. Academic performance measures were based on GPA grade point averages of pupils according to school data.

enhancing pupil's emotional intelligence, practitioners can support and facilitate positive secondary transitions. Findings illustrated that pupils with a lower baseline measure for emotional intelligence demonstrated the most significant improvement in emotional intelligence scores post-intervention. This can be used to inform issues, and challenges related to supporting the transition experiences of pupils' with SEMH needs as these vulnerable groups have been highlighted as often finding regulation of emotions challenging.

Although strong due to the large sample size and use of evidence-based theory to inform baseline measurements, this study highlights some key methodological issues. Firstly, generalisability for the general population (external validity) and across school contexts is limited due to both sample groups being within the same school. Secondly, possible issues related to biased measures need to be addressed as the involvement of teachers facilitating the interventions having the dual roles of reporting on pupil's scores, and facilitation could have led to skewed and biased reporting scores. For example, those who received the intervention may have been perceived as displaying enhanced emotional intelligence levels. The study also lacked specificity in relation to participant profiles, so it was unclear if any of the pupils' included had additional SEN needs. This study was rated medium for WoE.

3.5.3 Bloyce and Frederickson (2012).

Whilst Neal et al. (2012) focused their explorations on transition experiences and intervention outcomes specifically for anxious pupils, Bloyce and Frederickson (2012), investigated child reported concerns during the secondary transition phase. With a sample

size of 351 mainstream pupils who were identified as vulnerable to negative secondary transitions, Bloyce and Frederickson (2012) also focused on secondary transition intervention support. Through studying the impact of the Transfer support team intervention on transition outcomes versus participants who did not participate in any targeted transition support interventions. The sample included children with Social Emotional Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD). Of the whole sample of 351 participants, 106 participants had "access to" a universal transition programme. This experimental group therefore comprised of a non-equivalent comparison This was achieved by the authors including pupils who had been selected to receive the intervention to be studied (TST) whilst the remainder of the participants received universal transition support ordinarily offered to all pupils within their schools, the level of these were variable.

The purpose of the programme was to address areas relevant to transition adaptation. Hence intervention focus included attention to three identified areas of adjustment being; social, curriculum and institutional adjustment. Akin to other studies which highlighted these areas as key to transition adaptation (Evangelou et al. 2008), this study deemed these factors as significant markers to identifying factors constituent to a successful transition. However, it is worth emphasising here that different marker of successful transitions and may result in variable outcomes due to the complexities related to defining a successful transition.

Pupils' well-being concerns about transition and adjustment were collected through the use of self-reported measures. Self-reported data were collected using Strength and Difficulties Questionnaires (SDQ's Goodman, Meltzer and Bailey 1998) and Social Communication Questionnaire (SCQ, Berument, Rutter, Pickles and Bailey 1999). Data were collected in three different phases' pre-and post-intervention, which were later followed up.

Results of this study revealed a decrease in participant's self-reported levels of transition-related concerns post-transition. Namely, school concerns, peer relationship difficulties and emotional indicators of distress all reduced with scores recorded for the experimental group equating to those recorded for the comparison group. These levels continued to reduce, and reductions sustained post-intervention and follow up during the autumn term of year 7. Post-intervention data from the experimental group indicated a reduction in two key areas which the intervention was targeted to address being; emotional distress, and peer relationship difficulties.

Possible limitations of this study are evident from the authors' decision to include a non-randomised comparison group. This means that the conditions of the experiment did not adequately allow for the two groups to be compared fairly. This can significantly impact upon the validity of findings. Despite this, this study highlights the positive impact that a targeted intervention to support vulnerable pupils during the transition phase can have on pupils' social and emotional outcomes.

3.6 Category Four: What contributes to a successful transition?

3.6.1 Evangelou et al. (2008)

Evangelou et al. (2008) conducted a retrospective, longitudinal study using a mixed-methods methodology. This study was aimed at looking specifically at factors which contribute to a successful transition from primary to secondary school within the UK educational system. Quantitative data via questionnaires were collected from 550 year seven pupils' and 569 parents/guardians of year seven pupils. The questionnaires were

devised to ascertain parents and pupils' views and expressed experiences of various aspects related to the year 6 to year seven transitional phases. Later 12 pupils who had been identified as having experienced a successful transition from year 6 to year seven were interviewed using semi-structured interviews. To give a perspective from the professionals involved, these pupil's teachers were also interviewed at this point.

Factor analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data gathered identified five key elements which support successful year 6 to year seven transitions for pupils. These were:

- Development of friendships and confidence
- Settling into school life
- Development of a growing interest in school life and academic tasks
- Adapting / and adjusting to the new school routines
- Experiencing continuity of curriculum-based tasks.

This study highlighted the need for secondary schools to play a strong and active role in facilitating and supporting successful secondary school transitions for year seven pupils. The fundamental role of secondary schools in this active process highlighted within this study was to promote pupils' levels of social adjustment and Institutional adjustment. In particular, attention to ensuring and promoting pupils' academic continuity and high interest in curriculum-based activities were named as key areas to consider.

This study found that pupils who felt reassured about any school-based worries and those who were supported by school and family through advice on how to better cope with their worries experienced more successful transitions than those who did not have this support.

Other factors identified as facilitating successful transitions in this study can be broadly categorised into the above-mentioned areas. To elaborate, the study found that key

factors related to *social adjustments* being; participants experiencing their peers as friendly, transitioning with friends or those with siblings at the same secondary school were more likely to experience more positive transitions. Other key named supportive elements identified were pupils' having a supportive secondary school and feeling that curriculum tasks were interesting. These can be broadly categorised in the area of *institutional adjustment*.

Evangelou et al. (2008), therefore describe successful transitions from year 6 to year seven as consisting of multifactorial concepts. They argue that the combined influences listed above can be used to understand the fundamental basis on which the "underlying" elements supporting successful transitions from year 6 to year seven are based. These include the above five listed as well as: the establishment of a combined primary and secondary school transition programme; strong communication between primary and secondary settings; and sharing information and support for individual children across settings.

This study found that 37% of children with SEN had experienced bullying when transitioning to secondary school. The sample size of 550 children in total included 110 of the sample group identified as belonging to a SEN population. Other SEN specific challenges highlighted within this study illustrated that children with Specific Learning Difficulties experienced lower self-esteem after the transition from primary to secondary school. Although the term specific learning difficulty is referred to within the study, there were no references made to children with SEMH needs. Despite being a large piece of research into the relevant field, this study does not explicitly explore the perspectives of children from SEMH populations.

This research has relevant strengths as it offers value-added information relating to essential factors which influence successful year 6 to year seven transitions. Using a mixed-methods design, Evangelou et al. (2008) demonstrate the usefulness of the application of a mixed-methods design by combining the quantitative and qualitative data in ways which allow for each data set to support the other. The large sample size and the triangulation of parent/guardian, pupils' and teacher's perspectives and views further strengthen this piece of research.

The questionnaire used included a tick response box requiring a Yes or No response to the question asking whether or not the children had an SEN. This compounds the fact that the details related to the children within the sample remained vague, lacking sufficient information or detail about the specific nature of the needs of participants identified as having an SEN. It was, therefore, difficult to gain an in-depth understanding of how generalisable this study would be to help in understanding the factors that facilitate a successful transition from primary school to secondary school for children with SEMH needs. Also, this study was conducted approximately 11 years ago. Recent and relevant changes within educational policy and health sectors are therefore not reflected within this study. This study, therefore, highlighted a gap in current and contemporary research.

3.6.2 Gillison et al. (2008)

With a focus upon exploring changes in pupils' "Quality of Life" (QoL) following secondary transitions, Gillison et al. 2008 conducted a quantitative study. Data for this study was collected through participants' self-reported measures of QoL and satisfaction of needs via questionnaires. This data was collected at three different time points post-transition during

the autumn term in year 7. Regression analysis was used to determine the impact upon different areas of QoL post-secondary- transition. QoL measures comprise of individuals' responses to internal and external factors, and forces (Ferris 2006; Gillison et al. 2008). Internal forces include those of a physiological, mental, and emotional nature, whilst external influences refer to social psychological, environmental and cultural structures. These factors inevitably affect individuals' contexts, experiences and their understanding of these experiences. It is, therefore argued that measures of these QoL factors could prove useful in understanding the individuals' experiences of transition (Gillison et al. 2008).

The concept of QoL and its relevance to the contemporary educational context is highlighted further as Galloway 2006 states: *"For a range of economic, social and political reasons, QOL has emerged as a desired outcome of service delivery in mainstream and special needs education, health care, social services (particularly for disabled and elderly people) and, increasingly, for cross-cutting public sector partnership policy at all levels."* (Galloway, 2006; p.9)

Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000) has also been applied to understanding pupils' experiences within educational contexts (Ryan 2009). Self Determination Theory is essentially concerned with the exploration of factors which promote or hinder "assimilative and growth-orientated processes" of individuals' (Ryan 2009, p.134). Self-Determination Theory highlights; autonomy, competence and relatedness as essential psychological needs which are necessary for individuals to develop fully (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Deci & Ryan, 2002; Gagne & Deci, 2005).

Gillison and colleagues (2008), explore changes in QoL following secondary school transition. The authors make links between theory underpinning both QoL and needs

according to Self-determination Theory. The study aimed to identify the impact that schools could have upon promoting pupil's QoL through meeting pupil's needs for autonomy, enhanced competence and levels of relatedness. Participants comprised of 63 students within the same mainstream school post-transition in year seven. Self-reported measures of participant's QoL and self-determination needs scores were collected. Data collection took place in three phases spread across the year seven academic year.

Findings revealed a significant increase in pupils' QoL scores which increased progressively across data collection phases. QoL scores for psychological well-being also increased. The authors concluded that increases in pupils' levels of autonomy and relatedness were predictive of an increase in overall QoL (Gillison et al., 2008). Consequently, the authors argue that schools can best facilitate successful year seven transitions through ensuring that pupils' autonomy and relatedness are enhanced and promoted throughout the transitional stage.

This study included one small secondary school cohort. This contextual factor considered, leads to some possible challenges with generalisability across contexts and participants. Also, this study was highly reliant upon the pupil's self-reported scores recorded via questionnaires. QoL and Self-determination measures are recognised as fair and reliable and evidence-based measures. However, one may question the reliability of self-reported scores recorded as pupils would presumably require a certain level of competence and abilities to appropriately self-reflect in order to complete these questionnaires. However, the study does not specify if any measures were put into place to meet inclusion needs of those within the cohort who may have required support to complete self-reported measures.

3.6.3 West et al. (2010)

West et al. (2010) conducted a retrospective school-based study to understand the impact of C&YP's differences and how school and parental factors impact upon pupils' experiences of transition from primary to secondary schools. The study also aimed to explore links between pupils' personal and social characteristics and the parental styles adopted by their parents/guardians as well as characteristics and ethos of the school. The main area of exploration was around exploring how the factors as mentioned above impact upon whether or not pupils experienced a successful or unsuccessful transition and the long-term impact of transition experiences.

As a longitudinal study, data was collected via questionnaires conducted over nine years; however, not all time points were used to inform this study. Participants comprised of 2586 children, 2401 parents and 2581 classroom teachers within Scotland. Participants were recruited from 43 secondary schools and 135 primary schools. The initial phase of data was collected post-secondary transition at the age of 13. Subsequent data were collected from pupils when they were aged 15 with a final questionnaire conducted when pupils had left school aged 18 to 19 years old. There was a decrease in participant numbers for those who provided data in the aged 18 to 19 years old phase of collection. A total of 1258 participants, therefore, provided data during the final stage of the research.

From the pupil's perspective data collected explored participants experiences of secondary transition. This included the central focus upon possible "school concerns" and "peer concerns" experienced by pupils' pre- and post-transition (West et al., 2010). *School concerns* mainly encompassed concerns around peer relationships; timetables; change of environment; having to interact with new and different teachers and volume of academic work. *Peer concerns* comprised of concerns relating to forming new friendships;

bullying/being bullied and dealing with a multitude of older peers. The study found that transition experiences and the impact on well-being and attainment varied with age and according to the time/ phase of data collection (West et al., 2010). This study found that during the secondary transition phase in year 7 47% of pupils studied indicated difficulties coping with peer concerns while 68% of pupils reported finding it challenging to manage and deal with one or more "school concerns". The following factors were found to be predictive of higher levels of school and peer concerns (West et al. 2010);

- Lower academic abilities
- High anxiety
- Low self-esteem
- Previous experiences of victimisation/bullying
- Unpreparedness for secondary school
- Higher levels /incidence of expressed aggression
- Disengagement in primary school.

(West et al., 2010)

Through triangulation of the differing views of parents, staff and pupils within educational based research, key differences and similarities shaping different perceptions can be highlighted (Frederickson, Dunsmuir, Lang & Monsen, 2004). Within this study, West et al. (2010) designed questionnaires to capture a wide range of data from a triangulated perspective. Therefore, questionnaires aimed at teachers and parents explored further and broader systemic factors impacting upon secondary transition experiences of pupils. These included; views from parents regarding their parenting styles, details from staff and parents about student's psychological well-being, information from school staff about pupils' academic abilities and varying characteristics of the school.

Factor analysis revealed a correlation between specific factors related to transition, pupils' levels of school and peer concerns experienced and pupil's long-term social and emotional well-being. This was found to impact upon pupil's educational attainment and overall outcomes. Within this study, West al (2010) recognises primary schools as also having a role in support positive transitions in-so-far as they identify a need for the primary school settings to begin to support post-transition in regards identifying and addressing school-related concerns prior to secondary transitions. School transition has been recognised and cited as being a longer-term process. Therefore, researchers have advocated the need for support to begin during the primary phase and continue beyond this (Neal 2016) and earlier works of Anderson et al., 2000, Jindal-Snape & Foggie, 2008. Despite this, West et al. (2010) did not collect or include data measuring pre-transition anxiety and pre-transition school concerns. This further highlights a gap in this piece of research.

3.6.4 Bailey and Baines (2012)

Resilience pertains to the combination of internal predispositions of C&YP and external factors which can be deemed as supporting or hindering some C&YP's abilities to overcome adversity. The notion of resilience and links to successful secondary transitions has been emphasised by previous scholars (Catterall, 1998; Jundal-Snape & Miller 2008).

Through the application of a theoretical resilience framework, Bailey and Baines (2012) further explored resilience and protective factors conducive to successful secondary school transitions. This study aimed to identify risk and protective factors which may contribute to how pupils adjust to secondary school during primary to secondary transitions.

This non-experimental, longitudinal study consisted of 133 year six pupils from four different primary schools. Initial data was gathered post-transfer within the last half term of school. Subscales from the Resiliency Scales for Children and Adolescents (Prince-Embury, 2006) were used to decipher participant's perceptions of their levels of optimism; self-efficacy; a sense of trust; perceived access to support; comfort with others; sensitivity; recovery and impairment. Data collected within this study considered various systemic variables as pre and post data were collected from parents and staff to ascertain school adjustment measures and identify stressors relevant to each participant within their systemic contexts.

Data was also collected six months after pupils had completed two terms in year 7. Participants were transferring to two different secondary schools. The split of pupils transferring to the two different secondary schools were 45% to school 1 and 55% to school 2. Participants were selected to ensure that proportions of pupils studied who had identified SEN, and those from minority ethnic groups reflected the general population and national average⁷.

Findings from this study suggest a correlation between pupils' levels of school adjustment factors and pupils' risk and resilience factors. Bailey and Baines (2012) found a relationship between specific variables relevant to secondary school adjustment and "SEN" as a risk factor. Namely, where SEN pupils self-reported higher ratings pre-transfer in the area of optimism, these participants' perceptions of relationships gathered from post-transfer data decreased (Bailey & Baines, 2012). Similarly, where SEN pupils reported higher ratings in the areas of support and comfort pre-transfer data suggested lower ratings post-transfer in areas of overall school adjustment levels. School adjustment

⁷ SEN pupils were categorised as pupils at any stage of the SEN Code of Practice (DFE, 2009) being: school action, school action plus and those with statements of SEN.

levels were measured through self-reported and teacher-reported questionnaires. These relationships were found to be specific to the SEN sample of the participant population, highlighting having a SEN as a risk factor.

This study, therefore, suggests that the risk factor of SEN moderated the relationship between risk and resilience factors and school adjustment outcomes post-transfer. Within this study possible explanation for these findings specific to the SEN population focus upon an examination of the extent by which SEN pupils generalise and use strategies and support conducive to supporting positive resilience during their transition from primary to secondary school. The study also highlights resilience factors which may have been perceived as supporting positive resilience for SEN pupils (such as having support via 1.1 staff members) as the sources of risk factors impacting upon some SEN pupils abilities to adjust in the more independent setting post-transfer.

Strengths of this study are indicated in the large sample size, and the use of evidence-based measures to collect the data resiliency scales (Prince & Embury 2006). Also, by adopting a longitudinal design, the study offers insight into change and emerging factors relevant to the year 6 to year seven transitional stages. This study utilised a triangulated approach to understanding factors which impact upon pre- and post-secondary school adjustments through the collection and use of data gathered from teacher, parents and child perspectives.

Limitations of this study highlight the lack of clarity on the exact numbers of SEN participants. Neither are details of the nature of SEN needs represented. Therefore, this makes it difficult to apply and generalise this study across the SEMH population. Another limitation of this study is also reflected in the fact that the study was conducted over two secondary schools. This can be problematic as only the measures and characteristics of

these two particular school contexts and how they impact upon individual pupils' predispositions during the year six to year seven transitional stages are represented within the study. This makes it difficult to generalise the study across settings fully.

This is especially pertinent in contemporary educational contexts to consider factors such as the impact of changes in school trends, for example, the influx of academy run, and free-school mainstream settings and the differences in the infrastructure of these in relation to how they may impact upon participants' experiences and outcomes. This observation is supported further by Tobbell (2003) who notes that the dynamic changes across educational contexts can be viewed as restrictive to researchers when aiming to generalise findings sought across studies within the area of transition.

3.6.5 Rice, Frederickson, Shelton, McManus, Riglin and Ng-Knight (2016)

As part of a large scale, longitudinal research study Rice et al. (2016) aimed to identify factors which predict successful or challenging transitions to secondary school.

Encompassing pupils, parents and teachers from nine different schools within the UK, the study focus was essentially to explore transition for the general population. The authors, therefore, did not specifically focus upon any one particular pupil group or pupil profile.

Selection criteria for the sample group reflected this as the study was deliberately designed to ensure that in broad terms, the general populations of pupils were represented. This was achieved through the authors, ensuring the inclusion of pupils with SEN. Factors relevant to social-economic status (SES), race and ethnicity; EAL (English as an Additional Language) and gender were also considered during participant recruitment. This study eventually resulted in the "School Transition Adjustment Research Study" (STAR) (University College London (UCL) (Rice et al. 2016).

Through collecting data from school staff, parents and pupil's data to inform this study was collected through the adoption of a triangulated approach. This fundamentally promotes a systemic exploration of pupils' secondary transitions. Data was collected via questionnaires in three phases being; Phase 1: Summer term pre-transition, 2: autumn term post-transition and 3: summer term post-transition when pupils were approaching the end of year 7. Study aims were to identify the different perspectives and possible systemic influences and the impact of these upon pupils' secondary transition. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with staff of the secondary schools that had key responsibilities for coordinating the year seven transition process. The study also looked at whether concerns of parents and different parenting styles contributed influenced pupils' levels of secondary transition success. Questionnaires were sent to parents of the pupils transitioning to gauge pupil concerns around transition and parenting styles adopted. Questionnaires and Social-cognitive-maps (Cairns, Perrin & Cairns, 1985) were also used to gain pupils' perspectives and identify peer group dissemination and social affiliations amongst pupil participants within the school context. Questionnaires enquired about pupils' academic achievements, friendships and perspectives of teachers.

The social cognitive maps were repeated at the end of year 7 to identify changes in school-based social contexts across the transition phase. Additionally, semi-structured interviews were also used to gain a deeper depth of understanding from the perspective of children within the sample who had identified ASC's. The researchers specifically identified these pupils as "vulnerable to unsuccessful transitions". Evaluations were also conducted with staff and students.

Like West et al. (2012), this study found that levels of pupil's concerns were a major factor which impacted upon pupils' pre- and post-transitional experiences. However, the nature of these concerns shifted and changed between the beginning of year six and the end of

year seven. This study also supported the findings of Bailey and Baines (2012) as risk and resilience factors were examined.

This study indicated other key factors influencing the level of secondary transition success as:

- parental influences
- Lower levels of parental concern
- Supportive, involved and emotionally warm parenting
- Sustained and consistent friendship groups

The implementation of transition strategies pre-transition was cited as being highly conducive to lower levels of school-based anxieties post-transition. Strategies to support transition which were embedded in systemic frameworks were deemed as particularly beneficial to supporting smooth transitions. Systemic approaches which entail making links and sustaining a level of consistency between the primary and secondary settings also supported successful transitions. This study is highly relevant to the current research, although it does not explicitly focus upon pupils with SEMH needs. WoE rated for this study was therefore deemed high.

3.7 Answering the literature review question a summary.

The current literature review aimed to answer the questions:

What does existing published literature tell us about influences and factors which impact upon positive primary to secondary transitions for C&YP with SEMH needs?

Reviewed literature offers a broad outline of key factors which influence and impact upon positive primary to secondary transitions. The existing literature has focused upon:

1. Pupils experiences of primary to secondary transition.
2. Factors influencing transition experiences and successful transitions for pupils with SEN.
3. Support and interventions aimed at enabling successful primary to secondary transitions.
4. What contributes to a successful transition?

Attention has been given to; school and wider contextual practices and the role of primary schools in supporting secondary transitions (West al. 2010). The fundamental role which secondary schools play in supporting transitions is also highlighted as facilitative to positive transition experiences (Evangelou et al. 2008).

This review also outlines the application of a wide range of theoretical frameworks which have been posited to offer further understanding of factors which influence and impact upon pupils' experiences of secondary school transitions. These include theories based upon; resilience (Bailey and Baines, 2012); the need for YP to foster a sense of belonging (Sancho and Cline, 2012) and the benefits of adopting eco-systemic (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and social-cultural (Vygotsky 1978) approaches to support pupils through secondary school transitions (Tobbell, 2013).

Key influences on positive transitions have been highlighted in this review of literature as being impacted by pupils' levels of:

- Positive school adjustments made (Evangelou et al. 2008).

- Sense of school belonging fostered (Sancho and Cline, 2012).
- Individual emotional literacy and emotional intelligence (Qualter et al. 2007).
- Engagement in transition-based adult led interventions (Lyons and Wood 2012).
- Continuity and availability of designated support staff (Maras and Aveling (2006).
- Child-teacher relational dynamics (Tobbell, 2013).

Attention to the above factors can be broadly understood as influencing and impacting upon positive transitions for pupils during their transitions from primary to secondary school. The literature revealed that one of these studies, namely, Lyons and Woods (2012), made reference to and inclusion of pupils with needs which could be identified within the SEMH category. There therefore, exists a gap in the literature which focuses specifically on the needs of pupils with SEMH difficulties within the current educational context.

3.8 *Chapter summary*

Within this chapter, the literature review question and search process were outlined. Identified relevant UK based published literature into factors which contribute to successful secondary transitions for pupils with SEMH needs have been sought, presented, and appraised. Appropriate appraisal formats and systematic appraisal processes have been conducted and outlined using both Gough WoE (Gough 2007), and TAPUPAS framework (Pawson, et al. 2003) to inform the review process. Literature has been organised and presented under four distinct categories to reflect links, relationships and emerging themes which were identified within the extant literature base. A summary of the answer to the literature review question has been presented.

Chapter 4: Methodology and data collection

4.1 Chapter overview

This chapter offers a description of the methodological and data collection approaches adopted throughout the research. The research purpose and question are outlined. Research paradigms; ontological and epistemological perspectives underpinning this study are discussed and outlined. Grounded Theory (GT) as a methodological approach and a rationale for the use of a qualitative methodology are discussed. The process of data collection adopted, and details of the recruitment strategy utilised are described. Issues crucial to ensuring ethical research practice and practice adopted to ensure trustworthiness are also considered and described.

4.1.1 Research aims and purpose

The current research aims to explore and explain factors which contribute to successful transitions from primary to secondary school for pupils with SEMH needs. The research aims to explore participants lived experiences of secondary school transitions as expressed by pupils' with SEMH needs.

4.1.2 Research stance an overview

Research purposes include aims to; describe, explain, critique, understand, challenge or expand upon a research concept (Guba & Lincoln 1994). Four research aims are outlined by Robson (2011) being; explanatory, descriptive, emancipatory and exploratory (Robson 2011). Explanatory research aims to answer “why” and “how” questions relevant to explaining a phenomenon. On the contrary, descriptive research does not focus on why, how or when a phenomenon occurs but is more concerned with descriptive details such as characteristics, patterns of behaviour, frequency of events and other details which help to shed light upon variables relevant to the area of study (Robson 2011).

Exploratory research endeavours to investigate what is happening in regard to a particular phenomenon (Robson, 2002). Through adopting an exploratory stance, researchers must shape their enquiries to generate a new understanding. Emancipatory research aims to generate and contribute to the forming of social, structural and organisational change (Robson 2011).

The current research takes an exploratory and explanatory stance as it aims to develop an explanation based upon a theory to explain ‘why’ and ‘how’ participants experienced successful transitions, therefore looking for explanations of cause and effect. By asking ‘what’ factors contribute to successful transitions for these participants, I am also aiming to gain an increased understanding through exploring a range of factors to build hypotheses from which an explanatory theory will develop.

4.2 *Epistemology, Ontology and Paradigms*

4.2.1 Epistemology

Epistemology is concerned with the nature and order of existence; epistemology is described as the theory of knowledge referring to our understanding of how we come to know that a concept or phenomena exists and has a place in reality (Grix, 2004 p. 168, Robson & McCartan ,2016). How individuals come to know is hugely shaped by their subjective views of experiences (Robson & McCartan, 2016). The epistemological position informing this study is symbolic interactionism.

4.2.2 Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism adopts the world view that reality exists and is formed through symbolic meanings which are shared (Aldiabat & Le Navenec, 2011). Such symbolic meanings are subject to and shaped by social interactions.

Developed by Herbert Blumer (1969), the theory of symbolic interactionism grew from the work of George Mead, who studied the nature of group life and society (Blumer, 1969).

Key features which Blumer adopted from the work of Mead in devising the concept of symbolic interactionism were; the self; the act; social interaction; objects and joint interaction (Blumer, 1969).

Symbolic interactionism gives particular attention to the subjective meanings and interpretations which individuals give to the external world. Within symbolic interactionism, meaning is understood as highly changeable. Reality is seen as comprising of unlimited, fluid ever changing and emerging meanings which develop through interactions with

others in the external world (Blumer, 1969). Three additional assumptions underpinning symbolic interactionism are; Individuals give meaning to social 'objects' (i.e. physical objects, places and people) in ways which influence their actions.

4.2.3 Ontology

Ontology refers to an individual's understanding and views of reality and how the world works. These views are informed by assumptions which we hold relating to the nature of being, the nature of reality, and the factors which realities are composed of (Grix 2004). Ontology also considers how different entities interact with each other to form or inform individuals' concepts of reality.

4.3 *Research Paradigms*

Researcher's responses to the ontological and epistemological enquiry are also informed by, and inextricably linked to their world view. This world view is referred to as a paradigm. Understanding research paradigms is considered as the first and most fundamental stage of the research process (Elshafie, 2016). Each paradigm relates to different ontological perspectives. There are several different paradigms adopted within social and psychological research. These are understood as existing on a wide continuum (Madhill; Jordan & Shirley 2000). This continuum includes views located within the perspectives of; social constructivism; post-positivism and critical realism (Robson, 2002).

4.3.1 Constructivism

Research from a constructivist perspective generates questions based upon the phenomenological enquiry⁸. The primary aim is to understand the subjective views and experiences of others within their specific social contexts (Ernest, 1994). Constructivism adopts an interpretative ontology. The interpretative paradigm aims to gain a comprehensive understanding of social reality from the perspective of various participants (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p.19).

4.4 Positivism VS's Post Positivism.

Contrary to the constructivist paradigm positivism seeks to prove measurable truths. With positivism comes a realist ontological view. Realism adapts an objectivist epistemological stance (Guba & Lincoln 1994,109). Positivism aims to prove or disprove hypotheses through observations and measurements employed within qualitative methodologies. A positivist's view of what constitutes reality is informed and defined by what is observed objectively. Views based on positivism do not consider subjectivity as a reliable measure of reality (Grix 2004, 82).

4.4.1 The Critical Paradigm

An alternative approach which exists on the continuum between Positivism and interpretive paradigms is critical realism (Bhaskar; 1975; 1998; Grix 2004; Sayer 2004). The current study adopts a critical realist ontology. Within critical realism, understanding the subjective

⁸ Phenomenological enquiry defines qualitative research which has its focus upon the exploration of identified similar lived experiences of individuals within a distinguished group.

experiences of others entails an examination of the interaction between the objective world and one's subjective experience (Houston 2010). This can also be applied to explaining and understanding how the world views of individuals are formed (Robson 2002).

Robson (2002), states; "*Realism can provide a model of scientific explanation which avoids both positivism and relativism*" (Robson, 2002, p.29). As a theoretical approach, critical realism adopts the stances of both objectivity, traditional to positivism and the subjectivity of relativism. This approach allows the researcher to use these combined stances in ways which would not be possible from either stance alone (Bhasker 1998, Easton 2009, Kelly 2008). Critical realism entails researchers paying particular attention to causality within a phenomenon.

4.4.2 Critical Realism: Relevance to Educational Psychology in context

Educational Psychologists are widely understood to be scientific practitioners who apply their knowledge and skills to support C&YP (Rumble & Thomas, 2017, P.17). EP's work across a variety of settings including within multi-disciplinary teams. The role of the educational psychologist in practice therefore entails navigating between and aiming to understand complex issues rooted in factors which are entrenched within the individual's specific psych- social contexts.

Consideration of the role of the EP therefore illustrate why adopting a critical realist stance is cited and viewed as being hugely relevant and widely applicable to researching phenomena within applied professions including those related to educational psychology (Chouliaraki & Fairclough 1999, Kelly 2008).

Kelly 2008 highlights this point further by stating; *“The relevance of critical realism for the educational psychologist is in providing the wider theoretical framework and the practice rationale for analysing and acting in the complexity of social and educational contexts”* (Kelly 2008, p.25).

4.5 Research Purpose

Applying a critical realist approach supports the exploratory and explanatory aims of the current study. In line with an epistemological stance underpinned by symbolic interactionism, this study aims to gather information about the distinct actions of and meaning making which participants have adopted throughout their own unique experiences.

4.6 Research design: A qualitative approach

An exploration of research design entails great consideration of how best to answer the research question posed (Robson 2011). Three types of research design are; flexible; fixed, and multi-strategy (Robson 2011). Flexible designs adopt a qualitative approach whilst fixed methods utilise quantitative statistical numerically measurable data. Multi-strategy designs describe a mixed-methods approach (Robson, 2011).

A qualitative design has been adopted for the current research study to identify and explore the views of pupils' with SEMH needs regarding their experiences of successful transitions.

Qualitative research designs have been cited as well-placed when aiming to identify and ascertain the views, perceptions and experiences of participants (Robson; 2011, 2012). Adopting a flexible design allows for a research approach wherein research is able to progressively develop flexibly during the process of data collection and analysis. This hugely compliments a GT methodology. The current study, therefore, adopts a flexible/qualitative design. A flexible design is considered a good fit for the current research question as the aim of the study is to explore' participants' constructed views, experiences and processes as expressed by the participants' themselves within their naturally occurring environment being schools.

4.6.1 Alternative qualitative methods

Alternative methodologies considered for this study were Thematic analysis (TA) and Discourse analysis (DA). Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), entails identifying themes and analysing, meanings and relationships between these themes. Thematic analysis is highly applicable to research which is explanatory and exploratory so therefore offers the researcher a high level of flexibility and is compatible with a wide range of approaches and philosophical orientations (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This lack of philosophical grounding can potentially impact upon the; range, scope and depth of analysis required to formulate a more complex and multi-faceted explanation of issues related to the social sciences in comparison to alternative methodologies (Joffe, 2012, Clarke 2006). I felt that in comparison to GT, thematic analysis would not allow a greater level of interpretation to comprehensively answer the research question.

Within Discourse Analysis (DA) different discourses and the shared meanings which are applied to these construct social experiences in various ways. Social norms, positions and roles are theorised as being rooted within language in ways which define individuals' identities and perceptions of themselves in society. Due to the high level of emphasis upon the role of discourse in the construction of reality, this approach was deemed insufficient for exploring more subjective and affective aspects which influence experiences such as the role of emotions, self-awareness and attributions (Burr, 2003). GT was deemed more appropriate, and fitting for the current study because as a methodology allows for explanation and exploration of a phenomenon (Starks & Trinidad, 2007).

4.7 Grounded Theory: An Introduction

The methodological approach used within this research is GT (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). With its roots in sociological research, GT was initially devised by Glaser and Strauss (1967).

4.7.1 Grounded Theory Philosophy

The philosophy underpinning a GT methodology hypothesises that a distinct theory is located through the active examination of the emergent concepts which are 'grounded' in the data collected. GT entails the development of theoretical ideas through a systematic and inductive process (Oliver 2012; Robson & McCartan 2016). Inductive research entails

using the data collected as the basis of understanding and the catalyst for developing and shaping theory (Gilbert & Stoneman, 2016).

Within the current study, empirical data gathered from the participants based upon their subjective views and voiced experiences will form the basis for the development of a theory related to factors which young people with SEMH needs believe for them, facilitated successful transitions from years 6 to year 7.

4.7.2 Glaser (1967)

Rooted in sociological perspectives, and initially based upon positivist and symbolic interactionist paradigms (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) GT was devised as an alternative to the traditional deductive approaches to research theory development.

GT was initially devised as an attempt to offer a systematic and highly inductive alternative to traditional research theory development. Glaser and Strauss (1967) recognised and hence aimed to address the gap between research approaches by devising a methodology which was applicable to qualitative studies aimed to enhance reliability and credibility. This was addressed by the design of methodology which aimed to incorporate and embrace an approach to qualitative data which demonstrated the rigorous empirical approaches to data analysis used within quantitative methods. GT completely reverses the traditional perspectives on the relationship between data and theory. Traditionally the process of research has entailed approaches wherein hypotheses are primarily seen to be generated from theory before being subjected to empirical analysis. However, within GT, the origins of a theory are fundamentally embedded within and emerge primarily from the data (Glaser & Strauss 1967). It was originally argued that by adopting this inductive

approach to theory generation, the researcher avoids their subjective perspectives and interpretations impacting upon the process of data analysis and theory development. The aim is therefore to promote an objective dynamic between researcher, data and subsequent emergent theories.

The idea of developing theory from data hence formed the main foundational principle leading to GT. The researcher's role within this classical approach to GT entails; observation from the onset; data collection; data organisation, management and analysis of data in search of a 'truth'. One of the main criticisms of Glaser and Strauss's (1967) approach aimed to address the underlying and highly unrealistic assumption that the researcher plays a purely objective role in this process (Denzin & Lincoln 1994; Bryant & Charmaz 2007; Hallberg 2006; Charmaz, 2000). Further criticism of this approach also centres around the idea that this particular approach remained strongly located within a positivist epistemological paradigm as within it is the suggestion of the existence of a 'truth' to be discovered (Denzin & Lincoln 2003; Corbin & Holt 2005; Willing 2013).

Fundamentally, two primary differences which were introduced through the development of GT were; the introduction of a systematic approach to managing and analysing qualitative data and theory development through data wherein the relationship between data and theory are inversed.

4.7.3 Grounded Theory: An umbrella term

Following on from Glaser and Strauss (1967), GT has been adapted in line with different philosophical schools of thought. These adaptations have resulted in GT developing and being understood as existing on a wider continuum between positivist and constructivist

paradigms (Corbin & Holt 2005; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Described as an umbrella term, (Guetterman, Babchuck, Howell-Smith & Stevens 2019; Charmaz 2009; Cobin 2009), GT is understood as a group of interconnected approaches to methodology which aim to develop explanations and theoretical frameworks.

Under the GT umbrella, there are three predominant approaches which are drawn upon to inform current studies. These are; Glaser (1967); Charmaz; (1990; 2000; 2002; 2006) and Corbin & Strauss; (2018; 2015). Primarily the main areas of contention amongst these theorists can be located in their ideas about the relationship between data and theory alongside different perspectives regarding the role which previous theoretical assumptions may play in theory development (Kelle 2007).

The philosophical splits between each approach, therefore, impact upon how a researcher begins to view and understand a phenomenon as each approach takes different ontological and epistemological positions (Weed 2016; Denzin & Lincoln 2003; Corbin & Holt, 2005). These differing positions shape how data is analysed to inform the process of theory development (Charmaz; 2009; Corbin, 2009).

4.7.4 Charmaz; (1990, 2000, 2002, 2006, 2014)

Contradicting Glaser and Strauss (1967), the relatively recent perspective on GT by Charmaz (2014), is primarily underpinned by a constructionist epistemological position (Denzin & Lincoln 2003). This realist perspective argues that many possibilities of truths exist. Therefore, theory develops and is co-constructed by the influences of interactions between; participants', the data and the researcher. Charmaz (2014) draws great attention to the influence of researcher subjective assumptions, perceptions and perspectives.

These factors can hugely impact upon researchers process of analysis. Concepts which are categorised through data analysis are therefore viewed as being shaped by and co-constructed through the on-going interactions of the aforementioned factors (Willing 2013). This view is far removed from the idea of concepts and theory being purely *emergent* and can be well placed as a counter-argument for those who criticise GT because they argue that theory emerging through data can lead to researchers “forcing” emergent themes (Henwood & Pidgeon, 2006).

4.7.5 Corbin & Strauss; (2008; 2018; 2015).

Corbin and Strauss; (2008; 2015) build further upon the work of Glaser (1967). A main distinguishing factor between; approaches to GT established by Corbin and Strauss (2008; 2015); Glaser (1967) and Charmaz (2014), is evident from the proposed analytical processes and tools used to support analysis. Corbin and Strauss (2008), focussed grave attention on trying to ensure the verification of data through aiming to maximise researcher’s sensitivity to their own biases and preconceptions. Corbin and Strauss (1990; 2015) argued that through interacting with the data throughout this process, researchers could begin to minimise the influence of biases and preconceptions upon data analysis and theory development.

Corbin and Strauss; (1990; 1998) further adapted the principles of GT outlined by Glaser (1967). Again, a key area of debate which led to an adjustment in theoretical and epistemological shifts was around re-defining perspectives of the relationship between the data, pre-existing knowledge of the researcher and the effects of these upon analysis. Underpinning Corbin and Strauss’s (1998) approach to GT is the view that individuals’

psycho-social events, experiences and processes which they deploy in response to these are composed of and form objective realities which operate independently of the researchers' knowledge of these (Willing, 2013). However, Corbin and Strauss argue that although existing independently, these objective realities can be empirically observed, interpreted and analysed (Willing, 2013). This view aligns strongly with a realist ontological view as identified in the previous chapter of this study.

Corbin and Strauss, (1990; 1998) recognised and acknowledged that researcher subjectivity inevitably impacts the process of data analysis and theory development. Consequently, Strauss and Corbin (1998) devised a given set of procedures to facilitate the process of data analysis whilst paying great attention to attempts to minimise the impact of subjective perspectives upon analysis. As a result, Strauss and Corbin conceptualised the relationship between; data, the researcher, analysis and theory development as interactive procedures hence describing the process of data analysis as; *“the interplay between researchers and data...It is both science and art”* (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.15).

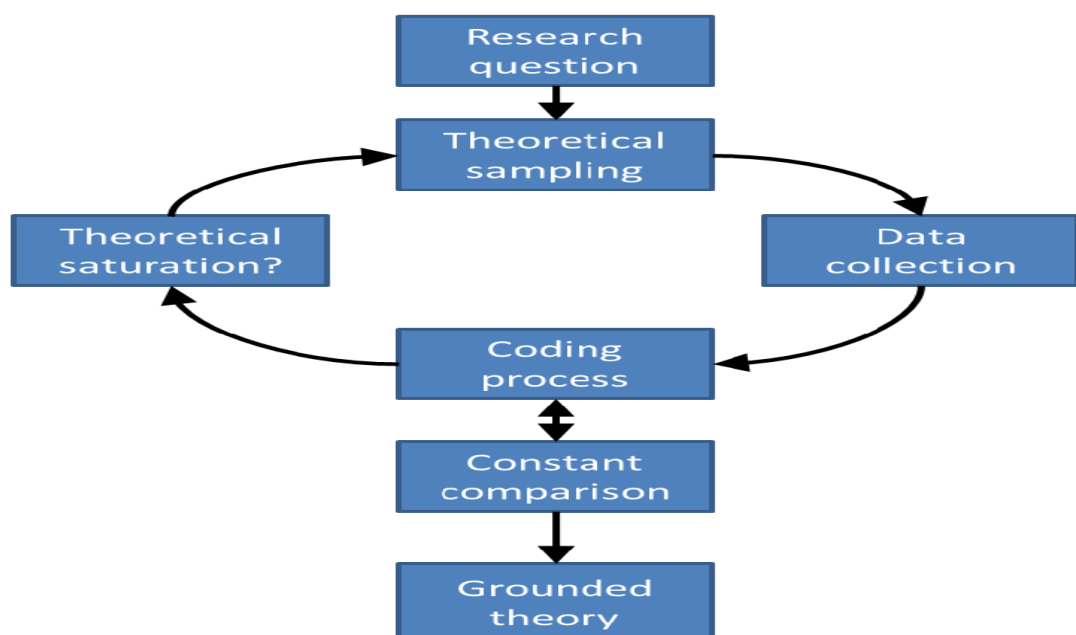
Universal to GT, regardless of the philosophical perspective taken, is the application of a highly inductive and systematic approach to data analysis. As such GT is underpinned by a distinct set of key principles. These principles are viewed and understood as a set of methodological tools used to enable the process of data collection and analysis (Birks & Mills, 2015). These principles include;

- Coding data - which entails analytically searching for concepts embedded within the data.
- Categorising and linking codes and concepts to form themes and sub-themes.

- Theoretical sampling which entails seeking clarity through further data collection to inform understanding of emerging concepts and sub concepts.
- Concurrent data analysis and collection in a cyclical process wherein analysis informs further data collection.
- Constant comparison of emergent data, codes, categories and sub-categories.
- Identification of a core category which captures and informs developing theory.
- Theoretical integration to gain insights from and integrate theory.
- Memo writing to devise and develop written accounts of researchers' thought processes and developing ideas.

As illustrated in figure 2, although presented in list form, the above process does not necessarily occur in linear stages. Moreover, the process of GT involves the continual interaction between; theoretical sampling; data collection; coding and constant comparison with the aim of reaching theoretical saturation (Corbin & Strauss; 2015; 2018).

Figure 2: The process of GT



Key steps in the GT research process (Adapted from; Rose; Spink & Canhoto 2015 p.2).

The method of GT deemed most appropriate for the current study was that of Corbin and Strauss (2018). This approach was selected as it was deemed well suited to the ontological position of the current research.

4.8 Rationale for using grounded theory

4.8.1 What is a Theory?

The aim of utilising a GT methodology is to develop a theory which answers the research question, (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Oskamp and Schultz, (2000) remind us that a theory is “*an integrated set of principles that describes, explains and predicts observed events*” (Oskamp & Schultz, 2000, p.23). Theories are comprehensible explanations of specific phenomena. Theories consist of:

- A phenomenon to be explained
- Concepts adapted to explain a phenomenon and with an examination of the interrelationships between concepts.
- Contextual factors which may impact upon, shift and generally alter the relationships between a, and b.

(Adapted from Oskamp & Schultz 2000; Hill, 2006).

Theories can take various forms. However, common to all theories is that they transcend beyond the phenomena of study to a depth which includes a rigorous examination of; variables, functions, processes or organising principles that are based upon factors which have not been directly observed (Oskamp & Schultz, 2000). Hence theory development

entails an examination of how the unobservable variables impact upon that which is visible, i.e. behaviours and responses to variables. The development of a theory which aims to explore and explain factors which contribute to successful transitions from year 6 to year 7 for pupils' with SEMH needs, therefore, offers valuable insights into how the observable and unobservable factors related to being within the school context impact upon experiences and outcomes for participants of this study. GT as a methodology offers the depth and rigour explicitly required for theory development.

“Grounded theory seeks not only to uncover relevant conditions but also to determine how the actors respond to changing conditions and to the consequences of their actions. It is the researcher’s responsibility to catch this interplay”.

(Corbin & Strauss 1990, p.5)

The right methodology is the methodology which answers the research question (Holloway & Tordres, 2003; Holloway & Wheeler, 2002; McPherson & Leydon, 2002). The above quote describes the aims of GT research. Underlying the aims of the current study is an endeavour to identify the relevant conditions within participants' contexts, which have contributed to them experiencing a successful secondary school transition. The current study also aims to understand participant's responses to their transition experiences, alongside an examination of the consequences of participant's thoughts and actions and how these have shaped their experience of a successful transition. The above outlined methodological aims of GT as outlined by Corbin and Strauss (1990) and consideration of what a theory is as outlined are, therefore, strongly aligned with the aims of the current research study. This forms a strong rationale for the choice and application of a GT methodology. Thus, outlining why GT has been deemed as a highly appropriate choice of methodology to inform the current study.

4.8.2 Grounded Theory and Critical Realism

Oliver (2012) describes adapted versions of GT as “*highly compatible*” with critical realism (Oliver, 2012, p:1). This compatibility is recognised in light of adapted GT approaches and critical realist perspectives and the shared focus amongst both upon “*abduction and commitment to fallibilism and the interconnectedness of practice and theory*” (Oliver, 2012 p.1). The use of GT to inform a critical realist ontological stance has understandably been described as offering researchers an accessible and congruent approach to research within the social sciences, (Oliver, 2012, p.2). This is because, within critical realism, there is recognition of the idea that there exists a reality “external to the human consciousness” (Oliver, 2012 p.2). These realities exist within social constraints in-so-far as meaning is understood as being derived from an individual’s experiences. From a critical realist perspective, the meaning which we attribute to our experiences consequently forms our realities. However, from this perspective, attention is also given to the idea that these realities which form the context of our social and psychological worlds are largely socially constructed (Oliver, 2012).

Through an examination of Corbin and Strauss’s approach to GT (2002; 2018; 2015) it can be strongly argued that compatibility between this approach and critical realism is apparent. This is evident in Corbin and Strauss’s views that external reality can be viewed through people’s differing lenses and is shaped by an individual’s perceptions and thoughts. Corbin and Strauss’s (2008; 2015) approach can, therefore, be understood as beginning to bridge the ontological gap on the continuum between the extreme realist and relativist paradigms. This is because within their version of GT Corbin and Strauss; (2008;

2015) continue to recognise the role of subjectivity and the possible influences which researcher's subjective viewpoints could potentially have upon the process of data analysis and consequent developing theory. For the reasons outlined within this section, GT was deemed the most appropriate methodology to inform the current study.

Through the development of a systematic guide to data analysis Corbin and Strauss; (2008; 2015) drew researcher's attention to evolving patterns which came from the data. Through this guide it was suggested that researchers organise data such that categories are identified and grouped to form emergent concepts. The main tool for enabling this process was viewed by Strauss and Corbin as coding.

4.8.3 Coding

"A code sets up a relationship with your data and with your respondents."

(Leigh-Star 2007, cited in Bryant and Charmaz

2007 p.80)

Described as a "core process" in GT (Holton 2007, cited in Bryant and Charmaz 2007, p.265) and as a "*fundamental analytical process*" in GT (Corbin & Strauss 1990, p:12), coding forms the foundations of the GT journey. Coding entails a process of data analysis wherein pieces of data are organised and assigned distinct codes resulting in relevant labels being assigned to emerging concepts following analysis. These labels are categorised into emergent patterns and concepts. Unique to grounded theory, the coding stage entails an on-going process of data coding and analysis which are done

concurrently. Coding, therefore, takes place at different conceptual depths. Depending upon which strand of GT adopted the types of coding expected and utilised can vary. It is in relation to the process of coding that Corbin and Strauss (2008) primarily focus additional attention. Three primary stages of coding proposed within Corbin and Strauss's (2015) adaptation of GT are; open, axial and selective coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2015 Guetterman, et al., 2017). This coding process was applied within the current study. This coding method was drawn heavily upon to facilitate the process of theory being abstracted from the data as termed by Corbin and Strauss as a theoretical abstraction (Corbin & Strauss 2015).

4.8.4 Description of the process of data analysis

4.8.5 Open coding

Initial coding or open coding describes the preliminary early stages of open coding (Strauss and Corbin; 1990; 2015). This stage began with line by line coding of the transcribed interviews. During the stage of open coding, researchers examine the data by asking "what" questions of the initially emerging codes in an attempt to make sense of the evolving data. To begin to answer the "what" questions, the process entails the generation of codes which are categorised. Fundamental throughout the coding process is sustained attention to identifying relationships between codes which can be categorised according to how they relate (Robson, 2011). This stage began with extrapolations of initial exploratory, yet provisional codes based upon identified similarities and differences which initially emerged from analysis of the data (Corbin & Strauss, 1990).

During this stage of coding initial categories were identified and the data began to be organised loosely. At this point, I began to explore and identify similarities and differences between descriptions, events and expressed feelings which came from the raw data. Open coding can be understood as the very early stage of initial theory development wherein the researcher begins to consider the relevance of categorised data and tentative codes (Robson, 2011). Through open coding, possible foundations by which to begin to build and name potential conceptual similarities, categories and sub-categories began to evolve. Colour codes using Microsoft word and track changes were used to track and record the evolving codes extrapolated from the raw data. An example of the early stages of line by line coding is illustrated below in figure 3. Codes are highlighted in yellow.

Figure 3: Example of open coding.

J: Not being able to walk around, not being parts of other groups outside like always being inside.

CODE: Not feeling like a part of the group. Sense of feeling Excluded.

I: Mmmmmhmmm

J : Like Having to leave early, having to miss lessons getting to lesson late leaving early so

CODE: Feeling of missing out.

missing out on important learning. But so yeah.

CODE: A sense of missing out on important things.

I: Can you tell me more about why you had to leave lessons and why you couldn't walk.

Corbin and Strauss, (1990) state that initially through open coding researchers' may "*inadvertently place data in a category where they do not analytically belong*" (p. 13).

Conceptual categories and subcategories, therefore, remained subject to change as further comparisons were made, and new conceptual categories emerged.

Open coding is an "*interpretive process*" (Strauss & Corbin 1990, p.12). It is at this stage that the questions generated and arising from analysis and interpretations of the data are broken down and analysed further. This is where the on-going process of constant comparison began as I began to evaluate the relevance of the data and categories. This evaluation resulted in me extracting and making more specific the theoretical potential of the categorised data (Robson, 2011). It is at this early stage that attention to minimising researcher bias impacting upon analysis and interpretations began as Strauss and Corbin state;

"Open coding and the use it makes of questioning and constant comparisons enables investigators to break through subjectivity and bias. Fracturing the data forces preconceived notions and ideas to be examined against the data themselves" (Strauss & Corbin 1990 p.13). It was, therefore, necessary for me to remove myself from the data at times to ensure that I was aware of why I may have been categorising data in the ways which I did.

4.9 Memos

Memos are recognised as fundamental in aiding researcher reflexivity (Birks & Mills, 2015). This "stepping away" from the data periodically throughout the entire coding stage, along with memo writing allowed for a level of reflexivity enabling me to monitor the

possible impact of my subjective views and how these may have been shaping the codes and categories. I also used memo's as a key tool to further support the exploration and interpretations of the data. Memo writing also aided in the process of generating questions which emerged from the data. I found memo writing to be a fundamental tool which allowed me to record and clarify my coding and thought processes side by side as they evolved. An example of this process is illustrated below.

Screenshot of an example of memo writing during the axial coding stage.

| CODE/CONCEPT P=Primary school S=Secondary school | QUOTES FROM INTERVIEWS VERBATIM | MEMO | Line number |
|---|--|---|---------------------------------|
| Positive and negatives about the rhetoric of a "permanent record." - Adults giving the message that this permanency can change to reflect positive changes. - | Oh, the teachers they need to like...not really like put pressure on them, but they need to don't err what's it called? They really need to like don't look at their record just look at them as a person don't really, really be like...don't, don't expect things like don't expect that they are gonna be bad because of what they did. You should like think...like think that they're normal and want a fresh start and stuff. | The idea of a record is seen as a threat. This threat is present from primary to secondary...Is the talk and idea of a permanent record following participants somewhat a hindrance to change for some SEMH pupils? | 552 553 554 |
| Beginning to reinvent- Change others and self's perceptions. - Positive messages about how perceived. - Staff Adopting a person-centred approach-By meeting the person in the here and now...Not past | "Yeah, pretty much cause like there were like four teachers here who knew about my record when I got here, and they weren't like "aww I know what you're like." they were like "okay he's a new person now" don't look at his record in primary or look at his record in primary and see how he used to be and things he used to do and like look at look at the person like look at what he's doing now. So that really helped". | Being seen in a new light linked to a new start. Seen as helpful. Some positive and negative aspects related to pupils being instilled with the idea that they have a "record that Follows" Staff knowing about "record" helped.....Students need opportunities to build their own records as part of the transitional stages. | 245 246 247 248 249 |
| | Because I behave well and I just don't get in trouble. Change in self - concept | Verbalising message as new person-New beginning offered. Concept-Making New beginning clear and celebrating this. Beginning to develop a positive impact | 252 253 |

Through memo writing, I was able to organise, revise and record my thoughts regarding the data throughout the coding process. Memos were generated through as and when the ideas and thoughts occurred as advised by Glaser, 1978. Memos were a useful tool used to track and record the emerging codes, whilst tracking my explanations and interpretations which shaped the eventual theory.

4.10 Axial coding

Once the categories were identified through initial and open coding, similarities between concepts began to surface whilst others remained tentative. As outlined within Corbin and Strauss's (2015) approach, the similarities identified required further investigation, exploration and breaking down. This process was supported through axial coding (Corbin & Strauss; 1990; 2015). Also referred to as theoretical coding (Robson, 2011) axial coding is the process of establishing further links between categories to inform theoretical development and formulation (Strauss & Corbin 1998; Robson 2011). Axial coding entails asking theoretical questions of categories and making comparisons and links between data concepts through constant comparison. Hence axial and open coding then became a simultaneous process which was undertaken concurrently. Generating axial codes entailed going back and forth to open code categories which generated a deeper depth of exploration. This process of concurrent axial and open coding and constant comparison are illustrated in figure 4 Below is an example of axial codes generated at this stage.

Figure 4: Screenshot - Example of axial coding and memos at the axial stage.

| PARTICIPANT | | ZACK | |
|---------------|---|---|--|
| # | CODE/CONCEPT | QUOTES FROM INTERVIEWS VERBATIM | MEMO |
| | P=Primary school S=Secondary school | | |
| 1 | EXTERNALISATION OF EXPERIENCES /DIFFICULTIES (Primary school). | "I wasn't really having any problems most of the times". | Others being "annoying seen as the difficulty as opposed to participants responses to the school, systems and context. Key Question: Were these responses deemed as problematic for this participant at the time? <i>wasn't really having any problems most of the times just people would start annoying me for no reason</i> ". |
| 2 | VIEWS OF WHAT IS DEEMED CHALLENGING/DIFFICULT- CHILD V'S ADULTS VIEWS Child v's adults' views -concepts of what is deemed challenging/difficulty". | • "Well... like just like not listening and stuff...not doing what the teachers said...and yeah Concept – | Participant's views/perceptions what defines difficulties/challenges. Participant expressed differing and shifting Views of what is deemed as a difficulty or challenge. Differences in perceptions of difficulties. By saying in line one there were experiences wherein he was not listening to teachers and not following instructions and then in the next line describing having no problems, Z displays a sense of disconnect between actions and view of self within the school context. |
| RELATIONSHIPS | | | |
| 3 | Allocation of key named staff for support. | so before you came to this school, who were the adults that supported you with your learning and behaviour in primary school ? was there anyone in particular? Z: Oh yeah there was this teacher called Miss Simon (Pseudonym) and then she use to like just help probably help me out with stuff and then she wasn't like...I think she was like deputy head or I think now she's deputy head but she used to be like somewhere | |

4.11 Selective coding and theoretical integration

At this point the existing data required organisation, clarity, further validation and questioning. Corbin and Strauss (1990) state that: *“sufficient coding will eventually lead to a clear perception of which category or conceptual label integrates the entire analysis”* (Corbin & Strauss 1990, p:12). Selective coding is the later stages of the coding process which Corbin and Strauss (1990) advocate utilising when aiming to manage this task. In order to sufficiently code data and in line with Corbin and Strauss’s model of GT I employed the process of selective coding.

Described as the most challenging phase of the Corbin and Strauss (2015) approach to GT (Robson 2011), selective coding entails the identification of a core category by which to begin to ground theory upon. To establish this core category, I systematically identified relationships between the previously identified categories which were generated through the open and axial coding phases and formed core categories based upon these.

Below is a screenshot of the main codes which emerged to form the selective codes which informed the core categories. These were colour coded for ease of organisation and navigation within the entire document.



Selective coding entailed further and constant comparisons in a somewhat cyclical process. This involved my re-visiting axial codes as a means to extract the predominant categories identified. However, through the open and axial coding process, I identified several categories which were deemed relevant. Ultimately, the aim of the selective coding process is to integrate the predominant categories to form a single category to achieve theoretical integration. Theoretical integration entails the development and definition of an emergent, main and focal conceptual category. Corbin and Strauss propose the development and use of a 'storyline' as a tool to organise the abstracted data into an increasingly coherent and integrated concept (Corbin & Strauss; 1998; 2008; 2015, Robson, 2011). This process is further supported through the use of organisational tools including; memo's and diagrams (Corbin & Strauss 1998). Below is a screenshot illustrating an example of the storylines which emerged, demonstrating how this was recorded. This example also outlines how the categories which the storyline comprises of developed through the axial and then selective coding process of analysis.

Screenshot of storyline data analysis recoding.

| Storyline | Selective Coding | Axial Codes | Number of open codes |
|--|--|---|----------------------|
| <p>Early intervention which promotes the development of trusting relationships.</p> <p><i>Memo</i> <i>A key factor to promoting these relationships is the pupil's perception of a school infrastructure which is perceived by participants as fair and equitable. This, in turn, appears to promote a sense of belonging which contributes to facilitating further positive change.</i></p> | <p>The need for the development of trusting relationships within the school community.</p> | - Trust | 26 |
| | | - Relationships /with peers and adults. | 39 |
| | | - The need to feel heard by school staff. | 24 |
| | | - The need to feel understood by school staff. | 42 |
| | <p>Early intervention – Post transition.</p> | - Reminders and continuity of pre-transition interventions and support post-transition. | 12 |
| | | - School orientation visits pre-transition deemed helpful post-transition. | 17 |
| | | - School making reasonable adjustments as required following early onset of transition. | 20 |
| | <p>The need to see and feel that equity, fairness and justice are being promoted within school contexts.</p> | - Staff and school systems which participants perceive as fair. | 26 |
| | | - Impact of witnessed operationalisation of school behavioural policies and procedures. | 19 |

4.12 Theoretical saturation

The aim of the coding process is for the researcher to reach a point of theoretical saturation (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Theoretical saturation defines the analytical stage wherein new categories from the extant data cease to reveal any new data nor generates additional theoretical insights to draw upon. At this point, the data has been analysed so extensively and systematically that the result of further analysis does not identify any new concepts, categories or theoretical questions (Charmaz, 2006). However, what a researcher constitutes theoretical saturation is highly subjective, (O'Reilly and Parker 2012; Bowen; 2008; Willig, 2013). Hence saturation of theoretical concepts can be seen as an impossible and unrealistic task, (Bowen 2008; Willig, 2013; Nelson 2016).

Dey (1999) previously recognised some of the difficulties and challenges underlying the idea of reaching full theoretical saturation when conducting real-world research. Dey

(1999), therefore instead, proposed the idea of data sufficiency. This predicated the notion that it is more realistic to reach a point wherein data can be deemed sufficient without claims of reaching data saturation. Instead, the idea of conceptual density was adopted to inform this study. Dey (1999), proposes that the achievement of conceptual density is not centred around reaching limit but rather more concerned with reaching sufficient depth of understanding which allows the researcher to build a theory upon (Nelson, 2016). This is what Dey (1999, p.257) called '*theoretical sufficiency*'.

4.12.1 Theoretical Sampling

The process of attaining theoretical sufficiency was significantly aided by theoretical sampling. Identified as a key principle of GT (Birks & Mills, 2015), theoretical sampling supports the researcher to achieve a greater depth of data gathering at a point when a strong base of concepts and categories have emerged (Corbin and Strauss 2008). Within the current study, theoretical sampling took place through me listening back to each interview in attempts to fill any conceptual gaps and to ensure that I had not missed information relating to a particular code or emergent category. Also, as a pre-emptive approach to addressing the need for theoretical sampling, I initially analysed and coded four of the six interviews. The remaining two interviews were analysed and coded once I had completed the axial coding stages using the initial four interviews. This allowed me to explore and fill any gaps which I felt emerged within the data by asking questions of the data which were specific to answering questions about categories which had emerged.

4.13 *Design*

4.13.1 Procedures

Prior to interviews, I discussed participants with SEND co-ordinators. The bases of these discussions were to discuss participant suitability and gather some verbal non-paper-based information about each participant's SEMH needs and how these have historically impacted upon their schooling from the professional's perspective. These discussions did not entail the sharing of any documentation regarding the schools nor the pupils. These discussions formed the bases of the information outlined below in table 3 entitled "Participant overview".

Participant interviews were conducted in private rooms within the participant's school settings and lasted between 45 and 60 minutes. Interviews were all carried out by me and audio recorded for transcription and analysis. Each interview followed the same process. Participants were thanked for agreeing to participate, reminded of the research purpose and reminded that they reserved the right to stop, change their minds and opt out of the research process. During introductions, participants were informed about confidentiality boundaries and expectations. This included a statement about what type of information would be shared and with whom in the event of a safeguarding disclosure. Interview schedules all allowed for a de-brief period following each interview. This was to ensure that the researcher was able to check that participants were emotionally fit to resume their school day and had the space to discuss and de-brief in the event that the interview process provoked any difficult emotions.

4.13.2 Data gathering

The data was gathered through qualitative means. Semi-structured interviews were used as the chosen method to accumulate data. Open-ended questions were used to ensure that participants were able to formulate and express their feelings and thoughts freely (see appendix 5 for interview questions).

4.13.3 Transcription

Interviews were audio-recorded during the interview process. These were then transcribed using 'a true verbatim style'. This entailed recording all words and discourse markers including; 'um', 'ah' and other vocalisations through transcription. Repeated words and phrases and all slang words used by participants were also included and recorded verbatim. This type of recording was adopted to ensure that transcriptions reflected a comprehensive representation of participant's views and voiced experiences and to ensure that all communications were accurately translated as advocated by Willing, (2013). I checked each transcription for accuracy. This was done by listening back to each interview and re-reading the transcriptions several times.

4.13.4 Recruitment strategy

I initially began recruitment by planning and using allocated time within an EPS team meeting as a means to engage and inform the placement EPS team. I used this space to

disseminate details of the research title and aims and share specific information about the particular participants required for the study. This was followed up immediately by me sending out electronic versions of school staff information sheets to the entire EPS team for dissemination to Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators and other key members of staff within EP's allocated schools.

The EPS team where I was based share a working space with a Behaviour and Attendance team. I also utilised this multidisciplinary link by addressing the Behaviour and Attendance team via a pre-planned slot at one of the behaviour and attendance teams weekly whole-team meetings wherein information sheets were shared along with written details of suitable participants. Both meetings with the EPS team and the Attendance and Behaviour team were followed up with fortnightly emails as reminders. This resulted in a recruitment strategy which potentially reached out to 19 in borough mainstream secondary schools which included eight academies.

Consequently, for the second stage of the recruitment strategy, I initially asked SENDco's to contact parents of potential participants. At this stage, the consent sought was not for participation but simply to gain the consent from parents of potential participants to allow the schools to share parental contact details with the researcher and to permit the researcher to contact parents to discuss the study. Once this consent was granted, parents were contacted by me, and those who consented to their child being participants in the study were given information about the study both verbally and in written form via "parent and participant information sheets (see appendix 6) parents' were also then asked to sign a parent consent form (See appendix 7).

Participants were then selected on the basis of the outlined participant criteria (as detailed below). I initially aimed to select participants on a first-come, first-serve basis in the event

of particularly large numbers of participants. However, the total number of participants who agreed to partake and who met the participant criteria were recruited and included in the current study.

4.13.5 Participant Criteria

The criteria for participants included in the study were as follows:

- Students in year 8 or year 9 in the academic year 2018 – 2019.
- Students who started and have remained in the same secondary school since year 7.
- Students who transitioned from a mainstream primary school to a mainstream secondary school.
- Students with SEMH needs which were identified in their primary phase of schooling prior to them transitioning to year 7.
- Students enrolled on the schools' mainstream secondary register and not those who were dual registered.

4.13.6 Participants and Settings

Participants comprised of six pupils. All participants were in year 8 when interviewed. Participants were recruited from three different mainstream mixed gendered secondary schools in a diverse London borough. At the time of data collection, all participants had EHCP's which highlighted social, emotional and mental health difficulties as a primary

need. All EHCP's were issued during participant's time in primary school and so carried over to their secondary school settings when they transitioned. Participants were interviewed individually. To protect the anonymity of participants and staff members' pseudonyms were used to replace participant's real names and, in the event, that participants named staff members and other pupils within their school settings. These pseudonyms were consistently applied and are referred to throughout this study and within all supporting documents. Additionally, names and exact locations of setting which participated in this study were anonymised accordingly.

4.13.7 Participant overview and brief history

Participants all had EHCP's which identified SEMH as a primary need. It was essential that these participants had experienced a successful transition (based upon definitions given in the introduction chapter of the current study) from year 6 to year 7 whilst the SEMH EHCP's were in place.

4.13.8 Diversity and difference

Of the 6 participants included there were three females and three males. One participant of mixed black African and white European heritage, three of southern Asian heritage and two of white British origin. The below table outlines more specific details relating to each participant and gives some insight into participants individual SEMH needs and stories.

Table: 3 Participant overview.

| Number | Pseudonym | Gender | Year group at time of interviews | Details of SEMH Needs Identified |
|--------|-----------|--------|----------------------------------|---|
| 1 | Jack | M | 8 | School refusal, generalised and school anxiety, experienced a significant bereavement when in primary school, friendship difficulties, presented as withdrawn in primary and early secondary phases, experienced bullying in primary school years. |
| 2 | Anna | F | 8 | Difficulties establishing and maintaining positive friendships, some school refusal, often displayed behavioural outburst at peers and teachers. Expressed feeling "picked on" by peers and some adults at primary school. |
| 3 | Asif | M | 8 | Received fixed-term exclusions in primary school for persistent disruptive behaviours. Often in conflict with peers which at times resulted in physical fights with peers. Angry outbursts at school. |
| 4 | Zack | M | 8 | Received fixed-term exclusions in primary school. Was excluded in year 5. Spent some a term of year 5 in a pupil referral unit. Transitioned to an alternative mainstream primary school where he spent a full academic year in year 6. Within this new setting, continued experience conflict with peers and adults. Physical fights with peers and angry outbursts at school. |
| 5 | Maria | F | 8 | Presented with social anxiety which appeared to be perpetuated by adverse family circumstances. Spent much of her time in later primary school quite isolated due to difficulties maintaining positive friendships. Would often get into conflict with peers. Had a history of being reprimanded at school for bullying peers. Often displayed angry outbursts |

| | | | | |
|---|-------|---|---|--|
| | | | | towards peers and staff during her time in primary school. |
| 6 | Amina | F | 8 | Presented with social anxiety and school refusal. Diagnosed with epilepsy in early phases of primary school. Has been placed on high dosages of epilepsy medications which affected her behavioural responses in and out of school. Increasing levels of anxiety displayed at school in ways which impacted her friendships and school engagement. |

4.14 Ethical considerations

GDPR (2016), laws around consent and sharing data meant that in the initial phase of recruitment, schools were not legally permitted to give me contact details for participant's parents. This information could not be shared until a member of the school staff had approached parents to gain consent to share their contact details. Once this permission was agreed, I was able to approach parents to explain and discuss the study further.

Throughout the planning and implementation of this study, further attention and consideration were given to ensuring respectful and responsible practice which competently valued and promoted participant and researcher integrity as stipulated within the BPS code of ethics (BPS, 2009, 2014).

Before conducting this study, I applied for ethical approval from the *Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust's Research Ethics Committee* (a PDF copy of the ethical approval letter is available on request). Through this, I considered and outlined vital ethical issues pertinent and specific to conducting the current study. These included considerations of issues such as:

- Safeguarding, this included consideration of;
place of interviews (within the school setting, i.e. an appropriate room with a glass panel to ensure visibility).
- ensuring participant's emotional well-being is considered during and post-interview process.
- consideration of additional support mechanisms and signposting to ensure participant wellbeing.
- Confidentiality and data management which included consideration of the secure storing of participants details and transcripts from interviews.
- Procedures which included consideration of; content and outline of the interview schedule and interview topic content guide.

This process ensured ethical considerations were outlined and adhered to fully.

4.14.1 Trustworthiness

Specific to qualitative research, Guba and Lincoln, (1985) outline measures to take to ensure the trustworthiness of studies. These entail attention to ensuring; credibility⁹; transferability¹⁰; dependability and confirmability.

⁹ Concerned with measures which exemplify the validity and truth of interpretations and subsequent findings (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

¹⁰ Pertains to measures taken to support the applicability of a study to different contexts, timescales and sample groups (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

4.14.2 Credibility

To help to ensure credibility, it was essential to remain reflexive. Researchers' do not have complete control over the extent by which their subjective biases, previous experiences, knowledge and held assumptions may impose upon the interpretations (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). As a Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP), I remained mindful that being in this role and being the main catalyst for the research study may have impacted upon the research process. My professional background before this role as TEP entailed supporting children and young people who displayed SEMH difficulties and needs. Collectively, my past and present roles along with my strong interest and professional passion for supporting children with SEMH needs, could have influenced the research process and interpretation through researcher bias. The process integral to GT of '*stepping away*' from emerging data to question the impact of subjectivity upon interpretations supported this reflexivity.

I searched for 'negative cases'¹¹ (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) alternative interpretations and conceptual ideas during the process of analysis and bore these in mind as the analysis progressed. This prompted me to at times to deviate from, evaluate and question my lines of enquiry. Supervision with my professional research supervisor proved invaluable in helping to ensure research credibility. This was particularly helpful following each stage of analysis this also helped me to; check my process of analysis; organise my thoughts and prompted me to ask key questions about emergent concepts and data which I may have missed in the absence of supervision.

¹¹ Negative case analysis requires deliberately searching for concepts and codes which contradict the emergent core concepts categories and subcategories (Morse, 2010).

Peer review and supervision were also useful ways to discuss the analytical process, interpretations and interpretations of relationships between concepts as they evolved. This was further supported by the use of memo's, diagrams and a research diary which were used to organise evolving ideas.

4.14.3 Transferability

Analysis of this study applies to pupils in year 8 within mainstream mixed gendered settings. Adaptations may need to be considered for other school contexts.

4.14.4 Dependability and Confirmability

Issues around dependability and confirmability pertain to the attention given to the consistency and reliability of the research process and subsequent outcomes (Lincoln & Guba,1985). This was supported through ensuring that an audit trail of; coding; categories and memos were kept throughout the process. Peer review, professional supervision and the inclusion of interviews within the appendices of this study (see appendix 8-12), help to confirm that the theory emerged from and was grounded within the raw data.

4.15 *Chapter Summary*

Methodological issues pertinent to the current study have been explored and outlined. The relationship between the critical realist paradigm and its significance to GT, the EP role

and EP research have been discussed. Corbin and Strauss's (2015) strand of GT and evidence of how this was applied to the current study is outlined along with the process of data collection and transcription. Methods used to record and organise data have also been demonstrated.

Chapter 5: Research findings

5.1 Chapter overview

Within this chapter, the research aims are reiterated. A newly proposed theory of factors which contribute to successful transitions from year 6 to year 7 for pupils with SEMH needs will be outlined and presented. Illustrations of how the newly proposed theory emerged from the research interviews via the subsequent data analysis and coding process will be outlined. The analogy of a set of clockwork cogs is used to present a visual representation of the proposed theory. This includes an in-depth description of the findings of the current study in relation to the research question. Quotes from participants are referenced throughout to demonstrate further how the theory emerged from the data.

5.1.1 Aims

The aim of this research study was to develop a grounded theory which explored and explained factors which contribute to facilitating a successful transition from year 6 to year 7 for pupils with SEMH needs. Grounded theory was the chosen methodology used to inform this study. According to Glaser and Strauss (1967), researchers' focus on emergent

categories is said to solve “*the problems of fit, relevance, forcing and richness*” (Glaser & Strauss 1967, p.37). The theory development emerges through the identification of categories and concepts which are analysed further to develop key categories.

The categories and concepts the following theory emerged from were generated and developed from data collected from 6 pupils with SEMH needs. All 6 participants had EHCP's with SEMH identified as an area of need. This study focussed upon eliciting the participant's voices in a quest to theorise what factors from their perspective and from their lived experiences contributed to a successful transition from year 6 to year 7.

5.2 *Theoretical commentary of the GT process*

Through the application of analysis using a grounded theory methodology, a theory of contributory factors which facilitate a successful transition for the participants interviewed emerged. The newly developed theory has been named 'The clockwork theory of secondary school transition for pupils with SEMH needs' (The clockwork theory). This theory proposes that successful transitions for pupils with SEMH needs centres around a core key category of '*the early development of trusting relationships*'. The overarching theory comprises of three closely interlinked categories being; '*the early development of trusting relationships*', '*having a sense of choice and agency*', and '*the need to distance current from past primary school experiences*'. The clockwork theory outlines and describes a range of fundamental factors surrounding the core categories which act as peripheral mechanisms. These peripheral mechanisms being put into place and maintained contributed significantly to the participant's experiences of successful transitions.

5.2.1 Storylines

Within GT, a story is described as a 'descriptive narrative about the central phenomenon of the study' (Strauss & Corbin 1990, p.116). A story is built on through further analysis, giving light to the emergence of a storyline. A storyline depicts the 'conceptualisation of the story' which hence becomes the core categories once analysed (Strauss & Corbin 1990, p.116). A storyline is identified through analysis. The identification and outlining of a storyline are a useful way to facilitate the researcher in the process of moving the data on from a conceptual level in ways which allow for the integration of theory (Strauss & Corbin 1990). The table in figure 5 outlines the storyline developed from the data generated from this study. What follows is a description of the storyline and how this storyline emerged.

Telling the story of successful transitions - A synopsis of participant's analysed narratives.

Main categories which arose from the analysed data formed a storyline about what contributed to successful transitions for participants interviewed. The analysis highlighted the following narrative.

Pupils required '*early intervention promoting the development of trusting relationships and a sense of belonging*'. Once the foundations for these trusting relationships are established or at least beginning to form, facilitative energy (which I liken to the energy generated from the main cog within a clockwork mechanism) slowly begins to set the broader successful transitional process in motion.

Salient subcategories emerged from the data. The nature of these subcategories illustrated additional facilitative factors. These contributed positively to building the momentum of influences which promoted successful transitions. The early development of trusting relationships is further powered by the input of two integral categories. These categories are theorised as the following:

- The pupils/participants *having a sense of choice, agency and academic aspirations.*

and

- *The pupils need to distance their current from primary school experiences.*

Participants *having a sense of choice, agency and academic aspirations* is also underpinned by a compendium of subcategories related to various internal and external/environmental factors. These factors will be discussed in further detail as this chapter progresses.

The third emergent category was theorised as '*the pupil's need to distance their current from primary school experiences*'. This category emerged from the analysis of a range of perceptions expressed by participants. These perceptions encompassed factors around pupil's self-perceptions and the way by which they believed themselves to be perceived by adults and peers across their primary versus their secondary school contexts.

5.2.2 Overview of coding hierarchy

To generate the above storyline, key categories were abstracted during each stage of the coding process. Figure 5 displays the inductive process, which resulted in the emergence of the main category for the storyline which this theory is based. For clarity and to promote the ease of flow for the reader, figure 5 shows data related to each main category which formed the basis of the emergent storyline as highlighted in a separate colour.

Figure 5: *Outline of the coding process which the storyline categories*

emerged from.

| Storyline | Selective Coding | Axial Codes |
|--|--|---|
| <i>Early intervention which promotes the development of trusting relationships and a sense of belonging.</i> | The need for the development of trusting relationships within the school community. | Trust Relationships /with peers and adults. The need to feel heard and understood by school staff. |
| | Early intervention – pre and Post transition. | Reminders and continuity of pre-transition interventions and support pre- and post-transition. School orientation visits pre-transition deemed helpful post-transition. School making reasonable adjustments as required following the early onset of transition. |
| | The need to see and feel that equity, fairness and justice are being promoted within school contexts as a means of feeling a sense of belonging and inclusion. | Impact of school environment and infrastructure Staff and school systems which participants perceive as fair. Impact of witnessed operationalisation of school behavioural policies and procedures. |
| <i>Having choice, agency and academic aspirations.</i> | Having a wide choice of adults and peers to form positive relationships with. | Bigger school community is seen as preferable and safer. |
| | | A wider selection of staff to draw upon to gain SEMH support deemed preferable by participants. Wider selection of peers seen by participants as beneficial to social development/promoting opportunities to form positive friendships. |
| | Expressed desires to do well academically. | Post-transitional fear of not meeting academic demands of the secondary school curriculum. |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| | | Appreciation of a wider and more varied curriculum offered in secondary school settings. Environmental and contextual factors. |
| | The need to feel some sense of control. | Narrative of “new beginning”/internal locus of control. |
| | | Needing to feel a sense of control <i>Internally/mind-set and externally choice of peers/reaction.</i> |
| <i>The need to distance current from primary schooling experiences.</i> | A need to distance oneself from pre-transition school experiences and an environment which fosters this. | Association of origins of negative self - perceptions deemed to be rooted in Primary school. |
| | | Polar opposite perceptions of current and previous schooling experiences. |

Figure 5 illustrates the core categories and their derivative selective and axial codes. An additional column illustrates the number of codes abstracted at the open coding phase of the analysis process. These open codes further informed the generation of emergent core categories. Please see appendix 13 for a full list of the open codes which emerged to form the coinciding axial codes.

5.3 The Overarching Theory

Through analysis of emergent data and subsequent study findings, a theory which reflects the results of this study while answering the research question was developed. This theory was named 'The Clockwork theory of secondary school transition for pupils with SEMH needs'. A visual model of the newly proposed theory is outlined in figure 6.

A more extensive analysis and synthesis of this model will be addressed in the Discussion chapter. To illustrate the theory which emerged from the data, and to help the reader to conceptualise it further, a model outlining the analogy of a set of interdependent clockwork

mechanisms has been devised (see figure 6). Fundamentally, this newly proposed theory purports that there are three salient categories, the origins of which have been described above.

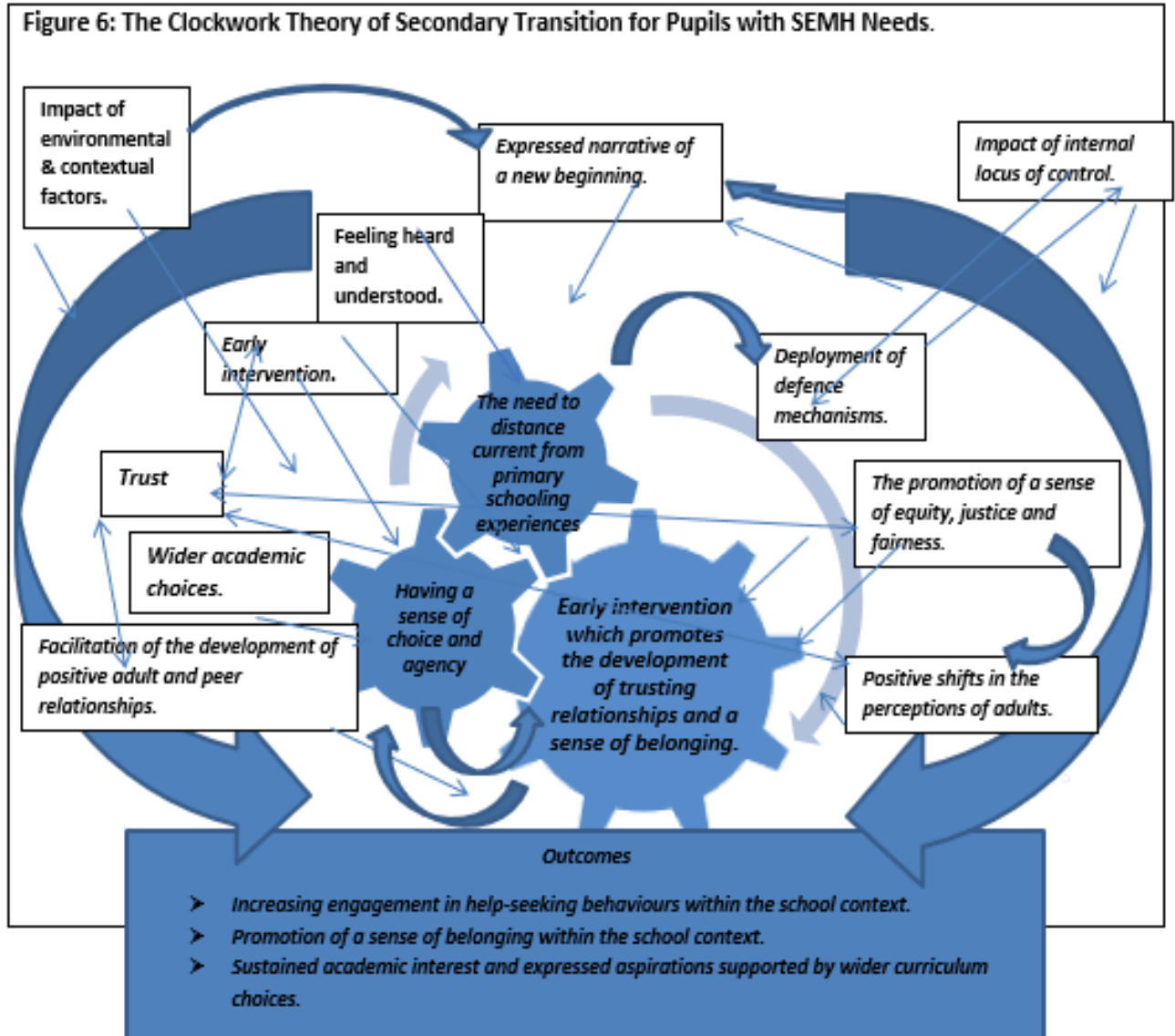
The main emergent categories identified were factors around:

- *Early intervention which promotes the development of trusting relationships and a sense of belonging.*
- *The need to distance current from primary schooling experiences.*
- *Having a sense of choice and agency*

The proposed theory argues that each of these factors interacts in ways which support the other. This works in the same way with subcategories, thus supporting a successful transition for the participants of this study. Jointly, the categories sub and main function in a co-dependent system in relation to each other.

What follows is an outline of the newly proposed model. This description will draw upon the above storyline synopses to offer a detailed narrative of the relationships and interconnections between the three core categories and the related sub-categories.

Outline of “The clockwork theory of secondary school transition for pupils with SEMH needs”.



The proposed theory (as illustrated above in figure 6) comprises three interrelated cogs each representing the three aforementioned core categories being; *early intervention which promotes the development of trusting relationships*, *having a sense of choice and agency*, and *the need to distance current from primary school experiences*.

5.3.1 Core Categories and Connections outlined

Within the clockwork theory, the relationships between various inter-connected factors are illustrated. Figure 7 outlines a mind map showing the links and interconnections between all of the core and subcategories, which underpin this theory.

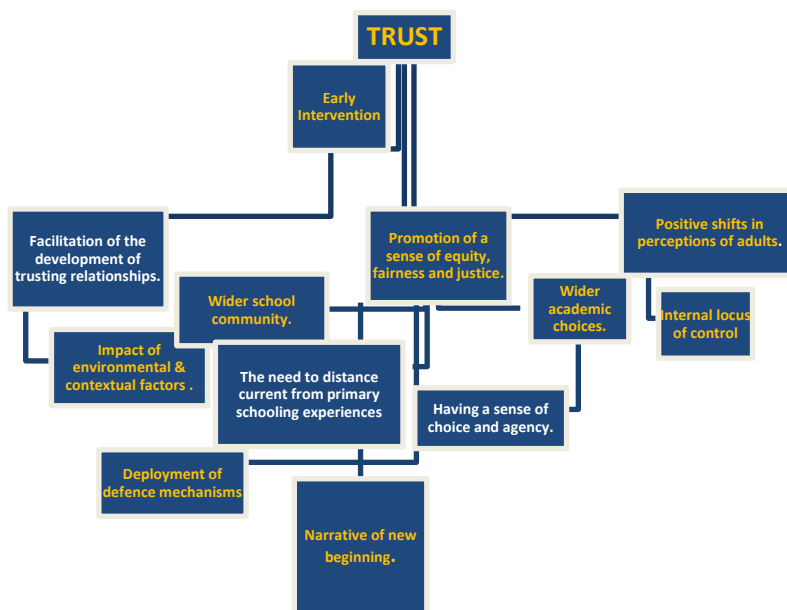


Figure 7: Mind Map illustrating the relationships between key concepts and categories.

5.3.2 Facilitative factors through peripheral concepts.

Categories highlighted in yellow signify what is referred to within this theory as the "*facilitative factors*". These facilitative factors are so-called because they are concepts which emerged as essential to facilitating the connected core categories. As demonstrated in figure 6, these facilitative factors operate on the peripheries interacting in ways which promoted positive outcomes for the participants of this study. Metaphorically, these facilitative factors are conceptualised as factors which help to give momentum to the core 'cogs'. The 'core cogs' are the core categories, as highlighted in white text in figure 7 above.

The analogy of clockwork mechanisms and peripheral factors at work which forms the basis of the proposed theory will now be dissected and outlined.

5.4 *Early intervention which promotes the development of trusting relationships and a sense of belonging.*

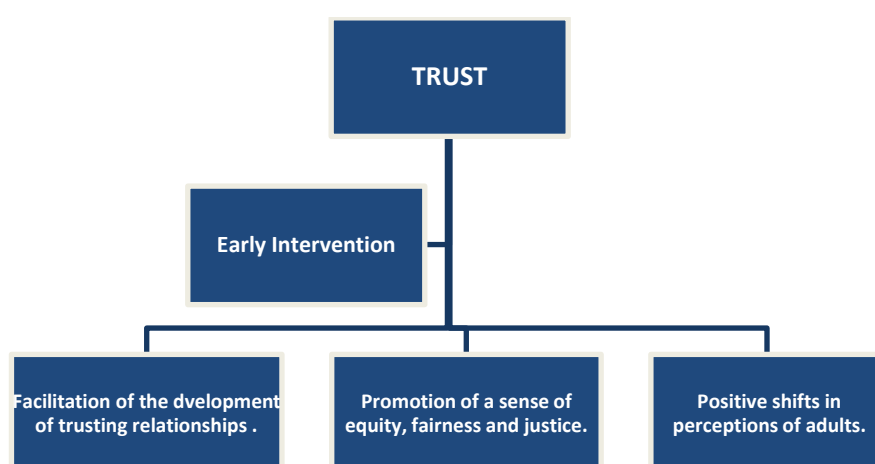


Figure 8: Concept map outlining the relationships between the concept of trust and the sub-categories.

5.4.1 Trust

The concept of trust underpinned several variables throughout this study. This evolved as a salient concept with its roots running securely through all of the relational factors which emerged. This formed the core category of '*early intervention which promotes the development of trusting relationships and a sense of*'. These relational subcategories being:

- Early intervention.
- Facilitation of the development of positive relationships
- The promotion of a sense of equity, fairness and justice.
- Positive shifts in the perceptions of adults.

Adults gaining and sustaining participants trust was therefore identified for the participants of this study as a significant factor which supported them in attaining successful transitions from year 6 to year 7.

5.4.2 Early intervention

Integral to the impact of interventions in terms of how participants responded to adults within their new school context, were factors related to participant's levels of trust in both adults and peers. Once participant's levels of trust in adults began to form and develop, they became more willing to engage with some adults within the school community. Previously expressed feelings related to *not* trusting adults showed signs of decline.

Intervention emerged as helpful. Participants discussed experiencing some form of intervention of support. For example, Maria stated, *“It felt like some of the teachers and adults generally in the school knew me because they always check that things are okay with me”*. Asif recalls the following interactions with school staff *as he states;” at the end of break they would ask like did anything happen at break time? and like every day in tutorial my tutor would ask did anything happen yesterday?”*.

Interventions mentioned by participants included:

- formal and planned interventions such as whole cohort transition days as organised by all schools for all post-transition pupils in year 6.
- Individualised, support interventions including pre- and post-transition meetings between schools, parents and participants to plan support for participants needs jointly.
- Intervention happening on an ad hoc and informal basis, such as staff members intervening at a critical time when participants were experiencing difficulties post-transition and the offering of a place and named person to go to when required.

The study showed that whether formal or informal the timing of this intervention was crucial. The data identified that early intervention by staff offering support post-transition resulted in early help-seeking behaviours displayed by participants. This, in turn, contributed to participants feeling supported within school hence facilitating their readiness to develop trusting relationships and engage with adults in impactful ways.

5.4.3 Facilitation of the development of positive relationships with adults in school.

The study revealed that for the participants interviewed, the establishment of trust was propelled by early intervention and support from school staff. This helped to set the foundations for the development of trusting relationships within the school context. As well as trust and early intervention, two additional major factors which helped to facilitate the development of trusting relationships emerged as; *the promotion of a sense of equity, fairness and justice*, and the environmental factors around *witnessing the operationalisation of school policies and procedures*.

5.4.4 The promotion of a sense of equity, fairness and justice.

Participant's experiences of feeling that they *were* fairly treated in their new schools, and witnessing equal consequences to peers within school, supported their abilities to build trusting relationships with staff and peers. As peers were seen as being treated equally within a perceived fair school system, participant's perceptions of some peers also shifted in ways which helped them to foster new established positive relationships with peers. A key factor in promoting positive relationships in school was participant's views of a school infrastructure which was perceived by them as fair and equitable. This helped to promote a sense of belonging for participants. This also contributed to facilitating further positive change and relationships.

5.4.5 A positive shift in the perceptions of adults.

Fundamental factors setting the foundations for developing participant's levels of *trust* in adults within school were; *early intervention and participant's need for positive*

experiences related to equity, fairness and justice within the school system. These factors emerged as being highly consequential to participant's experiencing positive shifts in their perceptions of adults. Fostering positive shifts in perceptions of adults supported participants to feel more willing and more likely to engage in help-seeking behaviours within their school contexts. By seeking out adult's support in times of need participants levels of trust also increased.

5.4.6 The need to distance current from primary schooling experiences.

The sense that participants needed to separate their previous experiences in primary school from their current secondary schooling experiences was a consistent and prevalent category which emerged from the data. The origins of this need may have been linked to participants need for equity, justice and fairness.

5.4.7 Narrative of a new beginning

Participants set out to create new beginnings through a range of conscious and unconscious means. This included the expression of a "*new narrative*" a narrative which was about promoting and executing a *new* beginning in year 7. Fundamental to this was the participant's deployment of coping strategies used, which helped to facilitate them in the process of adjusting to their new situation. Crucial to this process was the influence of internal and external factors which combined in ways which influenced participants' transition experiences. The unconscious deployment of defence mechanisms along with factors related to the participant's internal locus of control played a key role in facilitating participants to develop trusting relationships.

5.4.8 Having choice and agency and academic aspirations.

This category was facilitated by and also influenced the development of trusting relationships. External factors in the form of environmental school contextual influences evolved as fundamental to supporting participant's experiences of successful transitions. Participants feeling that they had a wider choice of adults, peers and curriculum content and options within their secondary school setting to choose from emerged as a significant. For a full visual representation of this model, please refer to figure 6.

5.5 Description of core categories.

5.5.1 Key category one: Early intervention which promotes the development of trusting relationships.

All participants spoke about relational aspects within school which influenced their transition experiences in positive ways. Peer relationships were often discussed alongside relationships with school staff members. As evidenced in the following quote from Joe who previously in year 5 and 6 avoided school but stated the following about his experiences in year 7 and 8; *"...now in this school, I wanna come in in this school yeah I wanna come to school just for the friends, and plus the teachers listen and care more here, so yeah it's better"* (Joe).

Similarly, Maria stated; *"It's actually better here in this school cause I think I got not got but made yeah made better quality friends, cause they actually care about me and want me to do good...and I feel like here I can actually go and find a teacher or a mentor or someone who I can speak to and stuff as well"*. (Maria).

As the nature and impact of both peer and adult relationships emerged to be a significantly relevant factor, this category was centrally located within the proposed model.

The category of 'early intervention which promotes the development of trusting relationships' derived from the following predominant axial codes as is illustrated in figure 9.

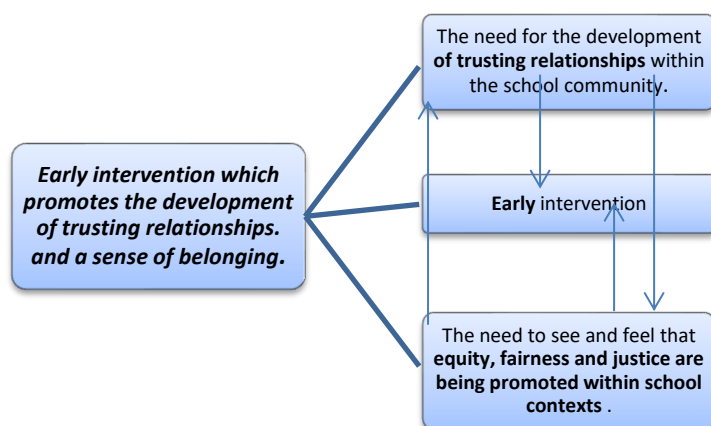


Figure 9: Illustrating the codes which emerged to form the development of core category one.

The emergent theory proposes that there exists a level of dependency within and throughout the concepts. The arrows inserted in figure 9 highlights the relationships between the three sub-categories. The thin arrows depict the level of dependency which each category has on the other.

5.5.2 The need for the development of trusting relationships within the school community.

"So when from year 7 I had no trust in no teachers cause I thought okay if, if I do get bullied it would be the same, but I thought it was like every teacher that they would listen but that they wouldn't do anything about it."

(Joe)

"I: When did you begin to trust them?"

"H: Well once in year 7 I was only here for a few weeks in year seven and the this boy this kid was saying mean things to me when he thought the teacher wasn't listening then I lost my temper, and I yelled at him cause I was so angry so I yelled at him and just left the class and then I saw Miss in the outside the class, and she took me to her room and asked me what was wrong, and I told her, and she actually listened and said she understood why I would feel like that and why I would react this way to the kid....she understands. And she helps me to work on ways to feel better when I'm angry.

(Anna: feeling understood and listened to)

"and then I just stop trusting people and then I like, I did stop sort of like to caring a little bit cause after that I just stop kinda like hanging out with people."

(Anna)

As illustrated in figure 8, the concept of trust emerged as a concept which flowed through all of those linked to the development of relationships within the school setting. Factors relating to trust emerged as a concept which impacted greatly upon participant's levels of readiness to build relationships following the transition. Initially, this could have been seen as a barrier to participants gaining support. However, what emerged strongly from this study was evidence that all of the participants overcame specific challenges which were initially barriers to them developing trusting relationships in schools.

Data revealed that the overcoming of this particular barrier was facilitated by a range of factors, predominant influences being a combination of the aforementioned early intervention and experiences of equity, fairness and justice.

Joe expressed the following;

“...and then also moving here I didn’t have any trust in anyone, cause I didn’t trust them in primary cause they kept not doing anything...” (Joe)

5.5.3 Building relationships, trust and feeling heard and understood.

Joe cites his experiences of feeling unheard by staff and feeling that staff members within his primary school were not taking action to support their needs as reasons for not trusting “*anyone*” at the onset of his transition to secondary school. Anna stated the following in response to being asked the clarifying question “*What do you like about it? (“it” referring to secondary school)*” *What’s been the best part?*” Anna’s response was: “*Err well getting away from the bullies and from the teachers cause I didn’t trust them.*”

(Anna)

Although the development of relationships emerged as a concept interlinked with issues around gaining a sense of trust, participants were able to establish this sense of trust before beginning to build relationships. This was a pivotal point to consider concerning the research question. This illustrated a dependency between the two concepts; building relationships and trust. This dependency between and within concepts and categories emerged as a key and consistent characteristic of the proposed model.

5.5.4 Feeling heard and understood by staff and early intervention.

Fundamental to the development of trust, which in turn impacted upon participants’ relationships with adults within the school context was the experience of ‘*feeling heard and understood by adults*’. The development of trust was further impacted by participants’ lived experiences of having their thoughts and feelings heard by staff within school.

Participants' measurements of the extent to which their thoughts and feelings were heard and understood were conceptualised through their experiences of school staff member's actions and responses towards them.

Maria states:

"Cause sometimes the teachers and TA's would just piss me off cause like...they don't listen...yeah, and its so annoying cause they need to listen; instead, they just shout and take other people's sides.

(Maria)

"They didn't understand my problem and what was wrong with me at that time.

(Amina)

"So, she should have listened to me. My mentor should have listened to me then I could explain and I'm the only one that got into trouble for that."

(Asif)

"...two teachers came and I... but when that happened, they actually listened, and I didn't get into trouble cause they knew that I..."

Interviewer – "So what advice would you give to teachers?"

"They need to like assess the situation first find out what's happening, yeah, and then after they need to like probably break it down see like what are the people saying. They should see the situation and stop it before it happens."

(Zack).

"I got so vexed...proper angry cause I got the blame full-on and they wouldn't even listen or believe me".

(Maria).

Experiences of feeling unheard impacted participants in unhelpful ways. For many, such experiences, at times led to participants feeling a sense of hopelessness. As expressed by Joe who stated;

"I think I just tried to ignore it I did try and like talk to other people."

"but no one would like listen, so I just ignored it cause they didn't really do anything and I didn't really do anything. I just ignored, but I didn't really do anything. I just like stayed out of their way". (Joe).

Key to understanding the impact of feeling heard and understood and how these experiences contributed to successful transitions for the participants of this study, is the consideration of how participants compared previous experiences with post-transition experiences. It was then through early experiences during the early intervention stage post-transition that participants experiences of being heard and understood became impactful. This supported participants successful transitions in ways which supported their school-based relationships.

5.5.5 Early intervention

“In the beginning of year seven near then because the school and my mum and me had a meeting to speak to me about what help I might need when I get angry or upset and whom to speak to.” (Anna).

“When they knew I was coming to this school this school they came to visit Me...like the behaviour people from this school came in year 6 when I was in year 6, and they had a meeting with my mum and dad. And like said, “these are the rules” and stuff...and like so yeah.”

(Zack)

All participants cited the transition day wherein pupils visit their secondary school for a day while still in year 6 as helpful as it assisted them to get to know their future school environment and get to know their new peers. Anna states; *“In the beginning of year seven near then because the school and my mum and me had a meeting to speak to me about what help I might need when I get angry or upset and whom to speak to.”*

I: “Was that before you started year 7?”

A: “Yeah before and then afterwards they reminded me...but I didn't trust them.”

All participants discussed early intervention which spanned pre- and post-transition.

Although the early intervention was vital for many participants, Anna required the establishment of a deeper level of trust over time before she felt that she could engage with adults in a help-seeking way.

Participants recalled experiences of; staff reaching out to them, staff reminding them of measures of support which had been put into place (i.e. whom to find and where to go

when things were feeling difficult), and staff making reasonable adjustments in response to their needs. All participants spoke about times wherein they experienced at least one of these support interventions actions very early on following their transition. For example, Anna states *"I was only here for a few weeks in year 7"* when she experienced feeling listened to and understood by a staff member during a challenging time for her. She also expresses that this experience helped her to begin to trust some adults in school.

Asif experienced some challenges early on following his transition to year 7. He recalls school staff supporting him and listening to him about a particular challenge he was experiencing. This resulted in school staff making significant yet reasonable adjustments to accommodate Asif's needs by putting him in a different form group and issuing him with a new timetable. He recalls *"they gave me like an exit pass, a new timetable and I moved class Yeah. Cause in my old class I would get into fights or get upset cause people would say mean stuff to me sometimes"*. When asked if this was helpful for him Asif's response was; *"Yeah cause I wasn't getting on well in the first class...in the beginning of year 7"*.

For Asif, this eventually developed his help-seeking behaviours within school as Asif later refers to the idea that he feels he has his own *"team"* of adults who are available to support him when he is experiencing challenges at school.

An example of this as outlined within the following quote;

"...if I was finding it hard my team would help me like they would get someone to get Mrs Hollins (pseudonym) and so they would help...cause they knew how I sometimes get when I get stressed or upset or something. And basically so when I got upset once basically someone must have gone inside and told Mrs Hollins and then my team knew I would sometimes lose my temper and get upset of something or something and my team would come and calm me down".

5.5.6 The need for equity, fairness and justice.

"They always thought I was the only one doing all the bad things, and other people would get away with the same things, but I'd get into bigger trouble for small things".

(Zack)

"I'm the one who got the blame for it."

(Asif)

"Well it's like most of the time the adults don't do anything in primary like you tell the adult and nothing really happens so mainly it's just like the adults say "oh no, don't do it again" and then when they do it again they be like " don't do it again".

(Joe).

"cause all the adults in school just blamed just me..."

(Asif)

"... cause whereas like in primary it's like "If you break this rule you're going to get into more trouble even more than someone else ". Because of like because of your record pretty much."

As the above quotes illustrate, all participants spoke about previous incidences linked to schooling wherein they experienced feelings which were triggered by beliefs that they were not being treated equally or fairly in comparison to their peers. This for five of the participants resulted in their lived experiences of facing injustice; through observing and experiencing noticeable disparities between sanctions given to them and those given to their peers at the time. In their view, these disparities worked to the advantage of peers and as a disadvantage to participants themselves. Above Zack expresses a feeling that he

was "a/ways" in receipt of consequences which he felt were disproportionate in comparison to that which he perceived others to be receiving for the same behaviours. Such experiences resulted in participants holding the view that previously within the school context, they were managed by adults within a school system which was inequitable and unjust. For participants, the process of gaining a sense of increasing trust in peers in adults within the school context was closely linked to what they saw and experienced. For example, Asif states; *"They would usually deal with it, and that person would get a phone call home."*

R: *"So it sounds like you feel like things are dealt with differently at secondary?"*

A: *"Yeah. They deal with things here"*.

The use of the term "dealt" and "dealing with" things at times when participants encounter challenges within their secondary settings was regularly eluded to. The importance of this was noted by five of the participants of this study. For example, Joe stated, *"cause they (peers) slap me on the neck and everything and I told them... so they got like two hours' detention after school."*

(Joe)

This experienced inequity and injustice were evidenced and confirmed to participants by their observations of how school staff operationalised school policies and procedures. Particularly significant for participants were observations and their interpretations of the way that school policies and procedures regarding behaviour and conduct were addressed by staff.

"Maria recalled, *"But my mum used to say it was cause I had a "bad rep" so they would straight away think I was the bad one...cause of things I did in the past or because I used*

to get angry...but it's still not fair even if I did things before. But thank God that don't happen here that much" (Maria).

Above Maria describes her sense of feeling unfairly treated due to events of her past. This quote was in reference to an experience she was reflecting on which occurred during her time in primary school.

This felt sense of injustice and inequity emerged as a concept which emanated from and existed hand-in-hand with feelings of being unheard and misunderstood. This, in turn, contributed to factors which led to participants feeling unable to trust adults within their school context pre-transition. Participants were therefore carrying this difficulty to the secondary school context. This impacted upon their preparedness to trust and build trusting relationships on arrival to secondary school. These experiences were found to be inextricably linked to how participants perceived staff members within the school context.

As is illustrative from the words of Anna; *"In the beginning of year seven near then because the school and my mum and me had a meeting to speak to me about what help I might need when I get angry or upset and who to speak to ...and then afterwards they reminded me...but I didn't trust them, so I didn't go at first, I just had to deal with it myself".*

Although the early intervention was key for many participants, Anna required the establishment of a deeper level of trust over time before she felt that she could engage with adults in a help-seeking way.

This also demonstrates the importance of the use of a range of early interventions in supporting participants post-transition. Because although due to experiencing a lack of trust in adults initially prevented Anna from engaging with adults in help-seeking ways, as illustrated in the previous discussions around interventions Anna responded well to a more informal intervention which occurred during a difficult episode for her.

Participants secondary schools promoted a sense of trust through interactions and school systems for these participants Joe states; “...and thanks for taking things seriously and making sure it's fair and, err, just thank you for everything basically”.

5.5.7 Core category two: The need to distance current from primary schooling experiences.

As outlined in figure 10 below, three different sub-categories underpinned the core category of the need to distance current from primary schooling experiences.

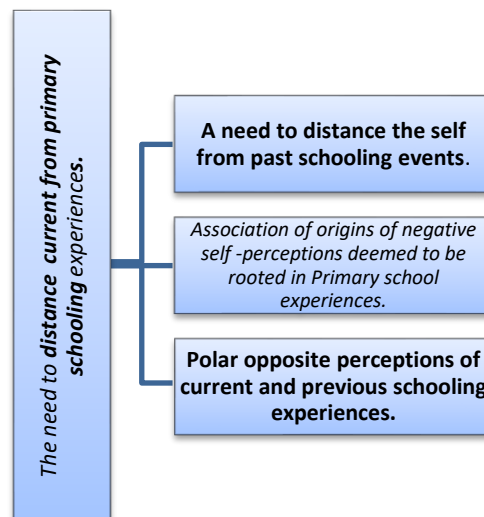


Figure 10: Illustrating the codes which emerged to form the development of core category two.

5.5.8 The need to distance current from primary schooling experiences.

"So like after like in year 7, I just moved on from what happened...I just decided that I had to just forget about what happened in year 5 and 6..."

(Asif)

Data revealed that participants often displayed a huge disconnect when discussing their primary school experiences. For example, when discussing a primary school account, Maria states; “...it’s like I was another person even though obviously I’m not. I know it doesn’t really make sense.” The impact of interconnected environmental and contextual factors supported participants need to distance current from past schooling experiences. This is illustrated further in figure 6, which depicts arrows linking core facilitative factors to the need to distance current from past schooling experiences. These facilitative factors were: *The deployment of defence mechanisms; expressed narrative of a new beginning; impact of environmental and contextual factors and impact of internal locus of control.*

Within the proposed theory, motivation for the need to distance the past from present schooling experiences is understood as being located within *internal and largely unconscious defence mechanisms deployed by participants*. This unconscious defence may have served several purposes for participants in ways which impacted upon their experiences of their secondary environmental contexts. The primary motivators for these defences being:

- The need to see and experience themselves in a new light.
- The need to shift their perceptions of adults to include more positive perceptions.
- Participants need for adults and peers within the school context to gain, hold and maintain positive perceptions of them. This, in turn, supported participants to perceive and experience themselves in a new light.

Collectively the above-listed motivators supported participants to better able set the psychological foundations necessary to build their narrative of a new beginning upon. As identified earlier, results of this study suggest that for participants, their successful transitions were helped by factors which facilitated shifts in their perceptions of adults within the school context. The same can also be said for the participant's perceptions of themselves.

Participants spoke about planned measures that they themselves had made in preparation for their transition to secondary school. Predominantly, these plans were related to social, psychological, conduct and behavioural changes which participants felt that they needed to make before transitioning to secondary school. This suggests that participants all displayed strong internal locus of control¹². The following are examples of participant's expressions of messages that they had told themselves and plans that they had made for change.

"It's like you need to have a positive mind-set.... cause like if you have a negative mind-set like I did in primary, then you think ah I'm gonna get into trouble for this this and this if you keep thinking that it will just keep happening more and more. So, you need to have a positive mind-set". (Zack)

For Zack, receiving feedback from adults in school which was congruent with his desired new self -concept facilitated his development of a new self-concept.

¹² According to Rotter 1954, individuals who are considered to have a strong internal locus of control attribute events and experiences as being primarily a product of their own thoughts and actions as opposed to attributing outcomes of events to predominantly external factors.

Anna states *“When I went into this school... so one of the things I did promise myself is that I wasn't going to make any friends because I feel like then cause one of the things is I didn't know how they would be with me”* (Anna)

Amina described plans she had made to distance herself from her peers as a solution to managing her anxieties around how her peers may have perceived her. She states that at times during this action, she would feel lonely and that yet there were times when she felt *“at peace”* as a result of this strategy. When asked to elaborate on this feeling of experiencing peace Amina stated;

“Well yes because I didn't have to always be worrying about what people would think of me or about what they would think of the things I say and better even I didn't have to be worrying about what if I have a seizure and they will think it's weird or scary”.(Amina).

Amina's sense of “peace” may also have been as a result of her feeling that she had a sense of control over how much exposure to peers she would allow herself.

Anna and Amina's plans were based upon devising organised strategies to isolate themselves and avoid peers' post-transition specifically. For both participants, motivations for such plans were based upon a need to protect themselves post-transition from experiencing rejection from their peers within their new school contexts.

Joe discussed his experience in his primary school of being bullied by his peers, who often called him fat. In response to this experience, Joe also put measures in place to defend himself from experiencing rejection from his peers. Joe's method signified the use of an ever-deeper internalised measure as exemplified within the following quote;

“Cause I wanted to be better for when I came to secondary school. I didn’t want people to look at me and be like, ‘aww look he’s fat and, and really big’ and everything so I did start losing weight now I’m actually quite...I’m not really big...”

(Joe)

This preparation spanned by a strong internal locus of control for Joe, impacted upon his perceptions of his weight and physical appearance. The idea of altering his physical appearance to be “*better*” may have resulted in Joe may exerting a great deal of control over his physical appearance. This resulted in Joe attributing perceptions of his physical appearance and how his peers perceived this with shifts in perceptions of himself.

Maria recalls her efforts to “*try really hard*” to make positive behavioural changes at the onset of year seven as she states;

“Well...I think I tried really hard when I first started here in year seven like when I started I was like I’m not gonna get in with any wrong crowds, I’m gonna get my qualifications and not get into bare trouble like in primary” (Maria).

5.5.9 Narrative of a new beginning.

“Like people say new year like new leaf and everything.”

(Joe)

Interviewer: “What felt better for you in year 7?”

“J: “Errrrm, it’s a fresh start”.

J: “That’s why when you change schools it’s a new start. Like in primary you change

from year 1 to year two or year 5 to year 6, but it's the same people every year, so it's not really new".

(Joe)

When discussing how he currently saw himself as part of the school community the following dialogue occurred between Zack and myself;

R: "You see yourself as someone who is going to do, and who is doing well, academically?"

Z: "Yeah".

R: "Have you always seen yourself in this way?"

Z: "Well not really cause like in like primary it was more like "oh you're this kid who's like always making trouble", and you have to be that way because that's what they think so yeah".

Zack stated; "cause like there were like four teachers here who knew about my record when I got here, and they weren't like "aww I know what you're like." they were like "okay he's a new person now" don't look at his record in primary or look at his record in primary and see how he used to be and things he used to do and like look at look at the person like look at what he's doing now. So that really helped".

"R: So seeing different and new people helped you?"

A: "Yeah. Cause they didn't know me from my primary school and they didn't know

about me what people in like year 5 and 6 knew”.

(Asif).

“...and it's like that idea of having a fresh start you, you don't have to be like held back by the previous stuff that you did. Where as in primary they'd be like "oh you've done this", and it would be like looking at your records and then getting into more and more trouble cause everyone thinks you're bad.....and yeah, they were like "ahhh you have a new fresh start" so and then, and then in this school no one was like ahhh he's the bad one...”

(Zack).

The above quotes are examples of the significance which participants placed upon the concept of newness, a new start and a new beginning. This concept of newness was specifically and directly associated by participants with how they prepared for their transition to secondary school. The above quote from Zack also communicated the importance of the impact of adults who supported this sense of newness. This further demonstrates how the interaction of internal and external factors can combine to support participants to experience positive changes which contribute to successful transitions.

The sense of participant's needing a new beginning was found to be further propelled by particular facilitative factors. These were; participants' deployment of defence mechanisms and the need to feel a sense of control over the actions which impacted upon their transition experiences.

As illustrated in figure 6, the participant's internal locus of control interacted with environmental facilitative factors to determine key positive outcomes. The result was participant's experiences of their new school context and events which took place during

their early post-transition experiences. These can be seen as factors which shaped participants' transition experiences in positive ways. For example; Anna and Amina's plans to isolate themselves from and avoid their peers could have impacted hugely and negatively upon their social and emotional development and sense of inclusion within their school settings.

A fundamental point to consider here is, these participants experienced opportunities which helped to shift their perceptions because participants generally experienced contrary responses to the negative one's experiences that they were expecting once they transitioned.

For example, when asked what advice she would give to pupils who had similar challenges to herself during transitions to year seven, Anna replied;

"Not everyone is going to be the same kids that are mean to you or bully you so try and trust them and try and ignore them the bullies cause once you ignore them they ignore you, and then you won't have to deal with them and you can find friends and make new ones."

This demonstrated a key shift in Anna's original perceptions related to trust.

5.5.10 Distancing past from present schooling experiences.

A sense of participants needing to create a narrative which supported them to securely place and keep their challenging primary school experiences in the past was a strong storyline which emerged from the data. Psychologically distancing their past from present

schooling experiences also seemed to serve the purpose of enabling participants to forge and action the narrative of a new beginning which they all so actively sought.

As outlined within earlier discussions around participant's expressed perceptions of their primary schooling experiences, a common concept amongst participants to locate the roots of their difficult school-based experiences within their primary school contexts was salient. This resulted in the emergence of an additional key concept entitled *'the need to distance current from primary schooling experiences.'*

When discussing her experiences of what she perceived as being blamed for things she did not do in her time during primary schooling, Maria's expression of relief, stating *"thank God that doesn't happen here"* gave some insight into the emergence of this concept. Joe describes his final years in primary school as something that he had to *"live through"* he also likens these final years of his primary school experiences as *"hell"*. Similarly, Anna describes primary school as being *"down there"* indicating a motion of measuring low with secondary school marked significantly higher. These views filtered down to relationships formed, for example, Asif stated; *"and my friends here are much better than my friends in primary school"*. Anna described her secondary school as being a better place to be in comparison to being in primary school. One of the reasons she gave for feeling this way in her words was *"because I have friends now"*.

This concept was borne out of the subcategory which noted participants' expressions of polar opposite perceptions and views separating current and previous schooling experiences. This was a prevalent code expressed across participants. This was understood as a need across participants to distance themselves within their current school context from their primary school contexts. As discussed earlier, this can be better

understood as being related to an internal coping mechanism being deployed as a defence. Anna stated:

.... It was actually a lot easier in secondary because all the kids well most of the kids I knew wasn't going to come to this school. My mum made sure that I never went to the other schools."

(Anna).

5.5.11 Key category three: Having a sense of choice, agency and academic aspirations.

Integral to the concept of new beginnings was the idea of participants feeling that they had a sense of choice and agency.

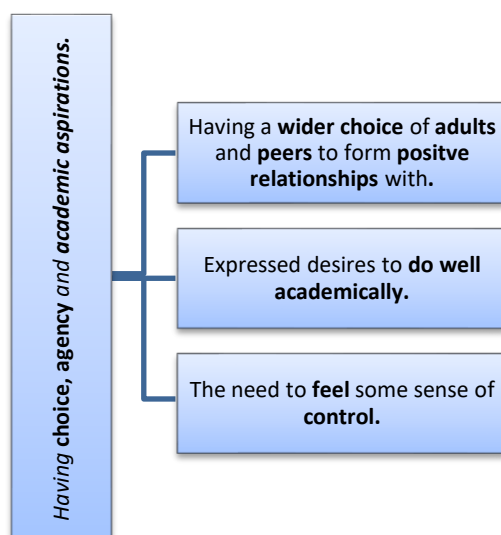


Figure 10: Illustrating the codes which emerged to form the development of core category three.

The main factors which facilitated the process of gaining this sense of agency encompassed both environmental (external), and inner drives and actions seen as internal factors. The combination of external environmental and internal factors and responses were drawn upon by participants to support them to feel that they had a level of choice within aspects of their school contexts. These factors included having a wider choice of adults and peers to draw upon and forge important relationships with, and a wider curriculum which reflected their learning preferences and subject preferences. From this emerged an understanding that participants' realising that they have a sense of choice over some key details relevant to their school contexts.

5.5.12 Environmental factors: The benefits of a wider school community.

For all of the participants, their primary school settings were smaller than the secondary school which they transitioned to. All participants identified being in a wider school community as a decisive factor which supported their transition. For example, Joe stated *"... there's more teachers I feel like the more teachers you have, the better so as I go around the school with like different teachers, it's a lot better than primary school... "when you do your lessons we are all the same err year, but it's just that it's different people, so you actually talk to people more"*.

(Joe)

Joe found being in the wider school community beneficial to his transition. The benefits also included enhanced opportunities to develop key relationships with peers and adults' post-transition. Additionally, by stating; *"the more adults, the better"* Joe communicates feeling a sense of safety within a school with a wider range of adults in close proximity.

Similarly, in response to having a wider range of peers to choose from, Anna stated; *"...it was better cause you didn't have to sit with the same bullies or same people being annoying all the...like for the full day you kinda know that when we have the lesson, we are going to be most likely with other people"*.

5.6 Chapter summary

The findings demonstrated the emergence of the clockwork theory. This theory suggests that several psycho-social factors interacted in keyways to support the successful secondary school transition for the participants of this study. The identified core categories, although salient were found to be co-dependent upon a range of 'facilitative' categories which interacted to support pupils' experiences post-transition.

The significance and positive impact which participants attributed to being within a wider school community, and gaining a sense of trust in school staff, exemplifies the role that external environmental and contextual factors played in their transition journey. Primarily, the positive consequence of the impact of these factors resulted in supporting participants to:

- Alter their perceptions of themselves, peers and adults, which allowed for the development of key trusting relationships (primarily addressed through informal intervention).

- Begin to conceptualise and carve out a narrative of a new beginning and act on this accordingly.
- Gain a sense of trust in school policies and procedures (necessitated by participants experiencing equity and fairness within the school context).

Chapter 6: Discussion

6.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter offers a commentary on the research findings into factors which facilitate successful secondary school transitions for pupils with SEMH needs. Links to relevant psychological theory are made and explored. Research findings will be discussed and located within the literature which has been searched and reviewed in chapter 3. The core categories of the grounded theory will be discussed with details of how they link with the facilitative factors outlined. The research question will then be answered. Reflections upon the limitations of this study will be outlined with reflections upon my learning and positioning in relation to this study. The chapter will conclude with a brief description of how the study will be disseminated.

6.2 Research Aims

This research aimed to explore and explain factors which contributed to facilitating a successful transition from year 6 to year 7 for pupils with SEMH needs. The research sought to establish, explore and explain factors which from the participants' perspectives supported them to adapt successfully to their secondary school settings following their experiences of secondary school transitions. The views of six participants with Educational

Health and Care plans (EHCP's) which identified SEMH as an area of need were sought using semi-structured interviews. The research question posed was;

What factors contribute to facilitating a successful transition from year 6 to year 7 for pupils with SEMH needs?

6.3 Summary of key findings

Through the application of a grounded theory methodology (Corbin and Strauss, 2008; 2015), and the process of analysis through coding, what resulted was the emergence and development of a conceptual theory which I named 'The clockwork theory of secondary transition for pupils with SEMH needs'.

The model comprises three interlinked core categories which emerged from the data. The nature of these core categories gave valuable insights into significant factors which participants identified as being crucial to their experiences of successful transitions from year 6 to year 7. These core categories were:

- *The need for 'early intervention which promotes the development of trusting relationships.'*
- *The need to distance current from primary schooling experiences.'*
- *The need to have a 'sense of choice and agency'.*

Additional internal and external factors are necessary as they play a fundamental role in facilitating the core categories. These factors comprised relational, internal and external factors which greatly contributed to the facilitation of successful transitions for participants. Core concepts to consider are the impact of;

- Trust.
- Feeling heard and understood.
- Participants' ways of relating to adults and peers within the school setting.

As outlined in the Findings chapter, factors impacting to facilitate the successful transition experiences of participants were summarised as playing a significant role in facilitating participants to adjust internally to the external school environment. This was hugely supported by participants' shifts in perceptions which were facilitated by the gaining of trusting relationships.

6.4 Core category one: Early intervention which promotes the development of trusting relationships.

6.4.1 Trust and relationships

The promotion of and the development of trusting relationships and early intervention which supports these are central to factors relevant to understanding what contributed to participants' experiences of successful transitions. Findings of the current study indicate that for participants, trust was gained through the dynamic interactions which occurred between participants and others and also between participants and the school contextual environment. For participants the facilitation of the achievement of trusting relationships was highly dependent upon two main relational elements being; The impact of intervention support and the extent by which participants felt that the learning environment fostered and promoted equity, fairness and justice which supported them to feel heard and understood.

The importance of school settings promoting positive relationships is recognised in the extant literature. Concurrent with the present study, Sancho and Cline (2012) and Tobbell (2003) support the view that relationships with peers and adults within the school context are central to supporting pupils' transitions from primary to secondary school. Additionally, in line with Bailey and Baines (2012) from perspectives based on resilience theory, the development of positive relationships during the transitions from primary to secondary school is highlighted as a protective factor which is viewed as significant in promoting positive transitions for pupils who are deemed at risk (Jindal-Snape & Miller 2008; Rutter; 1987). Gilligan (2000) makes the link between the development of at-risk pupils' self-esteem and pupils experiencing positive relational experiences.

C&YP approach new teaching settings with perspectives and expectations shaped by historical factors specific to their individual experiences (Geddes 2017; Bomber 1998). These include experiences of school which are specific to; ways of relating, levels of trust and perceptions of others. For pupils with SEMH needs, these perspectives are often based upon predominantly adverse, challenging highly anxiety-provoking and often ruptured experiences of relationships with peers and adults. Challenging relational difficulties experienced by pupils with SEMH needs was also echoed within the current study. Participants narratives related to their less positive previous schooling experiences and the nature of their often-difficult relationships in primary school were discussed at length. Transition to secondary school is notably met with a range of emotions for pupils. Considering the nature of SEMH needs, it is argued that this phase can be more emotionally charged for pupils with SEMH needs.

Bion, (1962), states that emotional experiences cannot be envisioned, or understood unless done so within the context of a relationship with others. This perspective is particularly relevant when aiming to understand the factors which contributed to the

facilitation of successful transitions for the participants of this study. The current study suggests that essential for understanding participants' experiences of secondary school transitions is the need to first explore the range of internal and external factors which impact upon relational aspects within their school contexts. The main premise being factors which facilitated successful transitions for these pupils with SEMH needs were inextricably linked to and informed by the context of key relationships. This included relationships with themselves internally as well as with peers and school staff externally.

A range of effects are located under the category of SEMH needs. This category as a group cannot, therefore, be homogenised. However, the need for additional support intervention during the secondary transition stage for pupils with a range of needs has been advocated within relevant policies (DfES, 2017) and is evident in guidance (Youngminds, 2008). For the participants of the current study, there is a strong indication that for them, the development of trusting relationships within the school context was a fundamental starting point which helped significantly to pave the way for a successful transition.

6.4.2 Feeling heard and understood

Trust is recognised as fundamental to enabling the 'learning relationship' within the school context (Youell, 2006). From a psychodynamic perspective, Youell, (2006) and Waddell, (2002) apply the concept of containment to understanding the importance of the role of trust within the learning relationship. Containment postulated by Bion (1961) describes the intra-psychological process by which an adult receives and responds to children's expulsion of feelings which they- the- child cannot psychologically; hold; process nor

understand by themselves. Through holding these difficult feelings without embodying them before giving them back to the child in a more manageable form, the adult can act as a container. Feeling contained within the school environment supports pupils' in developing a sense of trust (Youell, 2006).

Within the clockwork theory; feeling heard and understood; early intervention and the promotion of a sense of equity and justice were identified as key facilitators for the development of trusting relationships. For participants, it emerged that through interventions; they began to feel a sense of containment a sense of feeling; heard; understood and accepted by adults.

6.4.3 Intervention

The SEND code of practice (2015), the BPS (2016) hugely emphasises the need for schools to focus on a "combined approach to supporting pupils' with SEND (DECP 2017). Interventions within schools have been the focus of relevant legislation (DFE 2017). The DOH and DFE (2017) have highlighted the importance of practitioners working with children with SEND using "person-centred interventions within schools", (DOH and DFE 2017 p: 13; Taylor-Brown 2012). Person-centred interventions are further recognised as effective in meeting the "complex" needs of children with SEND (DFE 2017 p: 17).

The literature revealed the need for staff working with C&YP with SEMH difficulties employing a "non-coercive" and "humanistic approach" to intervention to support their needs (Carrol & Hurry 2018, p.314; Burton & Goodman, 2011; Cooper & Jacobs 2011, Hughes, 2012). From a humanistic perspective, Rogers (1951; 2000) recognised and outlined the essential need for the extension of the core conditions being; empathy;

unconditional positive regard; adoption of a non-judgemental stance and congruence as essential to facilitating the development of trusting relationships within the helping dyad. An additional fundamental premise of the humanistic approach is the need for practitioners to meet the individual in the present working with that which they bring at their own pace (Rogers 1951).

All participants discussed experiences which highlighted the importance of feeling supported by staff during the transition period and beyond. Participants described their first experiences of feeling supported by staff as occurring at times when they were finding it difficult to manage challenging or upsetting feelings or emotions. Bailey and Baines (2012) as a risk factor which if not supported can lead to poor secondary transition adjustments. Interventions which support the development of emotional intelligence (Qualter et al. 2007) and those which support pupils' abilities to emotionally regulate, (Bailey and Baines, 2012) are recognised as important for the facilitation of successful transitions to secondary school. For participants, this support coming early and initially occurring at times of emotional or psychological distress may have increased their sense of feeling contained in ways which with adult intervention supported them to begin to recognise and manage their difficult emotions. For Asif, the offer of staff members informally "checking in" with him following school day transitions such as after lunch and break times were deemed helpful. Amina and Maria also discussed experiences of having ongoing support put into place which they could choose to engage in when they felt the need. Asif stated that it could sometimes be "annoying" because he sometimes did not have anything to report but was still encouraged to go to these check - ins. Maras and Aveling (2006) found that pupils with SEN varied in what they needed and expected during the secondary transition. They concluded that it was not the actual intervention which was impactful for pupils with SEN but what was fundamental to supporting successful

transitions was continuity of support throughout their transitions. This is similar to Rogers's (1979) view that within a person-centred approach to supporting emotional and psychological needs what is of most importance to psychological growth is the quality and development of the relationship between help-seekers and those who help. Less emphasis is put upon the actual intervention (Rogers, 1979). Both views can be adopted to reflect the experiences of support offered to Amina, Asif and Maria. This is also in line with a "non-coercive" approach (Carrol & Hurry, 2018, p.314).

The implementation of support strategies pre-transition is recognised as being highly conducive to lower levels of school anxieties post-transition (Rice et al. 2016). Systemic approaches which entail making links and sustaining a level of consistency between the primary and secondary settings are recognised as supporting successful transitions (DfE, 2015, Rice et al. 2016). Asif, Zack and Maria all described recollections of cross setting meetings occurring pre-transition. These meetings involved liaison between their primary and secondary school settings and took place at participant's primary schools. These meetings were attended by; parents, a staff member from the secondary settings and participants themselves. Zack recalls being told at this meeting *'these are the rules for your new school'*. Maria and Asif's recollections centred on discussions regarding systems and how to access help when they were finding things emotionally difficult.

Notably, Asif, Zack, and Maria experienced SEMH difficulties which were sometimes expressed outwardly through externalised responses. Such responses often resulted in conflict with peers and adults. For example, Asif recalls "getting angry" and tipping tables at times when he felt angry or upset in his primary school. In comparison to their peers, pupils with SEN were found more likely to need differentiated and personalised transition

intervention approaches (Neal et.al 2016). This may be an indication of the need for some pupils with particular SEMH needs requiring more assurance and preparations pre-transition through interventions. This systemic triangulated approach involving parents and primary school settings pre-transition appeared to support these three participants. In particular, through these interventions participants developed an early sense of familiarity with key staff members; familiarity with school systems and were reminded very early on about their secondary schools' behavioural expectations and support mechanisms.

The implementation of transition strategies pre-transition was cited as being highly conducive to lower levels of school-based anxieties and improves school adjustment (Sancho & Cline, 2012; Bloyce & Frederickson 2012). Positive ramifications of the above early intervention are that it may have alleviated some of the anxieties which participants may have been carrying related to their secondary school transitions. This, in turn, could have contributed to enhancing these participant's levels of; trust and feelings of safety and belonging within their new school settings post-transition. Within the literature the fostering of a strong sense of school belonging is cited as a key factor to supporting successful transitions for pupils' as identified and outlined by; Sancho & Cline, 2012; Hegarty et al., 1992; Goodenow & Grady, 1993. Within the DfE (2016) the establishment of a sense of school belonging is identified as a protective factor.

Goodenow and Grady (1993) identified that though establishing a sense of school belonging, pupil's feelings of being "personally accepted, respected and supported by others" within the school community were positively enhanced (Goodenow & Grady, 1993; p.61). Integral to theories of school belonging is the idea that pupils feeling supported and feeling that they identify with the climate of the school in its entirety is fundamental (Sancho & Cline, 2012). This was exemplified within the current study as all three participants' who received the per-school visit intervention reported feeling a sense of

reassurance that staff members within their secondary school "*knew them*". Specifically, the participants found it helpful to know that key staff members within their new schools were aware of the participants' specific SEMH challenges. Similarly, when discussing her initial anxieties related to having epilepsy and how this was impacting upon her relationships with staff and peers' post-transition, Amina spoke about her initial feelings that staff did not know about nor understand her illness. This often led to her avoiding school and peers. Amina described later feeling supported by her peers within her form group in ways which led to her feeling accepted and understood within her new school. Similarly, Joe recalls and discussed a sense of feeling accepted by his peer's post-transition. These experiences for each participant further helped to foster a sense of school belonging in ways which supported them to experience successful transitions.

Feeling heard and understood was facilitated by interventions in the form of ad hoc and consistent support. This strong need to feel heard and understood was firmly located within participants need to experience; equity, fairness and justice within their school contexts.

6.4.4 Equity and justice operationalisation of policies and procedures

As discussed, feeling heard and understood by adults during difficult times was pivotal to developing participants' levels of trust in adults. Participants' measurement of being heard was mainly through their perceptions of actions and the level of reciprocity of communication with adults. For example, Asif, Joe and Anna all described incidences wherein they encountered difficulties with peers. All three participants expressed feeling surprised that they were listened to and that these issues were "dealt with" by adults. Transparency of behavioural policy and procedures were achieved by participants being

told what the consequence of other's behaviours towards participants would be. For example, Asif was assured by staff following an incident by peers that a peer would be spoken to and would receive a phone call home. Joe recalled noting that a peer would receive a detention for their actions towards him.

Zack, Maria, Asif, Anna and Joe all spoke at lengths about feeling unjustly treated within their primary school settings. Feeling that things were not "*dealt with*" in primary school was also expressed.

The clockwork theory illustrates that on the peripheries of the development of effective and positive relationships within the school setting was the concept of pupils needing to feel and witness a sense of equity, justice and fairness.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) proposed that a pupil's wider system consists of sub-systems. By gaining a comprehensive understanding of the macro, exo and meso systems around the pupil's Microsystems, and by considering and understanding the impact that these factors have upon each-other and upon the experience of pupils with SEMH difficulties, professionals are better able to understand and address these pupils needs, (Kelle, 2007). As demonstrated in figure 1, schools are a fundamental part of C&YP's Microsystems. As shown in the clockwork theory, contextual factors interact and contribute significantly to pupils' individual experiences within their school contexts.

Tobbell (2003) also makes this link by adopting Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic model of the child as a means to understand the experience of pupils during the secondary school transition phase. Bailey and Baines (2012) based their understanding of children during the transition phases on the theories and ideas of resilience. In line with the current study and the entities outlined within the Clockwork theory, both eco-systemic and resilience theories recognise the fundamental impact of and relationships between internal and

external factors and how these underpin and shape pupils' relational experiences of transition.

Unger, Ghazinour and Richter (2012) also recognised and make this link between eco-systemic and resilience perspectives of the child's experience. They state that C&YP overcome challenges and adversities through experiences which are understood as occurring through the interaction of proximal and distal factors relating to the child.

The school system entails the interaction of different internal systems operating at different levels. This impact upon how pupils and staff experience the school context, (National Council for Special Education NCSE, 2006). Pupils' experiences impact upon their actions within schools. From an eco-systemic perspective, there are sub-systems such as; peer friendship groups and class groupings; form groups and academic streaming sets. On the wider inter-school system-level exists a range of policies and rules and staff hierarchies which pupils are aware of.

Particularly salient for the SEMH populations are policies and procedures relating to behaviour. Participants expressed feelings related to not seeing behavioural policies and procedures being implemented fairly. Zack, Asif and Maria, in particular, expressed the beliefs that they were often treated unfairly in ways which resulted in unfair and often disproportionate sanctions being given to them during their time in primary school. Joe and Anna expressed their feelings which resulted from school staff saying that they would "deal" with behaviours of peers who were causing those difficulties, however, both expressed that they did not see or feel that this happened as the behaviours of peers continued. For these five participants, these experiences led to them feeling unable to trust adults. NCSE, 2006 points out:

"In the case of classroom behaviour problems, for example, the student who may be seen as the 'culprit' is located in relation to other sub-systems in the classroom,"

(NCSE, 2006, p.52)

This view is particularly salient in understanding the experiences of pupils such as Asif, Maria and Zack as their experiences may have been close to that of the "culprit" within their primary settings. Explorations of their primary school experiences led to many expressing feelings relating to experiences of feeling that they were; targeted, disliked or unfairly treated by adults within their previous school contexts. In line with the above quote participants', expressed feelings synonymous with being viewed as the "*culprit*" within the school system. Consequently, participants often questioned why they were singled out. Examples being; expressed through statements such as that by Zack, who recalled being banned from all school trips for behaviours that he felt others would not have been reprimanded for in the same way as he were.

From a psychodynamic perspective, the idea of positioning within the group context (Bion 1962; Frosh, Phoenix, Patman, 2003) is also useful to explore the experiences of pupils with SEMH needs within the school policy and procedural context. Pupils with SEMH needs may be influenced by the unconscious process of being positioned within the school system as the "*culprit*".

The need for a behavioural policy within schools which is coordinated in ways to effectively manage behaviour has been highlighted as fundamental to aiding pupils with SEMH needs to have positive school experiences (Institute of Education & National Foundation for Educational Research, 2014). This is particularly the case when aiming to support pupils in ways which minimise their chances of school exclusions. Within this study, seeing behavioural procedures operationalised indiscriminately and feeling that they

were fairly treated within the school context contributed greatly to enhancing participants' levels of trust in adults.

6.5 Core category: *Two- Having a sense of choice and agency.*

Pupils increased need and desire for autonomy; independence and choice have been identified as a developmental milestone associated with typical early adolescent development (Attachment O, 2009). Similarly, Gillison, Standage, and Skevington (2008), highlight the importance of pupils having a sense of autonomy and experiencing a good level of relatedness as factors which support positive primary to secondary transitions.

All participants expressed a level of desire to action significant change pre- and post-transition in preparation for secondary school. Maria expressively stated that she had made plans pre-transition to change her behaviours, friendship choices and responses to others within her new school context. She cited wanting to achieve and "*get*" her "*qualifications*" in secondary school as the motivators for these planned changes. Similarly, Zack stated that he had "*just decided*" to change his behaviours during the summer holidays in preparation for secondary school. Zack also spoke about thinking positively and spoke about developing a "*positive mind-set*" as a way which supported this planned change. Joe expressed feeling that he needed to lose weight and become more active in preparation for secondary school. Joe's internalisation of the perceived need to change physically may likely have been located in thought processes stemming from his previous experiences of being bullied at school. Students often present as more concerned with their status and image at the onset of them starting secondary school (Pratt & George 2005) this could also add to an explanation of some participants' expressed focus upon change.

Anna and Amina made pre-transition plans to isolate themselves. These decisions seemed to have been implemented as a way of protecting against what they perceived as untrustworthy relationships within their previous school contexts. The perceived need for participants to make these changes were for them all, based upon experiences located within their past schooling contexts. Regardless of the nature of these vastly different planned changes participants' actions and their need to outline these changes can be understood as the communication of a need to ascertain and sustain some level of control over the multitude of perceived unknown entities which come with secondary transitions. Hence participants making active plans for change post-transition were conceptualised within the current study as facilitated by participants' deployment of defence mechanisms and their need to gain from the outset, a sense of control in order to support themselves to cope during the transition process.

The origins of these perceptions, which informed their plans for change, could have been rooted within messages communicated to them through their wider support networks. Most poignant is the idea that participants held onto and intended to actualise these preparatory decisions to make changes to their behaviours, responses and even friendship choices as a way of planning for a smoother school experience following their transitions.

6.5.1 Internal locus of control

Through these shifts in thinking and plans to make changes to the way that they approached specific challenges, participants demonstrated attitudes and beliefs which aligned with the idea that they could affect change within their context thus demonstrating internal locus of control.

Based upon social learning theories of psychology locus of control proposed by Rotter (1954;1990) pertains to the idea that individual's experiences and responses are often determined and shaped by their own perceptions of how much control they have in relation to specific situations and outcomes. Individuals considered as having a strong internal locus of control attribute events and experiences as being primarily a product of their own thoughts and actions as opposed to attributing outcomes of events to predominantly external factors (Rotter; 1954;1990). For those with a strong internal locus of control; outcomes of events; responses to make adaptive changes and are viewed as being predominantly within their control.

6.5.2 Locus of control in adolescence

Specific to understanding adolescence and the impact of locus of control upon their school outcomes, studies have found that adolescence with an internal locus of control were more likely to display more positive social, academic and adaptive characteristics (Gilmor, 1978; Schall et al. 2014). Perceptions which are in line with an internal locus of control are closely linked to individuals, behaviours and emotions (Schall et al. 2014). Having an increased sense of control enhances pupils' beliefs related to their levels of success within the school context (Patrick, Skinner, & Connell, 1993). Adolescence' locus of control was,

therefore found to impact significantly upon their social and educational outcomes (Gilmor 1978).

6.5.3 Locus of control and defence mechanisms

Findings from the current study suggest that the impact of participants' internal locus of control and shifts in their perceptions of adults were facilitated further by participants' deployment of self-defence mechanisms. In this relational dyad, the deployment of defence mechanisms facilitated participants need to distance their current from primary school experiences.

6.5.4 Benefits of a wider school community

Previous studies have cited the wider school community and larger physical layout and space offered by secondary school settings as a possible source of; anxiety, stress and transition maladjustment for vulnerable pupils, (Evangelou et al. 2001; Tobbell 2008; West et al. 2010). Literature also highlighted anxieties and worries about being bullied by older children as common fears expressed by children pre-transition (Evangelous et al. 2001, Cefai & Cooper 2009). The adaptations which pupils are required to make in order to navigate their way around new secondary school environments can be perceived as being compounded by the wider range of peers and adults whom pupils must get to know. This has been cited as posing fundamental challenges to pupils' identity formations (Measor & Fleetma 2005; Warin & Muldoon, 2008).

Contrary to these views, participants of the current study all seemed to embrace the idea and experience of being within a bigger school. These adjustments and changes were identified as being facilitated by participants need for a sense of control; the impact of their internal locus of control and the environmental contextual factors which came with being within a wider school environment. Amina described having peers within her form group who spanned across the age phases as helpful for getting to know and feel comfortable around pupils in the school across age phases. This contextual factor may have also supported Amina to develop her confidence when navigating the school context allowing her to take full advantage of the wide scope of peers available to her within her secondary school. Amina also described feeling that her older peers within her form group "*knew*" and "*looked after*" her. This may have, therefore helped Amina to feel safe and supported within her new school context fostering a sense of belonging and inclusion amongst her peers. This may also have helped Amina to feel a sense of familiarity, promoting a sense of safety and belonging.

6.5.5 Wider school and autonomy and choice

Within the current study, the new wider school contexts supported participants' preferences and need for increased autonomy and choice. This was evident from participants' expressions relating to; having a wider choice of peers to choose as friends and having more adults to select from in order to forge helping relationships. Joe associated having more adults to draw upon within school as a factor which helped him to feel safer, stating: "*the more adults, the better*". This was not surprising considering his previously expressed experiences of being bullied in his primary school setting. Asif described having what he referred to as his "*team*" of adults which supported him during

difficult times. Maria stipulated the importance of accessing her mentors when she felt it necessary as opposed to her being directed to do so. She expressed that it should be her "*choice*" as to when or if she decided that she needed this support. This indicated that perhaps for pupils with SEMH needs autonomy and choice can help to support to engage independently in help-seeking behaviours.

Evangelous et al. (2008) found that of the SEN population within her study, 20 per cent experienced being bullied post-transition. However, for these participants, this fear did not become a reality. All participants discussed the positive impact of having a range of peers to choose from and saw this as a welcomed advantage to being within the secondary school setting. Many expressed a sense of frustration about feeling forced to spend their entire school day with the same pupils. This was particularly salient for; Asif, Maria, Zack, Anna and Joe who often experienced conflict with peers thus feeling as though there was often no escape from peer-related difficulties. For five of the participants with the exception of (Amina) the smaller school community of their former primary school settings, therefore, seemed to have often been a source of frustration and in some cases upset. Participants expressed feeling such as being "*stuck*" on a daily basis with the "*same old*" peers.

For Zack, Anna, Joe and Asif, being separated from peers who transitioned with them from the same primary school seemed to be helpful. Asif spoke about the difficulties which for him came with the idea and feelings of "*everybody knowing*" what he had done when he was in primary school. Asif also spoke about "*leaving*" and "*forgetting*" about past difficulties which had occurred in his primary school. Anna also discussed anxieties which she had regarding the idea of peers from her primary school transitioning with her. She

stated that one of the reasons that she and her mother had chosen her current school was to avoid peers from her primary school.

This suggests that for pupils with SEMH needs, having a wider school community can prove to be a protective factor. Within the literature, the need for some pupils to leave their primary school behind during transition is linked to facilitating their needs to leave difficult relationships behind (Sancho & Cline 2012). This supports the views and experiences of participants of the current study. The concept of a narrative of a new beginning emerged as a facilitative factor within the current study. This was further facilitated by category three being; the need to distance their current from primary schooling experiences.

6.6 Core category three: The need to distance current from primary schooling experiences.

Howe, Brandon, Hinings and Schofield (1999) state; "*School life with its rich environment of new relationships and tasks, presents children with occasions to identify, develop and establish fresh, more robust and socially valued aspects of the self*" (Howe et al 1990, p.260).

6.6.1 Perceptions

The findings of this study highlighted that perceptions held by participants proved important to their experiences of transition. Many participants expressed a desire to be "liked" and viewed in a positive light by others within their school context. For Maria, Anna and Zack being "liked" by adults in their new schools helped them to feel better able to forge important relationships with key staff members. Asif, Maria and Amina expressed the

importance of adults within their new schools knowing about their challenges. For participants, it seemed important that adult's perceptions of them were positive whilst still acknowledging and responding to their needs and challenges. Having adults who "knew" about their needs was also deemed helpful to participants and helped them to shape more positive perceptions of adults. Participants demonstrated a shift in help-seeking behaviours post-transition. This was catapulted by participants' shifts in their perceptions of adults seeing adults as more responsive and supportive and understanding. Participants may have found it helpful to feel that adult's perceptions of them included an understanding of their difficulties and needs in ways which acknowledged, accepted, responded to and supported their difficulties, challenges and needs.

Children with SEMH needs are often cited as presenting with low self-esteem (Jelessma et al. 2015). Low self-esteem is linked to holding negative perceptions of the self. Concerns with how adults perceived them may have shaped participant's self-perceptions leading to more positive self-concepts. Perceptions of adults and peers, therefore, seemed to come hand in hand. This demonstrated an interconnection between participants; perceptions of themselves; their perceptions of adults and their participant's levels of trust in adults. For example, the importance of how pupils perceive and are perceived by school staff and the possible impact of this upon pupils' transition experiences has also been stipulated as an essential aspect related to the facilitation of the development of positive learning relationships between pupils and staff (Vygotsky, Tobbell, 2003). Tobbell (2003) found that through positive shifts in perceptions of staff, pupils developed an increased interest in learning and engaged in more positive engagements with teachers. The current study suggests that positive shifts in perceptions of adults in school also encouraged participants to become more engaged in help-seeking behaviours; developed and improved their levels of trust in adults and supported a sense of safety and trust.

As stipulated in previous studies; Tobbell (2003), this study suggests that relationships and the quality of these within the school context proved significant to shaping participants. Studies also suggest a correlation between SEMH population's capacities to make strong social, emotional and behavioural adjustments with more positive and higher quality interrelations between pupils and staff (Breeman, Wubbels, Van Lier, Vershult, Van Der Ende, Maras, Hopman & Tick, 2015).

Shifts in their perceptions were understood as facilitating participants' levels of readiness to engage with others in ways which helped facilitate the development of positive relationships in their new school contexts.

Tobbell (2003) found that through positive shifts in perceptions of staff, pupils developed an increased interest in learning and engaged in more positive engagements with teachers. The current study suggests that positive shifts in perceptions of adults in school also encouraged participants to become more engaged in help-seeking behaviours; developed and improved their levels of trust in adults and supported a sense of safety and trust.

In order facilitate this establishment of a new beginning; it may have been helpful for participants to disassociate themselves from experiences of schooling which did not fit with the new beginnings that they endeavoured to carve out for themselves. The polar opposite views of primary and secondary school experiences, which was a common emergence within all interviews, highlighted participants need to locate all of their negative experiences in their primary school settings and contexts whilst attributing more positive experiences to their current secondary school contexts.

Joe described teachers in his primary school setting as "not teaching him properly"; he also described his primary school as a place he experienced as "*hell*" which he "*had to live through*". Maria, expressed feelings of being misunderstood. This was compounded by her perception that she had developed a "*bad reputation*" which, from her perspective resulted in staff members in her primary school treating her unjustly. Similarly, Zack and Asif both expressed regularly feeling that staff in their primary schools did not listen to them and were unfair to them due to their past behaviours. Amina and Anna also rated their secondary school experiences as vastly higher than their collective time in primary school. Both cited having more friends and feeling listened to in their secondary schools as key reasons for these more positive ratings for secondary school.

The idea of perceptions and how these shape experiences and relationships within the school context have been highlighted within this study. Previous studies suggest that pupil's levels of well-being are significantly more impacted by pupil's perceptions of the level and quality of support given than the actual level of support provided (Wethington & Kessler 1986; Ruscinski; Brown & Downer 2018; Jellesma; Zee & Koomen, 2015).

From a psychodynamic perspective, Klein proposed the defence mechanism of splitting which C&YP use to manage anxiety and stress. Coherent splitting entails psychologically and emotionally splitting the objects, i.e. events/people associated with good experiences from ones which they have associated with bad experiences. This can help to understand participants need to locate all of the "bad" into the primary school. Through splitting, children can preserve the "good" aspects and experiences while preserving the self as according to Klein during such times the "self" is dependent upon the split-off "good". Klein makes the link between perception and experiences as Kleinian perspectives on self-defences propose that such defence mechanism were based upon children's

perceptions of threat and their perceived threat of annihilation (Spillus, Garvey, Couve, & Steiner 2011).

Splitting their current from their primary school experiences may have hugely facilitated participants to action and conceptualise their narratives of new beginnings by psychologically defending themselves from their past difficulties and allowing them to start anew.

6.7 *Answering the research question*

This study aimed to answer the question: *What factors contribute to facilitating a successful transition from year 6 to year 7 for pupils with SEMH needs?*

Luxmore (2008; p.11) states that within the school context "*new possibilities can emerge from new relationships*" For the participants of this study the very concept of newness and in the form of a new beginning was a key motivating factor which impacted upon the way that they interacted with their environments.

This study from the onset endeavoured to adopt a critical realist and symbolic integrationist stance as the bases for understanding, exploring and explaining key entities which individuals experience and, base their perceptions upon. Within critical realism, understanding the subjective experiences of pupils with SEMH difficulties entails an examination of the interaction between their objective worlds and their subjective experiences of others. Mean whilst symbolic interactionism reminds us that participants world views and experiences of factors which contribute to a successful transition can be understood as a product of:

- Interactions which take place socially.
- Participant's perceptions which they give to their experiences.

- The meanings which participants give to their experiences.

These factors collectively shape individuals responses and behaviours and together form their experience and realities (Chamberlain-Salaun Mills & Usher, 2013; Aldiabat & Le Navenec, 2011).

The findings of this study concur with the above theoretical stances in that it is theorised that factors which contributed to the facilitation of successful primary to secondary school transitions are understood as consisting of a range of; relational, internal and external processes.

These core categories were:

- *The need for 'early intervention which promotes the development of trusting relationships.'*
- *The need to distance current from primary schooling experiences.'*
- *The need to have a 'sense of choice and agency'.*

Within the theory, factors which are understood to be viewed and theorised as facilitative to participant's experiences of successful transitions are outlined. These facilitative factors are understood to comprise of; internal, external and relational entities. These entities work in an interconnected way, and for some, an interdependent relationship is necessary between them in order to be facilitative. The relationships between the core and facilitative factors is such that each relies upon the process and motion of the other in order to gain and maintain momentum. This momentum contributes greatly to pupils outcomes as they support and facilitate pupils' positive experiences of the factors within the core categories.

The facilitative factors are outlined below:

Relational facilitative factors comprised of:

- Trust
- Feeling heard and understood
- Participants' ways of relating to adults and peers within the school setting.

Internal facilitative factors-comprised of the following:

- Impact of participants having internal locus's of control
- Participants deployment of self-defences
- Participants narrative of a new beginning
- Participants' making positive shifts in their perceptions of; peers, themselves and adults.

External facilitative factors which supported successful transitions emerged as:

- The impact of school-based environmental and contextual factors. These included:
 - Early intervention support.
 - School systems which promoted a sense of equity, fairness and justice.

As outlined in the Findings chapter, factors impacting to facilitate the positive transition experiences of participants were summarised as playing a significant role in facilitating participants to:

- Alter their perceptions of themselves, peers and adults. This allowed for the development of key trusting relationships (primarily addressed through informal intervention).

- Begin to conceptualise and carve out a narrative of a new beginning and act on these accordingly.
- Gain a sense of trust in school policies and procedures.

The clockwork theory will be referred to throughout this discussion.

6.8 Implications for Educational Psychologists and dissemination

This study offers a theoretical and strength-based perspective which is borne from the voice of children with SEMH needs. Within the EP context, research in the area of SEMH needs appears to be developing and growing rapidly. Research on transitions are wide and varied. However, studies which have combined the explorations of SEMH needs to understanding the specifics of supporting transitions from the pupils' perspective is an area which still requires development in comparison to other EP based subject areas. This study contributes to the growing knowledge base of SEMH needs within the EP sector.

Through sharing this theory and the accompanied visual representation of the core categories and facilitative factors EP's are offered a theoretical model explaining the factors that contribute to facilitating successful secondary transitions for pupils with SEMH needs. Through the use of this model EP's can share in the dissemination of the knowledge through:

- Staff training outlining the facilitative factors and how schools are creating and supporting these.
- In light of the EP services becoming traded schools and EPS's negotiate an SEMH audit and service. This could be based upon supporting schools to develop and SEMH tick sheet based upon research findings and begin to actively put support into place to meet the diverse needs.

- Primary and secondary schools would also benefit from the knowledge generated from this study in preparation for managing SEMH needs pre and post-transition.

Other ideas for dissemination include:

- Staff training within EP teams
- Staff training within schools and SEND forums.
- Designing and sharing age-appropriate adapted parts of the information with children as a transition preparation and maintenance resources in years 5, 6, 7 and 8.

6.9 *Limitations*

6.9.1 Sample size, diversity and demographics

The participants of this study comprised of six year 8 pupils over three different secondary schools. All three schools were located within the same areas within a diverse London borough. Although participants reflected a range of races and ethnicities which began to reflected *some* of the demographics of their schools and community, there was still not a comprehensive enough cultural representation in relation to the specific borough where the study took place. It is envisioned that a wider sample would inevitably yield different results as more diverse experiences would be explored to uncover more responses to inform the study.

6.9.2 Impact of types of interview questions compiled.

Through adopting a highly reflective research approach, consideration was given to the possible limitations of researcher devised interview questions and the types of questions compiled. It is therefore important to acknowledge that the type, tone and nature of questions asked in the interview were highly likely to have influenced; the data gathered,

interviewee responses, data analysis, emergent themes and subsequent theory developed within the current study.

6.9.3 Range of needs reflected

A similar observation related to the wide and varied nature of SEMH needs and difficulties. Again participants' presenting challenges were fully respected and understood as unique to each one of them. However, this study does not begin to encapsulate the experiences of pupils with a wide range of SEMH difficulties whom have in spite of these difficulties achieved a successful transition from year 6 to year 7. Which many children struggle with on a daily basis? This leads to consideration of the next limitation of this study being generalisability.

6.9.4 Generalisability

SEMH as a term is highly complex and has many layers. As has been echoed through this study SEMH cannot be understood as existing of a homogeneous nature. Hence as it stands, this study would be difficult to generalise across the pupils identified as experiencing SEMH.

6.9.5 Further studies

Future studies which address the above points would much inform the literature base regarding factors which contribute to facilitating successful transitions for pupils with SEMH needs. For example, this study could be broadened out to:

- Looking at this subject area nationally

- Explore if there are salient facilitative factors based on specific differences such as race, culture and religion.
- Explore what pupils with specific SEMH needs report as facilitative factors for them i.e., what works for pupils with specific overarching challenges such as those who have an eating disorder, those who present with anxiety, those who self-harm, the experiences of children who have been displaced (refugee population and children in care).

6.10 Researcher reflections

The process of conducting this research has helped me greatly to recognise and consider the importance of remaining reflective as a practitioner. As outlined within the rationale for this study, my positioning aligned greatly with my continued and sustained passion for supporting children with SEMH needs. My reasoning for conducting research on this particular subject was also motivated by my past experiences of;

- a) Being a young person who experienced schooling whilst managing SEMH needs .
- b) My experiences of being the often dismayed professional trying to understand at times why these children's needs were not always being met within school contexts.

Through continually engaging at the significant depth required to conduct this study I have gained a far reaching understanding of these pupils' experiences and perceptions.

It was vital for me to ensure that I remained as true to the data and as reflexive a practitioner as I could.

6.11 Conclusions

This study aimed to explore and explain what factors contributed to the facilitation of successful transitions from year 6 to year 7 for pupils with SEMH needs. The study demonstrates that through adopting a grounded theory methodology within the realms of critical realism and symbolic interactionism, fundamental knowledge about the experiences of pupils with SEMH needs can be gained. The study offers extremely valuable insights into the; experiences, views, needs and feelings of a group of young people who experience SEMH challenges. The clockwork model outlines key issues to consider and address when aiming to support the needs of pupils with SEMH needs during the primary to secondary school transition stage. This study also aimed to adopt strength based approach to developing professionals' understanding and perspectives of children with SEMH needs.

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Appendices

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salient axial codes.

Appendix – 1: Search Terms Applied

The following table outlines the search terms used to identify the relevant and reviewed literature.

Search Terms

| SEARCH TERMS | SYNONYMS |
|----------------------|---|
| SEMH | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - or SEMHD - Or Social and emotional mental health <i>or</i> - Or Emotional behavioural disorders <i>or</i> - Or Emotional and behavioural difficulties <i>or</i> - Or EBD - <i>Or</i> Behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. - Or BESD - Or Social Emotional Behavioural Difficulties. - Or SEBD - Or Emotional behavioural disturbance <i>or</i> - Or Emotional disturbance - Or Conduct Behavioural problems - Or conduct Disorders |
| SECONDARY TRANSITION | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Or progression - Or Year 6 transition/year six transition - Or Year 6 to 7 transition - Or move - Or KS3 - Or Key stage 3 |
| CHILDREN | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Or Young people. - Or pupils'. - Or adolescents. - Or students - Or teenagers, - Or Young adults - Or Youth |
| SUCCESSFUL | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Or positive - Or smooth - Or good - Or smooth transition |

The above search terms were then combined and searched with the “AND” option. Further searches were carried out using “Google Scholar”. This led to additional relevant literature. A “snowballing” sampling technique as outlined by Greenhalgh and Peacock (2005) was also adopted. Consequently, references of identified papers led to more relevant papers being sourced.

Appendix 2- Gough's WoE rating criteria.

According to this framework Gough (2007), proposes evidence is weighted as follows;

- WoE – A- Level of 'coherence and integrity' Researchers are encouraged to review the level of *transparency, accuracy, accessibility, and specificity* of the identified literature. This informs judgements around the overall judged quality of the literature.
- WoE- B – Looking more in-depth at and judging how appropriate the identified *method* used within the study is. At this point researchers should judge if they feel the study is fit for purpose in relation to the method used by the authors.
- WoE- C – Level of usefulness and suitability to answering the review question is judged specifically.
- WoE – D – The combined ratings from categories A, B and C are used to determine overall WoE of studies being high, medium or low based upon researchers' judgements.

(Information adapted from Gough 2007, p:11-12)

Appendix 3 - Details of Weight of Evidence Judgments

and application of TAPUPAS for each study included.

| Study | WoE A: Quality of execution of study. | WoE B: Review of appropriateness of method used. | WoE C: Review of focus/approach of study to review question. |
|--------------|--|---|---|
| Tobbel, 2003 | <p>Transparency: Details regarding methodological choice were clear. Selection process of participants not entirely clear. Analytical process clear.</p> <p>Clear reference to appropriate theoretical framework.</p> | <p>Purposivity: The design of this research offers findings based upon data which is in-depth and rich.</p> | <p>Utility: Emphasis upon exploring participant's experiences of transition makes this study hugely relevant to the review question. Factors influencing transition experiences were highlighted thus useful and valid. Explicit links between theoretical frameworks and ideas usefully applied to explaining research findings.</p> |
| | <p>Accuracy Thematic analysis as a methodology used to identify key emerging themes. Quotes from participants were used to evidence and support emerging and discussed themes.</p> | | <p>Propriety Received ethical approval. Clear about ethical considerations.</p> |
| | <p>Accessibility Written in an accessible and well-presented way.</p> | | |
| | <p>Specificity Results may be used to understand needs specific to female populations. This specificity inevitably impacts upon the generalisability of the study as male populations views and experiences are not explored or represented. The</p> | | |

| | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| | large female only sample group may have possibly shaped the themes which emerged. | | |
|--|---|--|--|

| Study | WoE A: Quality of execution of study. | WoE B: Review of appropriateness of method used. | WoE C: Review of focus/approach of study to review question. | |
|----------------------|--|---|--|--|
| Sancho & Cline, 2012 | <p>Transparency: Clear and transparent about adopting a qualitative design.</p> <p>The reader is left unclear about exactly what method of analysis is used (IPA or thematic analysis).</p> | <p>Purposivity: Study ascertained the views of participants using qualitative means. Links were made between participant's feelings of belonging and how this can impact upon transition experiences.</p> | <p>Utility: Highly relevant to review question as within this study factors which promoted a sense of belonging were also identified. Research offers' explanations of how a sound theoretical school of thought (sense of belonging) can be used to explain transition experiences.</p> | |
| | <p>Accuracy Study draw heavily upon existing theoretical approaches of school belonging. Emergent themes identified are reflected supported with direct quotes from participants.</p> | | | <p>Propriety Ethical approval sought and received.</p> |
| | <p>Accessibility Written generally in an accessible and clear way. There appears to be some lack of clarity around whether or not IPA or thematic analysis were used as both are referenced hence causing some confusion for the reader.</p> | | | |
| | <p>Specificity</p> | | | |

| | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| | Date collected pre and post transition taken and recorded. Semi structured interviews were based closely around exploring the specific themes which emerged. Therefore caution should be taken when considering data extracted. | | |
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| Study | WoE A: Quality of execution of study. | WoE B: Review of appropriateness of method used. | WoE C: Review of focus/approach of study to review question. |
|-------------------------|--|--|---|
| Maras & Aveling, (2006) | <p>Transparency: Clarity around using a qualitative study design apparent.</p> <p>Method of analysis clearly outlined,</p> | <p>Purposivity: Views of participant's pre and post transition sought.</p> <p>longitudinal qualitative case study methodology used to effectively support clear and concise data.</p> <p>Areas of concern identified along with details of how these were linked to and/or supported by staff members across settings.</p> | <p>Utility: Study was very relevant to the review question as it specifically included participants with a range of SEN including those with SEMH needs with participants and staff views examined.</p> <p>Propriety: Ethical approval sought and gained.</p> |
| | <p>Accuracy Study identified different approaches being used within different school settings to support positive transitions. Study outcomes based upon YP's experiences and views.</p> | | |
| | <p>Accessibility Accessible language and terminology use throughout with clear definitions of key terms.</p> | | |
| | <p>Specificity Explored specific details about pupils perceptions around transition</p> | | |

| | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| | experiences pre and post transition. | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|--|

| Study | WoE A: Quality of execution of study. | WoE B: Review of appropriateness of method used. | WoE C: Review of focus/approach of study to review question. |
|-----------------------|--|---|--|
| Lyons & Woods, (2012) | <p>Transparency: Makes relevant links to Theoretical frameworks of resilience. Mixed methods approach added additional richness to data.</p> | <p>Purposivity: Explored the impact of an existing transition programme (Transition Pyramid).</p> <p>Utilised a mixed methods approach.</p> | <p>Utility: High relevance to the review question as this study offers a useful source of information about a pre-existing transition programme and its effectiveness in meeting specific SEMH needs.</p> |
| | <p>Accuracy Pre and post measures of participants' social and emotional well-being and social and inter-personal functioning were taken using SDQ scoring (Goodman, 2001). To demonstrate impact through data.</p> | | <p>Propriety Ethical consideration given to selection of participants. A robust three stage selection criteria was adopted to identify appropriate participants with identified needs which meet the purpose of intervention. Use of SDQ (Goodmans, 2001) and Social Competence Inventory measures (SCI Rydell, Hagekull, and Bohlin 1997) applied across whole classes to ensure correct participant profiles adhered to.</p> |
| | <p>Accessibility Study was clear and accessible to the readers. Some background reading relating to Pyramid Programme was required as this was not outlined in the study.</p> | | <p>Ethical approval was sought and gained.</p> |
| | <p>Specificity Exploring the needs of C&YP with specific SEMH needs (anxiety, withdrawal and shyness)..</p> | | |

| Study | WoE A: Quality of execution of study. | WoE B: Review of appropriateness of method used. | WoE C: Review of focus/approach of study to review question. |
|---------------------------|--|--|---|
| Humphrey & Ainscow (2006) | <p>Transparency: Clear theoretical framework appropriately drawn upon.</p> <p>Offers a clear and transparent explanation and rationale for methodology and analytical process and design.</p> | <p>Purposivity: Qualitative data methodology used to gather children's views regarding effectiveness of intervention. Researchers explored these views as points of examination to measure intervention outcomes. analysed</p> | <p>Utility: Triangulation of qualitative focus groups and semi-structured interviews with observations of the group interventions offers findings based upon a highly comprehensive data rich information base.</p> |
| | <p>Accuracy Data appears to be thoroughly analysed. Direct quotes were used to evidence and support qualitative analysis.</p> <p>Attainment was a key component focus of the intervention, therefore quantitative data should have been used to measure attainment as the gathering and analysis of this data would have added value and would have further promoted accuracy.</p> | | <p>Propriety Researchers sought and received ethical approval.</p> |
| | <p>Accessibility Clear and accessible writing style and presentation.</p> | | |
| | <p>Specificity Focus groups <i>and</i> semi-structured interviews used to gather participant's views.</p> | | |

| Study | WoE A: Quality of execution of study. | WoE B: Review of appropriateness of method used. | WoE C: Review of focus/approach of study to review question. |
|---|--|--|---|
| Qualter, Whiteley, Hutchinson & Pope (2007) | <p>Transparency: Study demonstrated the application of a clear theoretical perspective. Quantitative methodology transparent. Comparison and experimental groups studied.</p> <p>Accuracy Reliable and valid measures of self-concept used.</p> <p>Information and details regarding validity and reliability are extremely limited.</p> <p>Study identified that emotional intelligence measures = positive response bias and measures of "Coping" potentially n=biased by level by which teachers are involved with intervention of support. Teachers involvement in the delivery of the intervention may have impacted upon outcomes and participants responses and upon teachers measures based on what they have learned about the pupils and views which they have</p> | <p>Purposivity: Study identified no statistical differences between comparison and experimental groups gender, baseline cognitive abilities and behaviour. Differences identified may have been attributed to curriculum differences and other contextual factors as opposed to response to interventions.</p> | <p>Utility: This study suggests that participants with higher levels of emotional literacy are linked to positive coping skills adopted to manage transitions. Also suggests that interventions aimed specifically at increasing emotional literacy are levels are more effective for pupils with lower baselines and less impactful for those with higher base lines.</p> <p>Propriety Researchers sought and received ethical approval.</p> |

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| | <p>built about pupils. Bias effects therefore need to be considered.</p> <p>Accessibility Accessible but lacks a depth of explanation.</p> <p>Specificity This study does not specify how the relationships between how higher level emotional literacy supports pupils to cope better with transition. More emphasis and evidence from relevant theoretical frameworks would have improved this are.</p> <p>The study also lacked specificity in relation to participant profiles so it was unclear if any of the pupils' included had additional and/or SEN.</p> | | |
| Study | WoE A: Quality of execution of study. | WoE B: Review of appropriateness of method used. | WoE C: Review of focus/approach of study to review question. |
| Bloyce & Frederickson (2012) | <p>Transparency: Study offers details and clarification around researchers ontological positioning which enhances readers understanding of research positioning. Hugely transparent procedure and sampling process.</p> <p>Transparency around the inclusion of vulnerable pupils</p> | <p>Purposivity: Areas which were targeted by the intervention were assessed pre and post with follow up data which added a richness to the data in relation to impact. Study involved the development and evaluative data of a programme designed to promote positive transitions.</p> | <p>Utility: Highly relevant to the review question due to emphasis on intervention aimed at promoting positive transition outcomes for pupils identified as vulnerable.</p> |

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| | <p>apparent as consideration was given to the inclusion of vulnerable pupils In the intervention as opposed to having a matched control group.</p> | | |
| | <p>Accuracy Use of valid, reliable evidenced based measure (SDQ and SCQ).</p> <p>Study offered clarity about potential limitations of using non-equivalent comparison group.</p> | | <p>Propriety Ethical approval sought and received.</p> |
| | <p>Accessibility Clear and assessable writing and presentation.</p> | | |
| | <p>Specificity Study specific to exploring vulnerable sample groups with SEMH needs. Selection process outlined a clear criteria for vulnerability. Non-equivalent comparison group data measured.</p> | | |

| Study | WoE A: Quality of execution of study. | WoE B: Review of appropriateness of method used. | WoE C: Review of focus/approach of study to review question. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Neal, Rice, Ng-Knight, Riglin & Frederickson (2016) | <p>Transparency: Methodological and data collection process transparent, clear and thorough. Selection process transparent</p> | <p>Purposivity: A longitudinal qualitative study aimed to ascertain support mechanisms which contributed to positive transitions for children with SEN.</p> <p>Data collection entailed the use of questionnaires designed specifically to identify whether schools used specialised strategies to support pupils with SEN. Hierarchical regression analysis was adopted in order to ascertain transition strategies used and their association with pupils self-reported anxiety measures.</p> | <p>Utility: Highly relevant to review question with attention given to SEN populations.</p> <p>Study concluded that in comparison to typically developing pupils, pupils with SEN were likely to need differentiated and personalised transition intervention approaches. However, one may argue that all pupils require an element of differentiation in order to ensure system level inclusion across settings.</p> |
| | <p>Accuracy: Longitudinal and large sample size as participants comprised of 861 pupils' (311 male and 310 female) across 9 non-selective secondary schools. SEN participants represented. Anxiety measures used.</p> <p>Of the SEN population the data suggested higher levels of generalised and school anxieties in comparison to typically developing children.</p> | | <p>Propriety: Researchers sought and received ethical approval.</p> |
| | <p>Accessibility: Clear and accessible.</p> | | |
| | <p>Specificity</p> | | |

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| | Dual focussed study based upon exploring transition intervention outcomes and factors which contribute to successful secondary transitions. | | |
|--|---|--|--|

| Study | WoE A: Quality of execution of study. | WoE B: Review of appropriateness of method used. | WoE C: Review of focus/approach of study to review question. |
|-------------------------|--|---|---|
| Evangelous et al (2008) | <p>Transparency Sampling and methodology processes were clear and transparent.</p> <p>More clarification regarding qualitative analysis would have been useful.</p> | <p>Purposivity: Large representative sample group included. Retrospective, longitudinal study within the UK using a mixed methods methodology.</p> <p>Quantitative data via questionnaires addressed to a sample size of 550 year 7 pupils' and 569 parents/guardians of year 7 pupils.</p> | <p>Utility: Highly relevant to review question. Study identified and stipulated five key factors which support successful year 6 to year 7 transitions for pupils. These five factors were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development of friendships and confidence 2. Settling into school life 3. Development of a growing interest in school life and academic tasks 4. Adapting / and adjusting to the new school routines 5. Experiencing continuity of curriculum based tasks. |
| | <p>Accuracy Review of the questionnaires used for the study reveals that they are lengthy and could be more concise to ensure accessibility. Researcher identified key factors which</p> | | <p>Propriety: Researchers sought and received ethical approval.</p> |

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| | <p>predict transition experiences. Links to long term well-being and what impacts upon these.</p> | | |
| | <p>Accessibility Presented as a DCSF document this was easy to navigate with all relevant information referred to in the study included with appendices.</p> <p>Questionnaire devised and used were particularly lengthy. This could impact upon levels by which parents and YP can fully access these. Hard to reach parents were accessed via phone increasing inclusion and accessibility.</p> | | |
| | <p>Specificity Study included a large representative participant sample. 12 pupils who had been identified as having experienced a successful transition from year 6 to year 7 were interviewed using semi-structured interviews. To give a perspective from the professionals involved these pupil's teachers were also interviewed at this point.</p> | | |

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|-------|---------------------------------------|--|------------------|
| Study | WoE A: Quality of execution of study. | WoE B: Review of appropriateness of method used. | WoE C: Review of |
|-------|---------------------------------------|--|------------------|

| | | | focus/approach of study to review question. |
|--|---|--|--|
| Gillison, Standage & Skevington (2008) | Transparency Procedures around process of analysis were transparent. | Purposivity: Researcher explored changes in QoL and shifts in satisfaction of need measure. | Utility: Measures of QoL and satisfaction of needs within the same study allows for a more holistic and comprehensive look at effects of transition for participants. |
| | Accuracy Reliable and evidenced based QoL and satisfaction of needs measures collected and used to greatly inform outcomes. Needs satisfaction measures questionnaire adapted from adult version to accommodate and be fit for purpose with use with C&YP. Generalisability of the study is somewhat limited due to the participant sample size. | | Propriety: Researchers sought and received ethical approval. |
| | Accessibility Too much emphasis specifically upon one year 7 group of participants indicates possibility of lack of generalisability across samples. | | |
| | Specificity Quality of Life (QoL) and Satisfaction of needs measures looked at to measure impact of transition. | | |

| Study | WoE A: Quality of execution of study. | WoE B: Review of appropriateness of method used. | WoE C: Review of focus/approach of study to review question. |
|--|--|--|---|
| West et al (2010) | Transparency Sampling and analysis process transparent. | Purposivity: Longitudinal study spanning over 10 years. Study adopts a holistic approach to the child which supports the emphasis on eco-systemic approaches outlined within and influencing the current study. | Utility: Highly relevant to lit review question. |
| | Accuracy Measures used reliable and valid. | | Propriety: Researchers sought and received ethical approval. |
| | Factors which predict transition experiences and long term well-being identified through comprehensive and appropriate analysis. | | |
| | Accessibility Paper was accessible to readers with much information reflecting the scope and length of the study. | | |
| Specificity The longitudinal nature of the study also meant that the researchers were able to carry out extensively follow ups in ways which added to the richness of data. | | | |

| Study | WoE A: Quality of execution of study. | WoE B: Review of appropriateness of method used. | WoE C: Review of focus/approach of study to review question. |
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|------------------------|---|---|--|
| Bailey & Baines (2012) | <p>Transparency Theoretical perspective used was clear and relevant. Methodology used and steps taken were transparent and outlined.</p> | <p>Purposivity: As this was a longitudinal quantitative design risk and resilience factors were explored both pre and post transitions.</p> <p>Study gave insights into participant's process during transitions as well as transition outcomes.</p> | <p>Utility Very relevant to the literature review question as this study specifically looks at how different risk and resilience factors impact upon participant's level of school adjustment and identifies protective factors which may support positive and successful secondary school transitions.</p> |
| | <p>Accuracy Evidenced based measures used to measure resilience and school adjustment levels.</p> | | <p>Propriety: Researchers sought and received ethical approval.</p> |
| | <p>Accessibility Written in a clear and understandable way.</p> | | |
| | <p>Specificity Theories of resilience utilised to specifically explore transition experiences in relation to impact upon transition.</p> | | |

| Study | WoE A: Quality of execution of study. | WoE B: Review of appropriateness of method used. | WoE C: Review of focus/approach of study to review question. |
|---|--|--|---|
| Rice, Frederickson, Shelton, McManus, Riglin & Ng-Knight (2016) | <p>Transparency Triangulated approach adopted. Transparency around methodological tools and approaches used. Data collected at different stages of the study. 2000 pupils within UK schools followed during transition.</p> | <p>Purposivity: Study eventually resulted in the "School Transition Adjustment Research Study" (STAR) (University College London (UCL) (Rice et al 2016).</p> | <p>Utility: Highly relevant to review question as study aimed to identify factors which predict successful or challenging transitions to secondary school. However, although useful, this study was not focussed specifically upon the needs of the SEMH populations.</p> <p>Results from this study indicated other key factors influencing the</p> |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| | | | <p>level of secondary transition success as; Parental influences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lower levels of parental concern ➤ Supportive, involved and emotionally warm parenting ➤ Sustained and consistent friendship groups |
| | <p>Accuracy Questionnaires and Social-cognitive-maps (Cairns, Perrin & Cairns, 1985) were also used to gain pupils' perspectives and identify peer group dissemination and social affiliations amongst pupil participants within the school context. Questionnaires enquired about pupils' academic achievements, friendships and perspectives of teachers. Through collecting data from school staff, parents and pupils data to inform this study was collected through the adoption of a triangulated approach. This fundamentally promotes a systemic exploration of pupils' secondary transitions.</p> | | <p>Propriety: Researchers sought and received ethical approval. Factors relevant to social economic status (SES), race and ethnicity, EAL (English as an Additional Language) and gender were also taken into account during participant recruitment enhancing inclusivity.</p> |
| | <p>Accessibility Development of concise and well-presented STAR research study with useful and relevant links to appendices</p> | | |

| | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| | makes this very accessible. | | |
| | Specificity Looked at the experiences and needs of general school population using a large sample size. Did not look specifically at SEMH needs. Explored parent staff and pupils views. | | |

Appendix 4- Table outlining rationale for weight of evidence ratings.

| Author/s year | Rating for Soundness of study. | Rating for Review specific: Appropriateness of design rating. | Rating for Review specific: Appropriateness of focus/approach. | Rating for Overall weight of evidence. |
|---|--------------------------------|---|--|--|
| Tobbel, 2003 | High | Medium | High | High |
| Sancho & Cline, 2012 | Low | Medium | High | Medium |
| Maras & Aveling, (2006) | High | High | High | High |
| Lyons & Woods, (2012) | High | High | High | High |
| Neal, Rice, Ng-Knight, Riglin & Frederickson (2016). | High | High | High | High |
| Humphrey & Ainscow (2006) | Medium | Medium | Medium | Medium |
| Qualter, Whiteley, Hutchinson & Pope (2007) | Medium | Medium | Medium | Medium |
| Bloyce & Frederickson (2012) | High | High | High | High |
| Evangelous et al (2008) | High | High | High | High |
| Gillison, Standage & Skevington (2008) | Medium | Medium/low | Medium | Medium |
| West et al, 2010 | High | High | High | High |
| Bailey & Baines (2012) | High | High | High | High |
| Rice, Frederickson, Shelton, McManus, Riglin & Ng-Knight (2016) | High | High | High | High |

Appendix 5: Appendix 5: Interview topic outline and questions.

BROAD TOPIC GUIDE

- Interviewer introduction with a reminder of the reason for interviews.
- Reminder of right to opt out of study at anytime.
- Interviewer safeguarding disclosure details to explain the process should participant express they are being hurt or mistreated by anyone or mistreating anyone themselves.
- Opportunity for the participant to ask questions of clarity before interviews preceded.
- Key relationships supporting needs and transition periods.
- YP's concept of self and school community member.
- Particularly challenging periods within the transition stage from primary to secondary and how these were supported.
- Advice that YP would give to a peer with similar or different SEMH needs to help them have a successful transition from primary to secondary school?
- Advice that YP would give to adults including parents/carers and key school staff members who are aiming to support YP with similar or different SEMH needs to help them have a successful transition from primary to secondary school?
- Key people and things which helped to make the transitional period smoother
What did they do/say/offer which supported the process?
- What support does interviewee feel they did not have but may have been helpful?
- Anything else which has not been asked but interviewee finds relevant.
- Questions/ areas to clarify (interviewer)
- Questions / areas to clarify (interviewee)
- Down time activity/ game activity to support interviewee to re-calibrate following interview process.

| Young Person Interview Schedule/Topic Guide/Sample interview questions. | | |
|---|---|--|
| Item No* | Question | Follow up/ prompt |
| 1. | Before attending the (School name), who were the adults that supported you with your learning? | |
| 2. | Can you tell me a bit about your experiences of schools before you started attending (insert school name)? | What was Primary/school like? |
| 3. | Can you tell me a bit about your initial experiences of starting at (insert school name) in year 7? | |
| 4. | What do you think staff members at (insert current school name) have done/do to help you to manage your SEMH needs and help you to achieve? | Key staff roles? Parental input? peer support? |
| 5. | Can you tell me a bit about any relationships which you feel were/are important and help to support you IN SECONDARY SCHOOL? | |

| | | |
|-----|---|---|
| 6. | How if at all did these relationships impact upon or support your transition from primary to secondary. relationships are a key element? This assumption has come from me and not through the grounded theory process! Do I remove or reword? | What do you think would have been different if you did not have these relationships at that time. |
| 7. | What ways do you feel the (insert school name) staff supported you during your transition from primary to secondary? | can you give me an example/ can you tell me how |
| 8. | Do you feel that there were particular times which were more difficult during the change from primary to secondary school? | If yes, could you tell me how/ when/ and why? Main challenges. |
| 9. | What or who helped you to manage these challenges? | How? |
| 10. | Can you tell me how you feel about your school secondary school experience so far? | |
| 11. | How has being at (insert school name) helped you to grow and develop as a student/learner? | |
| 12. | Can you tell me a bit about how you see your role, (yourself) within the school community? | |
| 13. | What elements have shaped your role and how you see yourself as a member of your school community? | |
| 14. | What advice would you give to a child who is now in year six and has experienced similar difficulties to you to help them have a successful transition to secondary school? | |
| 15. | To help them have a successful transition to secondary school what advice would you give to adults Staff and family members who are currently aiming to prepare a year six child who sometimes finds things tricky or who may have experienced similar difficulties to you? | |
| 16. | Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your experience of transitioning from primary to secondary school and what helped you to settle in? Is there anything not mentioned which may have helped you even more? | If yes, could you explain a bit more, please |

Appendix 6: Parent information sheet

Parent/Guardian Information Sheet

Research Project Title:

How can students with SEMH needs be supported to achieve and experience a successful transition to secondary school?

June 2018 – July 2019

Who am I?

Hello, my name is Marisha Grant. I am currently a university student who is training to be an Educational Psychologist. Educational Psychologists are people who work with children and young people to help find out what helps them with their learning. To help me to do this I would like to do some research in your school. The research is supported by The Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust and has been given approval and permission by the ethical board (If you would like more information about my ethical permission and the ethical board I am happy to discuss this further with you).

Why am I doing this research project?

I would like to find out how to help young people who have SEMH needs and who have an (SEMH EHCP) to transition happily and smoothly from primary school to secondary school. I would therefore like to hear your child's opinions on what they think helped to support their journey from primary to secondary school and what help would have been most useful to them during the change from primary to secondary school.

What will happen if you consent to your child taking part in the project?

I would visit your child at school and invite him or her to take part in semi-structured interviews. The interviews will last for about 45 – 50 minutes. I will use an audio recorder to record the interviews. Interviews will be anonymised. This ensures that your child's name or any personal details will not be mentioned in the final report and all the information that your child shares will be confidential. Only I will listen to the recordings of the interviews.

What do you need to do if you are happy for your child to take part in this research project?

If you are happy to give consent for your child to take part in this research project and if your child also agrees that it is something that they are happy to do. Please complete the attached consent form and return it to the school (INSERT KEY STAFF MEMBERS NAME AND ROOM NUMBER). You can also email me if you have any further questions. The deadline for taking part in the project is 31st October 2018.

What do you need to do if you don't want to take part?

If you do not want to take part in the research then that is also perfectly fine. Taking part in the study is totally voluntary. Also, if you choose to take part, but later change your mind, please rest assured that this is also ok. You can opt out at any time, even once the interviews have started. The main thing is that you feel comfortable and safe to talk with me.

Will you be notified of what I find?

Once I have completed all my interviews, I will write it up in a report. I will then send you a summary of my findings for you to read. The research will be complete in July 2019. Please be assured that your child's name and any personal details will not be included in the report.

Additional information

The information which I get from the interviews will be kept safely and will be protected under the Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust and University of Essex Data protection Acts. This ensures that we are abiding by legal requirements to keep any data safe and to not share data to external bodies. Your child's information will be kept safe and secure.

In the event of your child sharing sensitive information with the researcher which is about him or her or anyone that they know being at risk of harm or danger, the researcher will share such information with the schools safeguarding lead (INSERT SAFE GURADING LEADS NAME). Who will contact you as is required in order to safeguard your child.

If you, you're child or the head of school have any concerns about the behaviour of the researcher or are worried about anything related to the research project you are all advised to contact the head of quality assurance at the Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust. His name is Simon Carrington and he can be contacted at academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk

If you have any questions please don't hesitate to email me at
Marisha.Grant@walthamforest.gov.uk
Thank you for your time

Appendix 6: Participant information sheet.

Participants Information Sheet

Research Project Title: Hello there we need your help!

Who am I?

Hi, my name is Marisha Grant. I am currently a university student who is training to be an Educational Psychologist. Educational Psychologists are people who work with children and young people to help find out what helps them with their learning.

Why am I doing this research project?

I would like to find out how to help young people who have SEMH needs to transition happily and smoothly from primary school to secondary school. I would therefore like to hear your opinions on what you think helped to support your journey from primary to secondary school and what help would have been most useful to you during the change from primary to secondary school. I would like to know what advice you would give the adults around you which would help to support you and other young people make the jump from primary to secondary school. I would like to hear your thoughts and opinions.

What will happen if you choose to take part?

I would like to visit you at school and invite you to take part in interviews. The interviews will last about 45 – 50 minutes. I will use an audio recorder to record the interviews. Interviews will be anonymised. This means that your name or any personal details will not be mentioned in the final report and all the information you share will be confidential. Only I will listen to the recordings of the interviews.

What do you need to do if you want to take part?

It is entirely up to you whether or not you choose to take part. However, if you do choose to be involved then I hope you will find the experience beneficial. If you would like to take part you can let (INSERT KEY STAFF MEMBERS NAME AND ROOM NUMBER) know and they will inform me. You can also email me if you have any further questions. There is a consent form that I will give you to complete once I have been notified of your interest to take part. The deadline for taking part in the project is 31st October 2018.

What do you need to do if you don't want to take part?

If you do not want to take part in the research then that is also perfectly fine. Taking part in the study is totally voluntary. Also, if you choose to take part, but later change your mind, please rest assured that this is also ok. You can opt out at any time, even once the interviews have started. The main thing is that you feel comfortable and safe to talk with me.

Will you be notified of what I find?

Once I have completed all my interviews, I will write it up in a report. I will then send you a summary of my findings for you to read. The research will be complete in July 2019. Please be assured that your name and any personal details will not be included in the report.

Appendix 7: Consent forms/parent and child.

Research Project Title:
**How can students with SEMH needs be supported to achieve and experience a
 successful transition to secondary school?**
2018 -2019

If you are happy to participate, please complete this consent form and return to
 The school.

For additional information please contact: Marisha.Grant@walthamforest .gov.uk

Yes No

I have read and understood the information leaflet about the research and understand that this is a research project.

I am happy to be interviewed, and I understand that interviews will be audio recorded.

I understand that if any of my words are used in reports or presentations, no one will know it is me.

I understand that I can withdraw from the project at any time and that if I choose to do this, any data/information that I have given and no details about me will be used in the study.

I understand that I can contact Marisha Grant at any time and have been given contact details for Marisha Grant.

I understand that the results will be shared with me when the research is finished.

I understand that in the event of me sharing sensitive information with the researcher which is about me or anyone I know being at risk of harm or danger, the researcher will share such information with my schools safeguarding lead, as is required in order to safeguard me and keep me safe.

Name _____

Signed _____

Date _____

Appendix 7: Consent forms/parent and child.

Research Project Title:
 How can students with SEMH needs be supported to achieve and experience a
 successful transition to secondary school?
 2018 -2019

If you are happy for your child to participate, please complete this consent form and return to

The school.

Yes No

For additional information please contact: Marisha.Grant@walthamforest.gov.uk

I have read and understood the information leaflet about the research and understand that this is a research project.

I am happy to for my child to be interviewed, and I understand that interviews will be audio recorded.

I understand that if any of my child's words are used in reports or presentations, their identities and school setting will remain fully confidential.

I understand that my child can withdraw from the project at any time and that I can also withdraw my child at any time. If I or my child chooses to do so no data collected from my child will be used for the study with no details about my child used in the study.

I understand that I can contact Marisha Grant at any time and have been given contact details for Marisha Grant.

I understand that the results will be shared with me when the research is finished.

I understand that in the event of my child sharing sensitive information with the researcher which is about them or anyone they know being at risk of harm or danger, the researcher will share such information my child's schools safeguarding lead, as is required in order to safeguard my child and keep him/her safe.

 Name _____

Signed _____

Date _____

Research Project Title:
How can students with SEMH needs be supported to achieve and experience a
successful transition to secondary school?
2018 -2019

If you are happy to participate, please complete this consent form and return to
The school.

For additional information, please speak to: Your school inclusion leader who will
contact Marisha Grant for you.

Yes No

I have read and understood the information leaflet about the research and understand that
this is a research project.

I am happy to be interviewed, and I understand that interviews will be audio
recorded.

I understand that if any of my words are used in reports or presentations, no
one will know it is me.

I understand that I can withdraw from the project at any time and that if I choose
to do this, any data/information that I have given and no details about me will be
used in the study.

I understand that I can contact Marisha Grant at any time and
have been given contact details for Marisha Grant.

I understand that the results will be shared with me when the
research is finished.

I understand that in the event of me sharing sensitive information
with the researcher which is about me or anyone I know being at
risk of harm or danger, the researcher will share such information
with my schools safeguarding lead, as is required in order to
safeguard me and keep me safe.

Name _____

Signed _____

Date _____

Appendix 8: Interview with Joe.

Interview

Joe (Pseudonym) Year 8

R=Researcher

I=Interviewee (Joe)

1. R-So Joe the first thing I'd like to know is can you tell me about some of the difficulties you
2. experienced in school your experience of school so far? Your experience of school in general.
3. I: Can you describe some of your difficulties that you have had in school? What you've
4. experienced in school?
5. J: Not being able to walk around, not being parts of other groups outside like always being
6. inside.
7. I: Mmmmmhmmm
8. J: Like Having to leave early, having to miss lessons getting to lesson late leaving early so
9. missing out on important learning. But so yeah.
10. I: Can you tell me more about why you had to leave lessons and why you couldn't walk
11. around? Just because I don't know anything about your experience or what you have gone
12. through. Why were you having to leave lessons and miss lesson?
13. J Ahhh yeah! So I...I had a problem with my legs. Ahhhh they use to just go.
14. I: Ummmmhmmmm I see.
15. J: I'd be able to walk but couldn't feel it. So like like you could poke it or scratch it and I
16. wouldn't feel it. So I couldn't really walk around. So yeah I couldn't feel anything in my legs
17. and sometimes I couldn't walk around . And it was all because my uncle, he passed away in
18. year 5 for.....and it really upset my cousin, and it upset me as well . And because I didn't talk
19. about it I just kept it in and it started building up. And because I didn't talk about it, it
20. affected my whole body so I wasn't able to properly walk... so yeah.
21. I: Can you tell me more about how it affected you? So I understand that you couldn't walk
22. and you had to leave early sometimes. And that you were experiencing feeling really upset
23. about your uncle passing away.
24. J: yeah
25. I: Can you tell me more about how that all affected the way you were in school? like your
26. relationships with your friends?.
27. J: So..... I I had a friend Leo, and he was in my primary school since year one. He helped me
28. out a lot. He use to help me out. He used to leave class early with me and everything, so that
29. used to help me out. So that was good so at lease I knew that he was there. He understood.
30. And he understood. And at some point he came here when I was talking to Mr L..
31. I: So leo (pseudonym) came to this school as well with you in year 7? So you and Leo came to
32. this school at the same time
33. J: Yeah...we're in the same class so at least I knew him
34. I: Oh okay.
35. J: and he would always understand what happened and he knows if I'm annoyed or upset or
36. whatever. And he always asks. So, but yeah. So and with other people it just kinda went
37. down because.....so usually when you're talking with friends out in the playground and I
38. would just be sitting in the classroom just chatting. You know other people are just sitting
39. down in the class room just chatting.
40. I: So you say with other people it just went down? Can you tell me more about that?
41. J: So errr probably at the start of year seven it was (Paused) it was good cause it was like
42. new class, new people so you get to know more people but then when that happened it... I

43. didn't talk to anyone I would just leave. And I just wanted to be outside.
44. An now it's like, so you've got popular groups and you've got normal groups. I'm more
45. towards the normal group so like I've got a few friends and that. And you've got like all the
46. popular ones that know everyone around the school
47. I: So how do you see yourself around the school as a school member?
48. J: I'm good, getting better so it's like fine
49. I: How are your legs?
50. J: they're fine. Yeah cause I've been speaking to Mr L a lot. Cause when I first started here they told me that I can talk to all of the adults and I can go and find Mr L if I feel worried or things like that. Yeah and they told my mum and dad that as well.
51. I: Good!
52. J: So and yeah
53. I: So you say that when your uncle passed away it affected your walking and your legs.
54. Urrmmm how else did it affect you in schools so I'm hearing that you had some problems,
55. cause you couldn't socialise as much.
56. J: Ummmhmmm
57. I: You were indoors at playtime so you couldn't. Is that what you mean?
58. J: Yeah
59. I: Yeah I understand that. Sounds like you had one friend who would help you and he came to secondary school with you. And this started in year 5 did it? Your legs?
60. J: No. My uncle passed away in year 5 and this started in year 7 my legs. Because I think I
61. was quiet nervous moving to the new school. I hated my primary school. Cause I got bullied
62. for a long time. I didn't like it I wanted to move schools
63. I: Ummhmmmm
64. J: but my mum was like "no you've only got a year left" "you might as well get through like
65. the year and SATs and stuff" in your primary school
66. I: yeah I see
67. J: cause then you only have to do a year.
68. I: Okay
69. J: So...I lived through that and then I came here. But I...I was living with like not speaking
70. about my uncle,
71. I: oh because of not talking about it?
72. J: Yeah
73. I: So so you say in primary school you got bullied?
74. J:Ummhmmmm
75. I: How did you react to that? How did you respond to that in primary school?.....how did you manage it? Sounds like a tough situation.
76. J: Errrrr Yeah...I didn't tell my parents at first.
77. I:Okay
78. J: Cause otherwise people would call you snitch and snitch and it would just make it worse
79. so I kept it to myself quite a bit and then my Mum and Dad found out like errr like I just stop
80. talking I wasn't talking and I would just be upset.
81. I: So you would just shut down and not talk?
82. J: Yeah. I'd just be upstairs in my room all the time just doing I dunno just not talking just
83. staying there and watch TV.
84. I: Just feeling really quiet sad?
85. J: Ummmmhmmmm
86. J: And like they'd ask me what's wrong and I'd say ahhh these people are being mean to me
87. they'd punch me and they'd call me names.
88. I: They were actually hurting you?
89. J:Yeah they'd start swearing at me and start calling me names and throwing things at me and

90. everything. So then after they were like we'll go to school and we'll go talk like with the head
 91. teacher and like tell them what happened. But they did nothing. It just continued,
 92. continued, continued ahhhh (pause). And like even me and my cousin were getting bullied
 93. but by year 6 my cousin was like with them.
 94. I: your cousin was bullying you too?
 95. J: No. But like he he just started being friends with them.
 96. I: That must have been tough for you. How was that for you? Relationship changes.
 97. J: Yeah. It was kind of annoying cause I don't get it cause they bullied you but you just wanna
 98. be friends and that. (SPEAKING ABOUT COUSIN) And he's still even close with one of the bullies
 99. now. He still close and
 100. wants to be like their friends. And errr and every time my cousin calls me I'm like in the
 101. background I turn off the call and when he calls me I'm like why? what the? And I
 102. say that stuff to him and everything.
 103. I: Ummmmhmmmm. Cause you're annoyed?
 104. J: like yeah and I really don't like him, so yeah.
 105. I: Okay
 106. J: So
 107. I: So when you were in primary school what sort of things helped? How did you
 108. manage with staff because you say when you were in primary school you feel like
 109. they took no notice or didn't listen or notice when you got bullied. How did you
 110. respond to them (The adults in school), did you ever get into trouble? How did you
 111. manage being in a school that you feel didn't seem to care that you were being
 112. bullied?
 113. J: I think I just tried to ignore it I did try and like talk to other people but no one
 114. would like listen so I just ignored it cause they didn't really do anything and I didn't
 115. really do anything. I just ignored but I didn't really do anything. I just like stayed out
 116. of their way.
 117. I: So like you know when some people are stressed out? They can either close and
 118. go inside themselves, and go quiet or they can lash out sounds like... well what
 119. would you say you were doing?
 120. J: At times it was kind of both. So like when... there was a time when errrr one of the
 121. bullies came to and just came and started kicking and punching me and I was like
 122. why? And errrm I think I he was like your ugly, your stupid anyway and he started
 123. hitting me and I got up and like full on punched him and then I started like punching
 124. and kicking him and the teachers they like they just stopped it and and still they
 125. didn't even want to do anything. So it wasn't, dealt with.... It felt good but I was just doing
 126. it to
 127. let it out.
 128. I: did you get into trouble afterwards?
 129. J: No
 130. I: You didn't? did you get told off a lot in school?
 131. J: No. Honestly when I did it felt quiet embarrassing . But cause like my mum and
 132. dad always says if like someone punches you you do it back to them like you won't
 133. get in trouble cause you're just defending yourself so that's probably why (pause).
 134. I: So you don't like getting into trouble because of the embarrassment of getting into
 135. trouble.
 136. J: Yeah cause like, the teachers do it in front of them but in secondary school no one
 137. cares if you get into trouble.
 138. I: Okay thanks that's useful thanks Joe. So some of the difficulties that you had in
 primary school were you experienced being bullied and it felt like the staff didn't
 listen to you about that?

139. J: Yeah
140. I: Errm it sounds like these were the things that didn't help in primary school?
141. J: No didn't help.. they didn't
142. I: Those were things that didn't help. Was there anything which did help in primary
143. school? That helped with some of those feelings that you had? Because you said
144. before that you were worried about coming to secondary school.
145. J: Yeah... I was worried but just cause it was new people like I knew I'd be coming to
146. new people but its ahhhh, I felt better coming to this school because even-though
147. it's new people I like see more people so it's not like it's just sixty people there is like
148. nearly 200 people in different forms and you get to mix with them.
149. I: Ummhmmmm
150. J: So when you do your lessons we are all the same eerrr year but it's just that it's
151. different people so you actually talk to people more.
152. I: Right okay
153. J: Like in year 7 I didn't talk to anyone cause I was like split class N, F and P my class
154. had lessons together and the others were spilt.
155. I: So are you saying that you prefer it now because you get access to more people
156. J: Ummhmmmm yeah
157. I: Where as before it was the same year six class all of the time all day and every day?
158. J: Yeah and it's just your class in year six constantly and it gets really boring at times.
159. I: Ummm hmmm
160. J: Especially like when okay so say when you're doing a test.
161. I: Ummm hmmm
162. J: You're like always with the same class. You've been with them for 7 years. So say
163. you're like doing a test you finish your test you put your paper down you put your
164. pen down and you lay on the desk. Like then people will start throwing things at you
165. or poking you and then sometimes they try to copy down your answers and they will
166. try to get you in trouble and not them.
167. I: I see, so do you find it easier to manage being in
168. school when you're mixing with more people not just the same 30 or 60 people?
169. J: Yeah
170. I: Is that about having more of a choice? What do you think it's about? Or is it better
171. because you can mix with a wider range of people because there is more people to
172. choose from?
173. J: Errrr I think being split off. Like when you're mixed with more other people you
174. have more chance of like meeting new friends and meeting other people. Also it
175. would be....it'll be less trouble cause you would want to work yeah in like secondary
176. school. Like in primary all they did I'd tell you this and tell you that you do SATS and
177. You're with the same people from reception to year 6.
178. I: Sounds like you were pretty frustrated about being stuck with the same people
179. from reception all the way through to year 6.
180. J: Yeah so I always used to beg my parents and say like can I move school? Can I
181. move schools, or even can I be home schooled instead like can you get someone to
182. like just come round and try to teach me
183. I: Ahhh yeah so you wanted your parents to do that
184. J: Yeah like I didn't want to go in
185. I: Ahhh so you didn't want to go to school?
186. J: No I didn't
187. I: Can you tell me more about that?
188. J: I used to fake being sick like just to stay away, just to not go to school. Like many
189. times I used to fake being sick like I think my parents even knew I was faking but I

190. just continued it.
191. I: Have you done that since you've been here at this school
192. J: No
193. I: and do you feel like doing it here
194. J: No
195. I: Okay so tell me more about the difference then. You got here in year 7 when you
196. are looking back and you think "okay I'm in year 7" and you were in year 6 feeling
197. not quite happy there, and feeling like you didn't want to go in everyday and then
198. you get here to this school in year 7 what was the difference for you?
199. J: Pause
200. I: I know you are saying there are more children so you're mixing with more people
201. and you're split them eventually when you get to year 8? So you're spilt up for most
202. lessons. What felt better for you in year 7?
203. J: Errrrm it's a fresh start. Like people say new year like new leaf and everything
204. I: Yeah
205. J: That's why when you change schools it's a new start. Like in primary you change
206. from year 1 to year 2 or year 5 to year 6 but it's the same people every year so it's
207. not really new. The same people they may have grown a bit, they may have changed
208. a bit but they're still the same people. But when going from year 6 to year 7 it felt
209. really good because at least I knew no one from my old school was coming here
210. aside from Leo, so I was happy about that I was....because I didn't wanna have to
211. deal with it again. My mum wanted to send me to (SCHOOL NAME
212. OMMITED).....the catholic school, just but everyone went there.
213. I: Every one from your primary school went there to the catholic school ?
214. J: Yeah everyone
215. I: Ahhh right
216. J: Most of them went there some people went to (SCHOOL NAME OMMITED) or
217. SCHOOL NAME OMMITED) school. My cousin went to (SCHOOL NAME OMMITED) by
218. it was everyone else went to (SCHOOL NAME OMMITED) and I was like I'm not
219. gonna deal with that so I came to this school and the deal was you do your
220. confirmation and then you can go to this school.
221. I: Okay
222. J: If you don't do it you have to got to (SCHOOL NAME OMMITED) and I didn't wanna
223. have to go there.
224. I: Okay so you did it specifically to get into this school?
225. J: Yeah
226. I: So it was your choice to come here
227. J: Yeah my choice. Because no one else was coming here apart from Leo so the bullies
228. weren't coming here. And this school felt right for me cause my next door neighbour
229. he goes to this school and he was like in year 11 but he said yeah it's a good school
230. and like "and we do this and we do that" and like its more people so you get more
231. friends to hang out with and everything and even in year 7 if you don't make that
232. many friends in year 8 you mix with more people and you make more friends 100
233. percent you make more friends. But when I went to visit (SCHOOL NAME OMMITED)
234. it didn't feel like a good school for me.
235. I: So you went for school visits?
236. J: Yeah in year 5 and 6
237. I: And did that help you to choose this school?
238. J: Yeah
239. I: What else happened or what else did your primary school do to help you when
240. you were thinking about new secondary schools?

241. J: They said they would talk to them
242. I: They said they would talk to the secondary school
243. J: Yeah.....but they said they'd talk to the, the bullies but they didn't.
244. I: Oh okay. So when you came to this school what was it that you were mainly
245. worried about ?
246. J: I think I was worried about how people would look at me, cause honestly there I
247. was I was quiet fat in primary school I was quiet fat because I wasn't doing a lot. But
248. now I do football, life guarding, more football and other things during the week.
249. I: So you were worried about how people would see you? In terms of what you
250. looked like and your image and things like that?
251. J: Yeah but it went away
252. I: When did that worry go away?
253. J: After I started I felt better cause I was actually talking to people and people just
254. didn't be like ahh no you're fat don't come
255. I: What they did or didn't say that?
256. J: They didn't. They were just like ahhh come they were just talking and everything
257. they weren't just saying rude stuff and I felt like ahh these are the right people.
258. I: Mmmmmhmmmm
259. J: Like they're not judging you
260. I: Mmmmmhmmmm
261. J: Like but throughout year 7 and year 8 I started losing a lot more weight like from
262. before if you saw a picture I had like really chubby cheeks and that's when like I
263. knew I was a bit fat I was a bit fat
264. I: You think you were?
265. J: Yeah but and like other people in primary school said ahh like you're fat you're fat
266. I: Were those the bullies who were saying that?
267. J: Yeah so I would just stop eating stuff and things
268. I: So one of the ways they bullied you was by saying that you were fat and calling
269. you fat?
270. J: Yeah so that's why I probably didn't, that's why I thought I was and my mum and
271. dad would be like you're not fat you're not fat cause like you're a normal average
272. boy and there's nothing wrong with you.
273. I: Mmmmmhmmmm
274. J: But I was like I'm weird and not average so I took more awareness from that so I
275. just started losing more weight
276. I: Did you do that deliberately?
277. J: Yeah cause I wanted to be better for when I came to secondary school. I didn't
278. want people to look at me and be like awww look his fat and and really big and
279. everything so I did start losing weight now I'm actually quiet....I'm not really big
280. cause like my front used to be like that a bit use to come out a bit (MOTIONS
281. OUTWARDS FROM TUMMY) like so I use to have a bit of a stomach it used to come
282. out a bit but now it's flat now.
283. I: Gosh it sounds like you did a lot of thinking about a lot of things before you came
284. to secondary school.
285. J: Yeah
286. I: Sounds like you were worried about a lot of things happening to you when you got
287. to secondary school?
288. J: Yeah
289. I: If you think about the things that you thought were going to happen to you did any
290. of them happen when you got to secondary school?
291. J: No

292. I: No?
293. I: Did you have any challenges when you got to year 7? What sort of things did you struggle with?
- 294.
295. J: I think seeing how the teachers talk was probably different cause seeing how they talk and how I was taught in primary. Cause what I saw was there was some ways that I was taught in primary that when I got here it was different... like my primary didn't teach me properly and it was wrong the way they taught me like 100 percent wrong like they taught me the wrong way of doing it cause we didn't do enough science we didn't do enough RE we just did English and sometimes we'd spend a whole day doing English and only have like 20 minutes of maths.
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302. I: Did you like English?
303. J: Nah I prefer maths but I was put in the bottom set and I did ask the teacher I said Miss can I move up a stage cause the work was too easy and I was like flying through it and I didn't like understand why I was in that set because I was a lot smarter than some of the people in the top set and there was a trip a five day trip and they was like after the trip you can move up a set and I didn't get moved, they didn't move me up and I stayed there for the whole time and I did keep asking like kept asking to be moved up and like they didn't they never moved me up I stayed in the same set all the time.
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311. I: So how were your relationships with the adults? When in primary school?
312. J: Well they didn't do what they said they were gonna do so basically when my mum and dad told them I was being bullied, there was this deputy head and he said he'd talk to them and obviously if you talk to them and say ahh you're being bullies they are just gonna lie and say no and all that. And then basically there was they had this meeting and the deputy head said ahh you're being bullies and he was like so what happened? And I was like they're bullying me and everything so he asked what's been going on. And he said okay just... and then they told him..... they said yeah we did do this and we did do that but we were just playing and I was like no they're really not and I was like they keep punching me swearing at me and all that and they're like okay I'll punish them like and I was like okay.....but then like they didn't do anything they didn't do it...
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323. I: So you don't think that they were or have been punished
324. J: No they didn't they just said don't do it again unless you wanna be kicked out but they kept doing it and they never got kicked out. And then also moving here I didn't have any trust in anyone cause I didn't trust them in primary cause they kept not doing anything...
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- 327.
328. I: So when you got here what was difficult for you?
329. J: Yeah...I didn't really..... like trust them
330. I: Okay so tell me more about that.
331. J: So when from year 7 I had no trust in no teachers cause I thought okay if, if I do get bullied it would be the same but I thought it was like every teacher that they would listen but that they wouldn't do anything about it. But then after in year 7 I had a problem with...Leo has a friend called Adam (pseudonym) and like he's really annoying and
- 332.
- 333.
- 334.
335. like there was a time when he used to go and slap people on the neck and run off
336. and it was really annoying and I think like one lunch time they kept doing it and they kept slapping me on the neck and it was slap after slap after slap and then at break time they slapped me really hard and like it really hurt and so I got to the top of the stairs and I grabbed Adam and I pinned him to the wall and I pushed him to the wall and everyone came out and we were just fighting and I kept ramming him into walls and I was gonna punch him but I think like two teachers came and I....but when that
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- 341.

342. happened they actually listened and I didn't get into trouble cause they knew that
343. I...cause they slap me on the neck and everything and I told them... so they got like
344. two hours detention after school and then they were just and then they went like
345. ahh no it wasn't it's not my fault it's not my fault even though they clearly did it so
346. but that that told me that they do listen, it's not every teacher it's probably teachers
347. in primary school that probably didn't listen...well not all of them but probably some
348. of them and because they're like okay they're children they probably gonna like they
349. wanna work hard and everything but they're young so like obviously this is gonna
350. happen but they I don't think they understand how serious it was.
351. I: But this time you felt listened to?
352. J: Yeah
353. I: And that was in year 7?
354. J: Yeah it was better I enjoyed coming to school... like before I wouldn't come in for
355. the lessons I would come in for like the fun stuff
356. I: So you enjoy secondary school after this incident was dealt with?
357. J: Yeah
358. I: And you say you wouldn't come in unless it was fun stuff which school was that?
359. J: In in primary
360. I: Ahhh okay yep
361. J: Like I would always miss primary school,
362. I: Did you have friends at primary school
363. J: No zero friends but actually I had one friend we are still friends now but I barely
364. see him I I saw him once when we went to the Philippines I saw him but we just
365. hung out for a bit and everything and so I had one friend well he was like on the
366. other side like the other class so I barely saw him it was just it was only in the
367. playground but it was mainly me and my cousin and my cousin was like my best
368. friend so...
369. I: Ahhh okay and then you moved here with Leo and you and Leo are still close
370. friends
371. J: Well no
372. I: Ahhh well friends
373. J: Yeah friends I wouldn't say we're really close not now
374. I: Oh okay. But in year 7 having Leo with you in year 7 it helped?
375. J: Yeah
376. I: And it also sounds like feeling like you were listened to once you got to this school
377. helped as well? Is that what you meant?
378. J: Yeah
379. I: And so it also sounds like you didn't trust school much? Well the adults in the
380. school have I got that right?
381. J: Yeah
382. I: And then it sounds like you had an experience in this school with the fight that you
383. had where you started thinking that the adults are not all the same and at this time
384. you felt listened to. Have I got that right?
385. J: Yeah
386. I: Yeah? Is there anything else that the school this school did to help to kind of help
387. you feel....cause it sounds like you were feeling a bit more positive about school and
388. about school staff at this point?
389. J: Yeah definitely
390. I: Right so was there anything else that they did that helped you feel this way more
391. positive about school?
392. J: Errrrrrr I think well I think the main thing is the teachers they are like really nice

393. and they understand a lot more than other people. So if I go up to someone in this
 394. school and I'm like ahhh this thing happened they take it more seriously they don't
 395. take it as like a joke which probably wasn't like my primary school but so so say in
 396. this school if I'm like ahh someone's punched me and everything I'd tell the teacher
 397. and they'd be like okay I'll talk to them we'd write a statement about what
 398. happened and then they would and then they would keep going on until we actually
 399. get to the proper like what happened so I feel more...I feel more safe at this school.
 400. I: Okay
 401. J: More safer than I do at primary school I feel more safe here.
 402. I: Okay, tell me more about the safety? About why you're feeling safer?
 403. J: Errr there's more teachers I feel like the more teachers you have the better so as I
 404. go around the school with like different teachers it's a lot better than primary school
 405. where you just have the same teacher and they do English Maths and everything
 406. cause we never did Geography we barely did RE we I don't even think we did science
 407. and I think it's a lot better to have more teachers that you can trust. Cause as soon
 408. as teachers get to know you they start to know your name like would ask and be like
 409. okay Joe is doing good and everything...they and at least if something happens they
 410. will ask you and then ask the other side they wouldn't be just like just ask the other
 411. side and they say whatever and you're in trouble....Cause I think at one point there
 412. was a big meeting
 413. I: At primary or secondary?
 414. J: At primary sorry
 415. I: No no it's okay. So there was a big meeting at primary?
 416. J: yeah and there was in one of the meetings there was like two teachers and they
 417. were like Joe what happened and I told them and then they were like no, no that
 418. didn't happen
 419. I: What the teachers said it didn't happen?
 420. J: No the other person who was one of the ones who was bullying me
 421. I: Ahhh okay
 422. J: And then they said something and the teachers were like Joe you shouldn't have
 423. done that you shouldn't have sworn at them and I was like I didn't cause at primary
 424. school I didn't even swear like I probably like knew like one or two but I didn't use
 425. them in primary school I didn't I think in primary school if I got into trouble and it
 426. was like bad and my fault they would be like don't do that and I'd get into trouble
 427. and they would come down quiet hard on me cause in reception class I was kind of
 428. naughty I use to go to the head teacher a lot and he'd like and I think he was the best
 teacher that I had in primary school he left when I was in year one and even if
 429. something happened he'd be like come to my office and he didn't come down so
 430. hard and he didn't start shouting he'd be like okay we'd ask your mum to come and
 431. get you and he might say to my mum he did this or that but don't come down too
 432. hard on him.....
 433. I: So how did this teacher help?
 434. J: He use to make it feel better for me and he would say to my mum it's okay it was
 435. by accident and like errrr I didn't get into trouble with my mum or anything. So that
 436. was the only teacher I trusted but and he left.
 437. I: So you trusted him
 438. J: Yeah
 439. I: Because?
 440. J: He wasn't like all the other teachers who would start shouting at you and he'd be
 441. like ahhh don't do this again okay you don't want to have to keep coming to my
 442. office cause it just...your parents would get annoyed at you and everything and he

443. actually understood so he'd be like don't do this cause you don't want your parents
444. to be sad with you and punish you and everything...and he use to be quiet fun as
445. well cause me and my cousin got into trouble for doing something and he told my
446. parents and he'd be like don't go too hard on them they're only young and it really
447. helped cause if I did something wrong my mum would just be like no TV for a day
448. but if I did that now my mum would be like no games or TV or anything like and
449. she'd be like for a whole week and she'd probably take my phone away and
450. everything...
451. I: Okay so there was one teacher in primary school who understood
452. J: Yeah and he would have helped if he...but then he left and the bullies started in
453. year two.
454. I: So in this school what type of pupil do you describe yourself as?
455. J: I'm I'd say I'm a bit good and a bit bad....so like I try my best and stuff and say like
456. so say like with my English teacher she puts up work and like we can we never finish
457. it and then the next lessons she's like we have a new piece to do and usually during
458. assessments and stuff you have like an hour to do it but she only gives us like 20 30
459. minutes to do it and when there is just like 5 minutes left to go for the lesson she's
460. like I want 3 paragraphs before the lessons end and I always like say like miss you
461. can't do 3 paragraphs in like 5 minutes cause like that's like a line per 20 seconds so
462. but I've had quite a few issues with Miss and errrm like me and my table cause we're
463. all friends but we have had quite a few issues with Miss.
464. But me now I'd probably put me in the middle section but not too bad but not too
465. good not at the top cause I am sort of like slightly bad at times not but just like
466. talking a lot in class and laughing a lot and just having a fun time with my friends.
467. But I think I do that because I didn't have that...I didn't have that in primary school
468. where you could just be like talking and laughing with your friends and everything
469. I: Cause you don't feel like you had any friends in primary school?
470. J: Yeah and errr it was like so I'd say I'm enjoying it like more now than I ever did
471. cause I have more friends and I can like make more friends like every week
472. I: And that's because your school this school is so big?
473. J: Ummmmhmmmm
474. I: Right okay. So before you came to this school in primary when things weren't
475. going as well for you what sort of support do you think there was to help you? On
476. the days when you didn't want to go to school on the days when you felt like you
477. weren't being listened to. Who or what helped?
478. J: My mum and dad helped me a lot from moving from primary to secondary school
479. they were like it's a new school don't worry cause there was like a day when you
480. come to the school for like half a day and you go to your lessons and stuff and like
481. wander around and like that helped a lot cause it got me to like get to know people
482. and like to know the school so my parents would be like okay it's a new school and
483. like remember it's new people so try try and speak to them more and don't worry
484. cause if you if it goes bad then you will 100 percent you'll find new friends cause
485. when I was going through the bullying and I was faking sick my dad always used to
486. say there is something not happy in that school and I used to say no when I should
487. have said yes.
488. I: Okay
489. J: But I feel like now if I actually told my mum and dad they would have taken me to
490. school but they would have taken me back home if I if they knew it was that bad so
491. if I was actually like truthful and like told them this is happening they would have,
492. they would have taken me to school and we would have spoken and this might not
493. be true or anything but and the school and my mum and dad might have given me

494. the decision to be like would you like to stay in school today? or would you like to go
 495. home and come back tomorrow?
 496. I: So sometimes it was hard to stay in school?
 497. J: Yeah I didn't wanna be in school for....I think like a month I didn't wanna go to
 498. school.
 499. I: But that's not happening in this school?
 500. J: No I I wanna come in in this school yeah I wanna come to school just for the
 501. friends and for the fun of it.
 502. I: Ahhh okay also can you tell me about what else in the school in this school that
 503. makes you want to be here more? So I know we spoke about the fact that you feel
 504. safe, listened to, you feel like if something bad happens to you it will be dealt with.
 505. Am I right have I got that right. What else has helped you to like school more? Cause
 506. it sounds like you really didn't like primary school
 507. J: Yeah I came from hell...sorry
 508. I: No no need to apologise that's fine that's your experience.
 509. J: Ummmmhmmmm. It's errr so the environment is good it's; not like one of
 510. them groups were you come with a group it's not like that there's not a lot of
 511. violence like there's not much fights like what you'd get in other schools. Most of
 512. the people here are good and friendly there might be a few bad people here who do
 513. stupid things but there's more people that you trust like there's new people that I
 514. I've made friends with since like, year 8 and now that I trust more than errrrrr
 515. friends I've had since like year 7 like Leo like I don't trust Leo that much like I trust
 516. him but not a lot.
 517. I: Sounds like you have made new friendships and that you make more friends here like
 you were more able to
 518. approach people and start a conversation with them now.
 519. J: Yeah
 520. I: Did you do that in primary school?
 521. J: No no I had no confidence when I came to this school like if, if I came and someone
 522. was like oh hi I'd just be like oh hi and probably walk away
 523. I: How would you feel inside when that happened
 524. J: I would feel quiet scared and like and I'd feel embarrassed cause like there was
 525. this time in Geography when this person was taking some ones book and they were
 526. like "give it back give it back" and the person taking it thought it was funny and so like
 527. I went behind him and I took I took the book and gave it back to the person who it
 528. belonged to and I gave it back to them so it was kinda it was really good and then
 529. and I think at break time I was just lining up to get some food and like her and her
 530. friends came with them and one of them was like one of them wanna say something
 531. to you and like I was like okay so I turned and I didn't fully turn but I turned a bit but
 532. yeah it was quiet embarrassing but I didn't feel really confident so sometimes id and
 533. other times not... but it was fine and they were just like thanks for getting my book
 534. back and I was like ahhh no it's okay it's fine.
 535. I: And you were alright with it
 536. J: Yeah I didn't like the attention , but it was alright
 537. I: Oh so you don't' like having attention on you?
 538. J: I didn't then but now I like it
 539. I: Oh okay it sounds like your confidence has grown a lot since year 6 and 7 like you
 540. feel more confident have I got that right or am I putting words in your mouth?
 541. J: Yeah I feel I feel more confident because from primary school, my confidence was
 542. from there to there (Motions from high to low with hands) cause there was one
 543. point were like in primary when they were like stand up and do this and do that in

544. front of everybody and there was a point where I fully couldn't ummmm I didn't feel
545. confident enough to say it but now I raise my hands if they ask a question and I'll
546. read out loud and do this and that.
547. I: What do you think the difference is? About how you were feeling there and how
548. you feel now? What do you think made the difference?
549. J: Errrrrr new me and new place.
550. I: Tell me more about that
551. J: Errrr errr so in primary school I would like used to be like one of those people who
552. would get a haircut but like keep it long and everything but and I would just let it
553. grow but now and I think then I didn't really care about how, how I like dressed and
554. everything but now it's more like in secondary school people like boys do their hair
555. and everything and like the girls they put on makeup in primary school you wouldn't
556. do that cause like they wouldn't allow it but in primary school I'd just put on my
557. uniform and walk to school on my own but now I actually have friends I walk with
558. my friends and its quiet fun it's much better. And like In primary school it wasn't that
559. big.
560. I: Right so it sounds like the new me is more about you choosing from a wide range
561. of friends
562. J: Yeah and like there are more good people to choose from.
563. I: So is it about choosing how you want to be?
564. J: Yeah and more people and friends and stuff and not caring about what everyone
565. else thinks and not just following people and not being like awww like copying
566. someone. Like my cousin I think I used to follow him not follow him like where he
567. was I'd go but like follow like copy what he did so in class say if he if he come and he
568. was on my table and he would like fell asleep, I would put my head down and
569. everything and I'd try to be like him. But now I do what I like and also I've got friends
570. and I go out with them. I go cinema with people.... I go out to eat with people and
571. everything so hmmmmmmmm.
572. I: So it's helped your social life?
573. J: Mmmmmmmhmmmmmmmm
574. I: Sounds like it's because the school is bigger? Is that right?
575. J: Yes
576. I: So you have more choice of people to choose to be friends with who maybe fit
577. your personality better?
578. J: Yeah. Cause I have a lot of different friends ahhh first there is a person in the
579. school who I've known since nursery, like we didn't go to the same primary school
580. but I've known him since nursery and like we are totally different types of people
581. and he's got friends and I've got friends like and we all hang out together sometimes
582. his friends and my friends so yeah.
583. I: Great that's great thanks Josh
584. I: When you came to secondary school, were there any particular times when it was
585. particularly hard for you when you got to year 7 and year 8? Were you at any point
586. worried about things going wrong for you or things going back to the way they
587. were for you?
588. J: I think it's when new people join.
589. I: Okay yep so tell me more about that.
590. J: like so when there was a person from my year and he was like really big and like
591. and like tall and like he was like stupid and like he did stupid things and he got
592. kicked out of the school.
593. I: So how did it feel for you? How did school feel when he was there?
594. J: I didn't feel kinda like that safe because sometimes when new people join I know

595. they are kinda like bad people like they might bring knives in and everything
 596. I: So when new people join it feels unsafe for you?
 597. J: Yeah cause you don't know what...you don't know anything about them. Like
 598. there's a boy that's come and he's been here for like 3, 4 months and he's he
 599. doesn't come from here and he's from Italy and he's like one of my friends like we're
 600. actually good friends and I like walk around in the playground with him and
 601. everything like... yeah
 602. I: Okay so it sounds like sometimes but not always when people join the school
 603. who are new it worries you and you sometimes feel unsafe.
 604. J: Yeah. Cause there was this one boy and it was like....he's not here anymore but
 605. like no one liked him cause he was actually a pain like every time so say we're in
 606. computer science cause that's my favourite lesson. Like he'd come and be like "I'm
 607. stronger than you, I'm stronger than you" and every time I walk past he'd be like
 608. "shut the like f off and things...like stuff like that...and errr and I was just walking
 609. with one of my friends okay and we were just talking and we just started laughing
 610. and he was behind us and he was like "ahhhh that's not funny" and I was just like
 611. "who is talking to you it's not got nothing to do with you" and he was like and he
 612. always used to be like "I'm stronger than you I'm stronger than you" and like there
 613. were so many times when like I wanted to full on hurt him because he was really
 614. annoying and he came before and he was just grabbing me and everything and
 615. like...I pushed him off and I grabbed his tie and like just zipped it up and like I didn't
 616. get in trouble cause like he, he went after he left the school. But he was really
 617. annoying cause he use to he hangs out with like year 10's and that and every time
 618. he used to come up and I was like ahhh "you're gonna get your big bodies to come
 619. up and like gang up on me.
 620. I: So sometimes does it feel like the bullying is going to start again ?
 621. J: Nah nah cause like I can defend myself now before I use to not defend myself I use
 622. to just let it happen like I wouldn't fully just like if they did something I wouldn't
 623. react to it.
 624. I: Ahhh okay . So another question is, how has the school helped to develop your and help
 you?
 625. J: Errrm they've, I think cause they've spilt up the lessons so it's not like oh you have
 626. English all day, and like so like you got like a planner and like you got maths first and
 627. before we had only two or three lessons and like now we have four or five and like
 628. they split it so we have different lessons and a planner and we know how long
 629. the lessons will last like when we see our planner so it's a lot better cause in primary
 630. school it was mostly English all day which was so boring for me
 631. I: How about socially how has that helped you socially , well I know we spoke about
 632. it before the fact that you feel safe, listened to and as though school will deal with
 633. tricky situations or times when people are not being nice yeah?
 634. J: Yeah
 635. I: and the planner that sounds like it's been useful so you know what lessons are
 636. next and how long they will last ?
 637. J: Yeah
 638. I: Is there anything else that I may have missed out there?
 639. J: Mmmmmmmmm Nah
 640. I: Okay great so what advice would you give to someone who have had a similar
 641. experience to you? Someone who may have had a tricky time in primary school but
 642. have managed to come to secondary and get to year 8 and is doing well
 643. J: Errr I would I would say don't try to be someone else be yourself do whatever you
 644. want to do and like don't follow like a friend that you've know just make get like

645. your own friend groups and like so say if they go off somewhere you can go to like
646. other friends errrr and like don't think of yourself as like how other people see you
647. like don't like you could be you could be like a really you could be like someone that
648. does stuff that other people don't and the other people could be like talking about
649. you and looking at you and like but just do what you want to do and don't worry
650. about what other people say and do just do what other people want you to do yeah
651. cause it would cause you to join groups of other people and then you'll lie and say I
652. do this I do that and then people could be like I dear you to drink a bottle of vodka
653. and then cause you wanna impress them you might do it and then you would just do
654. it so just find the right people to hang out with.
655. I: Okay thanks that's excellent . And what advice would you give the adults say from
656. the primary and secondary school to help them help others with similar challenges
657. to you are who had any issues and challenges ?
658. J: Errr I'd say listen to them cause it's at points you could be wrong and they could
659. be right. So like if something happens take it seriously don't be like ahhh I'll talk to
660. them and then don't do anything about it and then...then they need to punish them
661. cause if, if they cause you know the bad person is gonna lie and be like ahhh no I
662. didn't do anything but listen to the person that says they're getting bullied and not
663. the person that is doing the bullying and then also so when teaching do different
664. lessons during the day like not all day English.
665. I: So what advice would you give the teachers here? How did they help you? What
666. would you thank them for?
667. J: Thanks for listening to me thanks for helping me through helping me with what
668. I've been through and thank you for Mr L so I could come and talk to someone like
669. that and thanks for taking things seriously and making sure it's fair and errrr just
670. thank you for everything basically.
671. I: So it sounds like listening and being listened to is important and being fair and you
672. mentioned safety before, so feeling safe and also having a wide range of different
673. people helped to make you feel more sociable and like friendships were more your
674. choice. Does that sound like what you are saying to me?
675. J: Yeah, yeah definitely
676. I: Thank you so much Joe for the interview, thank you for your time and for being so
677. open and honest and sharing your experiences with me. Is there anything else that
678. we didn't speak about that you would like to include?
679. J: Errr no that's it really.
680. I: Well thank you and well done. Sounds like you've come such a long way Joe.

Appendix 9: Interview with Zack

Appendix 9: Interview with Zack

R=Researcher

Z= Zack

1. R: Can you tell me a bit about your experiences of schools before you started attending (school name)?
2. Z: Well.....like just like not listening and stuff....not doing what the teachers said...and yeah
3. wasn't really having any problems most of the times just people would start annoying me
4. for no reason.
5. R: And how would you respond?
6. Z: Well most of the time I would just tell them to go away and afterwards they'd try and fight
7. me so I was okay so it didn't make sense.
8. R: It didn't make sense can you tell me more about that?
9. Z: Yeah sure well cause I didn't know why they would start on me because I would end up
10. fighting with them and.....yeah.
11. R: Was this in primary school?
12. Z: Yeah.
13. I see what other sort of things were happening in primary school?
14. Z: Well I used to get into trouble a lot...I mean like a lot...I used to get into loads of fights.
15. R: Ahh so can you tell me some more about that?
16. Z: So yeah I used to get in trouble for doing like real bad things errrrrrr...
17. R: You can say what they were if you want to
18. Z: (Laughs), well like one time it was likewe had like a trip and it was like in Epping forest
19. and I really, really needed to go to the toilet and so like I ...I literally just wanted to go to the
20. toilet and so I just went behind a bush..... and then they banned me from going to trips just
21. cause I really wanted to go to the toilet. And it was like a two hour trip walking and there
22. wasn't even people around...so yeah
23. R: Ahhh so you were banned from trips?
24. Z: Yep
25. R: How did you feel about that decision? to be banned from the trips?
26. Z: Well I didn't think it was fair.....just cause I really needed the toilet.
27. R: Okay so you felt that it was unfair?
28. Z: Yeah like really unfair.
29. R: What was happening in school before that incident?
30. Z: Well like I used to get into trouble and fights a lot yeah and also in primary I got into
31. trouble for things that I didn't do. It's like you know when your...in primary you have to have
32. like a toilet partner or something? Yeah so I had to go in with this girl and she said ahhh
33. there's no tissue in there can you pass me some tissue? So I threw the tissue in there and
34. then they were going on like I...well the teachers were literally saying oh how I went inside
35. the toilet and yeah and like pretty much went in there and like threw tissue at her just to be

36. bad..
37. R: And so you ended up getting into trouble for it?
38. Yeah yeah yeah
39. R: And how did you feel about that?
40. Z: Well my dad....came in and well they were pretty much about to exclude me before that
41. anyway for that and my dad said well if we leave now it won't come up on your record...it
42. pretty much made sense so I left that school.
43. R: So how many times did you get excluded?
44. Z: Errrr once from that school
45. R: Ahhh so you went to two primary schools?
- 46.
47. Z: Yeah
48. R: What age were you when you did start to get into trouble more at school?
49. Z: That was in like year 4
50. R: Okay so year 4 in the first primary school?
51. Z: Yeah then I had to go to some unit thing in year 5 for a little bit and it's so annoying cause
52. like it's so bad.
53. R: What happened there
54. Z: it's like literally if you do anything wrong they have to tackle you they literally tackle you
55. down if you cause like so yeah even if you just pushed someone and they come and like restrain
- you. If you do anything wrong.
56. R: Ahh so they restrained you?
57. Z: yeah yeah yeah
58. R: Did that happen to you at all?
59. Z: Yeah pretty much on my first day (laughs). Cause I pretty much just pushed someone
60. cause I thought someone was going to be violent to me and stuff
61. R: So you went in there feeling worried?
62. Z: Yeah yeah yeah
63. R: So after you went to the unit where did you go after that/ was it another primary school?
64. Z: Yeah I went to (SCHOOL NAME OMITED) primary school.
65. R: In year 5 or 4?
66. Z: In year 5
67. R: So you spent the rest of year 4 in the unit?
68. Z: Nah it was like the end of year 4
69. R: Ahh okay
70. Z: Like half of year 5 I was in the unit...other half I was in primary school.
71. R: Okay and you say your problems started in year 4?
72. Z: Yeah cause yeah and a bit before that as well so yeah
73. R: So can you think about things that happened in year 4 and before that made you get into
74. more trouble?
75. Z: In year 4 I don't really know that much well what I mean is I don't really remember not
76. don't know
77. R: Yeah it was a long time ago wasn't it so that's understandable.
78. Z: Yeah
79. R: So when you were in (SCHOOL NAME) you stayed there for the rest of year 5 and year 6?

80. Z: Yeah
81. R: What was that like? How was it for you?
82. Z: Well when I first started there it... it was just like people were like "awww it's a new boy"
83. and stuff like that. I didn't really mind it, it was just sometimes it would get annoying and
84. stuff.
85. R: Okay so it was a bit annoying in the beginning?
86. Z: Yeah like and then after like people would be like you know when people sometimes
87. make trouble try and make trouble?
88. R: Yes
89. Z: So like I had like one of those boys in my class like one of those like this one guy and he
90. was basically so annoying he would go around the school saying "aww yeah he like this
91. person" when it was really not like that. And he would try and get me into trouble. So yeah it
92. was really annoying. And there were like pretty much these three girls and they were so
93. annoying and they would pretty much try to get me in trouble by saying "ahhh we're gonna tell the
- teacher you done this and that" and it wasn't true...it was pretty much so annoying.
94. Like and they would tell the teachers false stuff and because its three of them they won't
95. believe me they would just believe them because like its three of them...
96. R: Yeah I see.
97. Z: Then I used to get in trouble for that and one of like my main friends my friend Larry
98. (pseudonym) and my friend Frank (pseudonym) were there so yeah it was pretty good
99. (pseudonym).... So like yeah.
100. R: So in this second primary school what other things were happening?
101. Z: I did get like into t bit of trouble.....uhhhhhh I did ummmm uggggggg.... I probably
102. did a few really bad things like this time we were in the canteen and this older boy in
103. year six cause I was in year 5 at that time and this older boy who was really
104. annoying , he was annoying me so much....like this guy was like... you know like
105. those two faced people?....he was two faced like he'd just annoy someone for no
106. reason and like I pretty much just got my food and I threw it at him because he was
107. sitting on the opposite table to me and I got into trouble for that.
108. R: So you got into trouble.....did you ever get excluded from (SCHOOL NAME
109. OMMITTED)?
110. Z: Errrrrrm yeah I think I did for like errr two days I think.
111. R: Ahhh okay so it continued to be difficult for you in the other primary school?
112. Z: Yeah I'd still get into trouble.
113. R; You still get into trouble? I see.
114. Z: Yeah I really did.
115. R: Ohh okay so before you came to this school, who were the adults that supported
116. you with your learning and behaviour in primary school ? was there anyone in
117. particular?
118. Z: Oh yeah there was this teacher called Miss Simon (Pseudonym) and then she use
119. to like just help probably help me out with stuff and then she wasn't like...I think she
120. was like deputy head or I think now she's deputy head but she used to be like
121. somewhere up there and then like she used to help me out with stuff and be like
122. "oh if you need any help " "tell me if you need help with stuff" yeah so like that was
123. pretty good.

124. R: Right so when you say she used to help you out with stuff tell me some more
125. about that.
126. Z: it was like most of the stuff I'd get helped out with is like so if someone is pretty
127. much trying to annoy me....like that that person who was two faced and I...I would
128. just go and tell of them cause I didn't really care. So then when I did they basically
129. would get into trouble but they'd still do it so.
130. R: What do you mean by you didn't care? Can you tell me a little about that?
131. Z: Yeah. Like I didn't care if like they called me a snitch. I didn't care.
132. R: Ahh okay so you feel like when you got to your second school in primary you feel
133. like you had someone to go to get help?
134. Z: Yeah
135. R: So it felt like if someone was doing something to annoy you or upset you, you
136. could go to find and tell an adult and the adult would deal with it?
137. Z: Yeah
138. R: So can you tell me did this make much of a difference to you?
139. Z Well it's like most of the time the adults don't do anything in primary like you tell
140. the adult and nothing really happens so mainly it's just like the adults say "oh no,
141. don't do it again" and then when they do it again they be like " don't do it again"
142. R: Ahhh right I see
143. Z: Yeah so that was my main problem because they don't really do anything to
144. actually help the situation yeah so.
145. R: Ahh okay but you felt that that was different when you were in your second
146. primary school?
147. Z: Yeah
148. R: Because of this deputy head because she would help you
149. Z: Yeah
150. R: What else would she help you with?
151. Z: So if like we had this thing where I'd go out of class to see a teacher...I forgot the
152. teachers name now I forgot cause it was such a long time ago....but like you could go
153. to her and ask her to talk and literally play games with her in a different room .
154. R: So you're saying you had adults you could go to for help when things were feeling
155. difficult you'd go to them and they would listen to you....did you feel listened to?
156. Z: Yeah but it was like that sometimes but most of the time it was like "ahhh don't
157. do it again" still cause like primaries are like that they go easy on the kids and like.
158. R: Were there any other adults who helped you in primary?
159. Z: The main teachers in my class they were kind of like okay with it they would tell
160. you to go sit somewhere else's in the class or something. Yeah but with our school
161. they had a main building and a side building and the side building was like mainly for
162. like reception but they had one extra class there so they put our year six class in
163. there when I was in year six.
164. R: Ummmmhmmmm
165. Z: So because we were like away from all the other like urrrrm pretty much other
166. year sixes we had our class and I was like that was the main thing.
167. R: Ahhh that really helped? Being separated from the other year six classes?
168. Z: Yeah

169. R: How many year six classes were there?
170. Z: I think it was like four.
171. R: So when you came to this school what were things like for you?
172. Z: Well I didn't really get into much trouble. Cause they knew...most of the teachers
173. well not most of them but some of them knew
174. Knew. Cause when they knew I was coming to this school this school they came to
175. Visit Me...like the behaviour people from this school came in year 6 when I was in
176. year 6
177. and they had a meeting with my mum and dad. And like said "these are the
178. rule" and stuff...and like so yeah.
179. R: Ahhh so it helped that the behaviour people from this school came to see you and
180. your mum beforehand have I got that right?
181. Z: Yeah and then they were like "ahhh you have a new fresh start" so and then and
182. then in this school no one was like ahhh he's the bad one and like so yeah.
183. R: Oh so it sounds like being told you have a new fresh start helped.
184. Z: Yeah definitely
185. R: Right so that really helped you?
186. Z: Yeah
187. R: okay
188. R: So were there times when you got to this school when you did find it difficult ?
189. Z: Errr no not not really actually no.
190. R: Oh Okay. What do you think it is about this school that that makes things feel so
191. different ?
192. Z: Well most of the time when people just annoy me I just go and tell the teacher
193. Z: and the teacher will actually deal with it they'll be like okay you got this you got
194. this
195. Z: most of the time they don't even have to do that... and but yeah they listen here
196. Z: more.
197. Z: Yeah and its like that idea of having a fresh start you, you don't have to be like
198. held back by the previous stuff that you did.
199. Where as in primary they'd be like "oh you've done this" and it would be like looking
200. at your records and then getting into more and more trouble cause everyone thinks
201. you're bad.....and yeah.
202. R: So it sounds like being given a fresh start and being told that it is a fresh start
203. really helped you to have a better more settled time at school when you came here.
204. Have I got that right?
205. Z: Yeah definitely it did.
206. And also.... I think cause I had like a sibling in the school my brother is in year 10 now
207. and then like.....so it's like he was there and that helped.
208. R: And that helped?
209. Z: Yeah (laughs)
210. R: So did his friends and having his friends help as well?
211. Z: Yeah sometimes it's like some of them did but and then sometimes they try to
212. annoy me just because I'm my brothers little brothers and that.....yeah (laughs).
213. R: Errm so your initial experience of being here? Initially when you started here did

214. you have any worries or anxieties?
215. Z: Well I had some worries... that I wouldn't live up to the standards that I did...like
216. educationally like....cause I had like decent grades in primary.
217. R: How do you think you are doing now?
218. Z: I'm doing good (smiles).
219. R: That's great so you're doing well academically now?
220. Z: Yeah
221. R: What do you want to do when you leave school?
222. Z: I'm still thinking about it....I don't really know.
223. R: Loads of time to think about that. So what do you think staff members at this
224. school have done to help you to do well and keep doing well and help you to
225. achieve? So you've already said
226. that they deal with things when you go to them if someone is annoying or upsetting
227. you, they deal with it.
228. Z: Yeah
229. R: So does it feel like that helps you to achieve?
230. Z: Yeah cause some staff members or most of them are really quiet strict so just
231. like...if you break the rules there will be like consequences and everyone gets into
232. trouble the same for breaking the rules and if you break the rules there will be like
233. big consequences.
234. R: So is it about the rules being the same for everybody?
235. R: Yeah cause whereas like in primary it's like "If you break this rule you're going to
236. get into more trouble even more than someone else ". Because of like because of
237. your record pretty much.
238. R: So it sounds like you feel a reputation, having a reputation really held you back in
239. primary school.
240. Z: Mmmmmhmmmm it really did because they always thought I was the only one
241. doing all the bad things and other people would get away with the same things but
242. I'd get into bigger trouble for small things.
243. R: So coming here where not everyone knew you really helped. And it sounds like
244. you were almost allowed to become a different person?
245. Z: Yeah pretty much cause like there were like four teachers here who knew about
246. my record when I got here and they weren't like "aww I know what you're like"
247. they were like "okay he's a new person now" don't look at his record in primary or
248. look at his record in primary and see how he used to be and things he used to do
249. and like look at look at the person like look at what he's doing now. So that really
250. helped.
251. R: So staff helped by looking at you in a different way?
252. Z: Yeah
253. R: Did that help you to see yourself in a different way?
254. Z: Yeah
255. R: Great. Errrm was there anybody else like key people in your life that helped you
256. to turn things around and keep them turned around? And helped you to manage? I
257. know earlier you mentioned your mum and your brother.
258. Z: Yeah eeeeerrmmm.....pause

259. R: So is there anyone else in your life that helped you to turn a new page?
260. Z: Errrrrm.
261. R: Did you ever go to CAMHS or anything like that?
262. Z: No
263. R: Did you see a counsellor or anyone like that?
264. Z: Yeah that's what I mean the lady whose name I can't remember she was the
265. counsellor . She really helped me.
266. R: So you had a counsellor that you could talk to?
267. Z: Yeah
268. R: When you were here at this school?
269. Z: No no not when I'm here in (named primary school). But if I do wanna talk to a
270. counsellor here I can just go to like to find them and talk to them.
271. R: Was that an arrangement made for you when you started here then?
272. Z: Yeah
273. R: Oh okay so was a plan made so you know where to go when you need help?
274. Z: Yeah they told me that in the beginning...that I could just go and speak when I
275. needed to as long as I got the teachers permission for like whatever class I was in at
276. the times and yeah so it was okay.
277. R: Ahhh so you know and have always known where to find help?
278. Z: Yeah.
279. R: So did anyone else in your life help by giving you any other messages to help you?
280. Like parents or family members or anyone like that?
281. Z: Errrrrm nah.....not really.
282. R: Okay. So can you tell me about the relationships which were helpful? You spoke
283. about it a bit because you said that you could go the mentors some teachers and the
284. counsellor if you needed to.
285. Z: Yeah
286. R: You've got a good relationship with another two members of staff who you can go
287. to if somebody gets on your nerves.
288. Z: Yeah
289. R: So if you can tell me about any other people who helped you to keep things on
290. the positive line.
291. Z: What you mean in primary school or in secondary?
292. R: Both is okay...so maybe if you tell me first about primary and then tell me about
293. now in secondary then I can see the difference.
294. Z: So like in primary I had a counsellor that I could talk to. And like sometimes they'd
295. take me out of class and I would like have some activities to do.
296. R: What sort of activities?
297. Z: Like sewing
298. R: So like activities which helped to calm you?
299. Z: Yeah and like and also they were like really like errrm so whats it called errrm
300. informative like they were really informative I think that's the word.
301. R: Informative?
302. Z: Yeah like I can't remember the word but when they really helped ;
303. R: Oh okay so they were informative as in that they gave you information that

304. helped?
305. Z: yeah that's it. They really helped pretty much.
306. R: Informative is the right word. So they gave you a lot of information that helped
307. You? Which is why you said they were informative am I right? Is that what you
308. meant?
309. Z: Yeah....pretty much.
310. R: So what were the bits that were informative?
311. Z: Like they would help me by telling me what I can do in certain situations like.....so
312. like if I was getting angry they'd be like they told me to breath and take deep
313. breaths, or count to 10 and they would be like" ahhh come straight to us". And then
314. so like the majority of time like I did and....cause I was like in the room so it was too
315. late.
316. R: Ahhh why because you'd be in the room and already upset at the time?
317. Z: Yeah cause I was already annoyed.
318. R: Ahh yeah I see. So at those times it was difficult?
319. Z: Yeah
320. R: But sometimes it was helpful?
321. Z: Yeah definitely.
322. R: So that was in primary in your second primary?
323. Z: Yeah but it's like in secondary now...I don't even have to do any of these things
324. Cause like I didn't really get into like fights or lots of arguments or anything like that.
325. R: So where are those feelings gone do you think? Because by the sounds of it
326. before you would sometimes get quiet angry have I got that right?
327. Z: Yeah pretty much but now I don't even know I just think I control it more so yeah
328. I like know like know how to control it now.
329. R: So it sounds like you managed to find a way to control your anger?
330. Z: Yeah
331. R: What type of things were you doing differently?.....to control your anger?
332. Z: I don't even know, maybe like I was just I was ignoring people who were annoying
333. me and walking away....pretty much cause like I didn't even care about what they
334. were saying cause it was like look at them they're probably not even like you
335. academically and like their probably that stupid.
336. R: Right yes I see. So it was you looking at your strengths and thinking " I really don't
337. have time for this?"
338. Z: Yeah cause it's just rubbish,
339. R: Okay yeah Errrrrrrm So How did the relationships that you had in primary and
340. secondary school.... How did these relationships help you to have a good transition
341. from primary to secondary school?
342. Z: Errrm so I had the counsellor in primary saying like "Oh it's okay you're gonna do
343. well" and like "you can always come back and talk to us even if you're annoyed"
344. R: Right so was it something about knowing that the door was still open in primary
345. school?
346. Z: Yeah
347. R: So like knowing that it wasn't the end?
348. Z: Yeah yeah.

349. R: So it still felt like you had a space to walk into in that school.
350. Z: yeah yeah yeah
351. R: Also it sounds like the staff speaking to your mum and to you in secondary school,
352. that really helped with your transition yeah?
353. Z: Yeah
354. R: Was there anything else about the people or things that happened during
355. transition that helped?
356. Z: Ahhh yeah yeah we had a transition day and most of the teachers were nice it was
357. good to see how the actual school works and like how you're gonna be like when
358. you go there.
359. R: Was it just a day or was it a week? How long was it?
360. Z: It was just a day.
361. R: Do you think it would have been better if it was longer?
362. Z: Nah I think one day or two days is okay yeah is better.
363. R: So one or two days?
364. Z: Yeah it would have been better if it was a little bit more actually...like two days
365. maybe.
366. R Would have been better if it was a little bit longer?
367. Z: Yeah yeah yeah
368. R: How do you think it would be different if you didn't have these relationship and
369. didn't have these things happen? Like if you didn't have staff saying "right Zack this
370. is a new start" and if you didn't have transition day for example. I know it's hard to
371. think of that because those things did happen but how do you think you would have
372. managed if they didn't?
373. Z: Well I think I would have thought ahhh its gonna be the same as last time and be
374. like and pretty much like flip out again.
375. R: So you wouldn't have been like certain.
376. Z: Yeah
377. R: Do you feel safe in this school?
378. Z: Yeah
379. R: And you felt safe at (enter primary school name)?
380. Z: Yeah well not that much.
381. R: Ahhh okay. Do you know what the difference might be?
382. Z: Just like in primary they go easy on you but that's not always a good thing so I
383. don't really like it sometimes.
384. R: Ahhhh so you like the rules and the structure here? Is that right?
385. Z: Yeah
386. R: And the fact that if one person gets into trouble another person would get into
387. the same trouble for the same things not depending on their records or who they
388. are?
389. Z: Yeah yeah but it's also a bit like that here kind of but not as much, cause some
390. teachers know what you're doing and then....I dunno it's a bit hard to explain.
391. R: it's okay keep trying.
392. Z: Cause like there are some people in this school and the teacher would be like
393. pretty much pick on them cause it's like oh their behaviour points is high and it's

394. kind of like the same thing. I see it happen cause that used to be me as well.
395. R: Ahhh so you can notice it cause it used to happen to you?
396. Z: Yeah
397. R: But it's not happening to you now?
398. Z: No no but I know how they feel.
399. R: Why do you think it's not happening to you now?
400. Z: Because I behave well and I just don't get in trouble.
401. R: So you stay under the radar?
402. Z: Yeah most of the time. But I decided I weren't gonnn like weren't gonna do that anymore like to be that person.
403. R: So when did you make that decision? was it at the beginning of year 7 end of year 6 or middle of year 7?
404. Z: I think it was like in the middle of the like the summer holidays pretty much cause I was just like oh okay then I wanna get good grades and stuff.
405. R: So you started becoming more interested in your school work by the sounds of it.
406. Z: Yeah people need to find out what they're good at their hobbies and stuff and then they can like focus on their strengths.
407. R: So focusing on strengths helps you stay on track?
408. Z: Yeah
409. R: Yeah that's really useful. Errrm. So yeah things that would have been different is that you would have been more stressed out and would have flipped out.
410. Z: Yeah
411. R: And you would have been like oh no its just like primary school
412. Z: Like the same old people and things like that. Well it is a bit like that because you get the same people trying to make trouble for people same people trying to annoy other people.
413. R: So give me an example of something when you first started in year 7 can you give me another example of things which happened to give you a smooth transition. I know you gave me the examples of transition week and staff from here meeting you and your mum before you came here.
414. Z: My old primary is like just over there (Points) I knew that most people from there were gonna come here. So I knew that some people from there would also come here. So that's... for me its half good and half bad because like half good is like ahhh I'll see some of my friends and like that's good but then like the other half bad it'll be like oh my God I have to see all of those other people and the ones that really annoy me.
415. R: That was from your old primary school the first primary school?
416. Z: Yeah
417. R: Did you get any from the last primary school come here?
418. Z: Yeah but just like 4... yeah 4 people from there. But I've got like different kind of friendship groups and stuff. Cause like in cause in primary I had one group of friends like there was like 6 of us and I don't know why but people wanted to like fight us and stuff and I don't know why. But now in this school since I started I got like lots of different friends.
419. R: So you established a wider set friendship group when you got to secondary.

439. Z: Yeah definitely. And I pretty much ignored people who tried to annoy me when
440. we got here and found lots of new friends. Cause like in my last primary only one of
441. my friends from that school who came here was in my class in primary so the others
442. even though they were in the same school they didn't actually see when I flipped
443. out in primary but they pretty much just used to hear about it but not actually see
444. me do anything.
445. R: So before you said and explained really well about it being part good part bad.
446. can you tell me even more about that.
447. Z: Well it was good to see people from primary and stuff like see them around.
448. R So like having familiar face?
449. Z: Yeah familiar faces. But I thought ahh I don't have to make loads of new friends.
450. And then it was so annoying because they put us all in different classes cause in
451. secondary they have two sides to the year they have the A side and the B side so I
452. was in A side and my friend that I was telling you about before he was on the B side.
453. So it means I wouldn't be in any of his classes. And I couldn't get to see him that
454. much.
455. R: Ahh so you were spilt from the one main friend that came with you from
456. primary?
457. Z: Yeah yeah yeah
458. R: And what's the friendship like now.
459. Z: Pretty good we play games and stuff. We see each other outside school and like
460. we go and watch movies with friends from primary and stuff.
461. R: So you get to year 7 and settle down and it's a new Zack new me.
462. Z: Yeah
463. R: So was there a time or times during the transition which were particularly
464. Difficult ?
465. Z: Maybe like meeting new friends and making new friends and like some people
466. were like pretty much spreading rumours cause they'd be like "oh he used to be like
467. this and he used to do this and that" And then like that was like oh okay....(Shruggs).
468. R: So it was difficult when people would remember how you were before? And
469. things that you did before?
470. Z: Yeah people like from like the first primary I went to because most of them came
471. here.
472. R: Right yep so that was difficult. Were there any other times when things became
473. particularly difficult? How are you when there are new teachers and new kids.
474. Z: New kids that doesn't really bother me. But I see some of them get caught up in
475. the wrong crowd and stuff and then for them it goes downhill.
476. R: So you've seen that happen?
477. Z: Yeah a lot
478. R: Does that unsettle you in anyway?
479. Z: Nah I'm just like oh well just another one of them kids like...
480. R: New teachers are you okay about having new teachers.
481. Z: Yeah cause it's like you need to have a positive mind set....cause like if you have a
482. negative mind set like I did in primary then you think ahhh I'm gonna get into
483. trouble for this this and this if you keep thinking that it will just keep happening

484. more and more. So you need to have a positive mind set.
485. R: Yep yep....that's really really nice a nice way to think about it. Where did you learn
486. that from?
487. Z: Yeah I thought about it myself .
488. R: So it sounds like you see yourself as a successful learner?
489. Z: Yeah.
490. R: You see yourself as someone who is going to do well?
491. Z: Yep
492. R: You see yourself as someone who is going to do and who is doing well
493. academically.
494. Z: Yeah
495. R: Have you always seen yourself in this way?
496. Z: Well not really cause like in like primary it was more like "oh your this kid who's
497. like always making trouble and you have to be that way because that's what they
498. thinks so yeah.
499. R: So if you think about when that changes for you...when you started seeing
500. yourself differently and more successful .
501. Z: It then goes back to that fresh start thing...like you can be who you wanna be now
502. because you have that like new start.
503. R: So you had that thing where you just clicked and said "I'm a new person".
504. Z: Yep...pretty much.
505. R: And it sounds like in doing that you are doing better and well academically. Were
506. you doing well academically in primary school?
507. Z: In primary I was doing well but not as good as I'm doing now. Because of the
508. things I used to do.
509. R: Right right right I see. So in primary school you did you see yourself as successful?
510. Z: No (laughs)
511. R: But now you are just like I'm a successful learner.
512. Z: Yeah
513. R: How do you feel about your secondary experience so far?
514. Z: It's pretty good going. Cause everyone knows I don't do nothing wrong.
515. R: Great. So so far secondary school has been good.
516. Z: Yeah
517. R: So can you tell me a bit about how you see yourself and your role in the school
518. community?
519. Z: Well in the school community I don't really do much....I'm pretty much just there
520. like I don't get involved in like things like school council and stuff like that.
521. R: Ah okay.
522. Z: I'll just like do well for myself I don't need to do well for other people.
523. But outside of school I help people a lot so.
524. R: Okay. And you see yourself as quiet a high achiever in school?
525. Z: Yeah
526. R: So what things have shaped the way you see yourself in school? So primary was
527. full on and now you are more focussed on achieving.
528. Z: Yeah I pretty much focus on what I'm good at.

529. R: Great. So what advice would you give to someone who has had similar challenges
 530. and difficulties as you did? What advice would you give them to help them to have a
 531. successful transition from primary to secondary just like you have?
532. Z: So I'd ask them if they had any help or support from anyone in primary. And if
 533. they did just stick to their support and if you have any problems just go and talk.
 534. And get like to stick not like stick close to the teachers cause like don't really...don't
 535. let them get a bad impression cause like first impressions are really good. That's like
 536. my older brother even told me "ahh yeah for your first impression don't like...okay
 537. you've got a good English teacher right now, She's probably the best like go in there
 538. and shake her hand and stuff like make sure you get a good first impression" So It's
 539. just like if I made a bad first impression it would be like they'd expect that of you.
 540. Like make sure you give a good impression so that they think good of you and then
 541. expect good from you.
542. R: So also then they will have high expectations of you?
543. Z: Yeah yeah yeah . And also don't get mixed up with the wrong crowd like with the
 544. wrong people. Yeah sometimes you can tell if they are bad cause if the person like
 545. comes from primary school where they were bad and with the bad crowd they
 546. would try and be cool so might do the same thing in secondary and if people ask
 547. them to do stuff that's going to get them in trouble like say no.
548. R: Great thanks for that. Great advice. Errrm one last question is what advice would
 549. you give to the adults so staff and parents. What advice would you give then if they
 550. were trying to help someone who had similar problems to you to have a successful
 551. transition? So maybe say like "to help this child you need to do....."
552. Z: Oh the teachers they need to like....not really like put pressure on them but they
 553. need to don't errrrr what's it called? They really need to like don't look at their
 554. record just look at them as a person don't really, really be like....don't don't expect
 555. things like don't expect that they are gonna be bad because of what they did. You
 556. should like think...like think that they're normal and want a fresh start and stuff. And
 557. for the parents they don't really need to like worry but their probably gonna be
 558. stressed because I know my mum was she was like "oh can you please be like good
 559. in this school" and like " don't get in trouble and this and that" and like they need to
 560. support their children.
561. R: And the adults? You were saying about talking to them. How would you advise
 562. them to respond when you go to them?
563. Z: Well like if you take a problem to them it depends on what teacher you go to
 564. cause if it's like one of those nice teachers who would be like "Oh you know it's fine
 565. I'll go tell them to stop"
566. R: Mmmhmmmm. So what advice would you give to that teachers
567. Z: they need to like assess the situation first find out what's happening yeah and
 568. then after they need to like probably think break it down see like what are the
 569. people saying. They should see the situation and stop it before it happens.
570. R: Great. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your transition
 571. experiences or anything you think I should have asked but didn't?
572. Z: Errrrr no not really.
573. R: Okay well in that case thank you so much you have been great.

574. Z: It's okay.

Appendix 10: Interview with Anna

Interview

Anna

1. I: Hi Anna
2. H: Hi
3. I: So one of the first questions I'd like to ask you is can you tell me about some of the
4. difficulties you experienced in school in primary school? In terms of your experience
5. of school so far.
6. H: Yes well some of the difficulties I had was making and being with friends lots of
7. the people there were mean to me and they would tease me. I didn't feel like
8. speaking to them so I didn't really say like hi or ask if they'd like to play with me.
9. And I did go back a little before year 6 when I played with the older kids and then
10. they left me out and used to make fun of me and tease me, then I was left on my
11. own for a little bit.
12. And I had a hard time keeping up with the class and errrrm sometimes
13. when....sometimes things would easily distract me.
14. I: Oh okay
15. H: Yeah like if someone would like yell in class or someone would be like trying to
16. tease me in like in that room I wouldn't be able to keep my eyes off them... I
17. wouldn't be able to ignore them, I'd just be glaring at them waiting for them to do
18. another bad thing. And sometimes I still do that but I've been stopping a lot more I
19. was easily distracted by things going on in the class so if someone made too much
20. noise or there was too much going on I would just stop and glare at them to get
21. them to stop or end up shouting at them and losing my temper cause it was getting
22. on my nerves, and the people were getting on my nerves. Then I would get into
23. trouble for it sometimes. But I still do that now but I try not to, I try to ignore them
24. now but sometimes it's a bit hard.
25. I: Ahhh thanks that's really interesting so it sounds like some of the main difficulties
26. were around making friends, trying not to get distracted by others and sometimes
27. struggling to manage the other peoples behaviours and the noise? people teasing you and
28. people not including you? Sometimes you would get into trouble?
28. H: Yeah
29. I: So how would you describe primary school? For example, would you describe it as
30. a good experience? Or not so good? Or in the middle?
31. H: Yeah so nursery up until year 5 it was fine it was good because we would be in the
32. same class for like the entire whole of it and then by the time we reached year five
33. they decided they were gonna mixed up all the classes (FIRST TRANSITION IN YEAR 5
34. EXPERIENCED CLASS BEING MIXED UP IN YEAR 5. FOUND THIS HARD). So kids from
35. one group and the kids from the other group would come in and we would all be put

36. together and all be...and it wasn't nice . And it wasn't really so nice.
37. I: It wasn't too nice?
38. H: No
39. I: Is that because you wasn't used to it?
40. H: Yeah it wasn't nice
41. I: Ahhh okay so that must have been difficult...
42. H: Mmmmmhmmmm
43. I: Okay. So do you think that any of these difficulties affected in this school. How do
44. think that experience has affected you when you were moving to and began
45. secondary school? As it sounds like in primary school you have described that things
46. affected your learning and how you got along with others , it was difficult to make
47. friends for you.
48. H:
49. I: Because it sounds like it affected your learning and social life in that school.
50. H: Yeah I: So can you tell me more about how or if these things affected you when
51. you got to secondary school?
52. H: Oh errrrrm It did a little but not a lot because, its' it's hard to explain...it did a
53. little but not as much, does that make sense?
54. I: Yep, yep makes sense so you mean it affected in some ways but not as much as it
55. used to?
56. H: Yeah
57. I: Okay I yeah that makes complete sense.
58. H: like make trying to make friends and like trust cause I didn't know if I could trust
59. anyone, cause it like scared me to think that they would pretend to be my friend and
60. do what they did again.
61. I: Okay I see, so in primary school trust was an issue is that the case?
62. H: MmmmmmmHmmmmmm
63. I: can you tell me a bit more about that? With primary school and trust, what made
64. you stop trusting in primary school?
65. H: Well... well errm I think that one of the problems were with there was one kid I
66. mean there were two who used to call me names they were just really mean and
67. erm there was this one girl who used to hang out with them and so then she stopped
68. hanging out with them and me would hang out with me and then when others were
69. around she wouldn't hang out with me. So then I found out that the only reason that
70. she wanted to hang out with me was so that she could make the other two jealous
71. to just.....and then I just stop trusting people and then I like I did stop sort of like to
72. caring a little bit cause after that I just stop kinda like hanging out with people
73. altogether and then I hung around by myself and it was pretty nice because I didn't
74. have to have to worry about other people. And then but then it would have been a
75. lot more fun if I just stopped worrying about what other people thought of me.
76. I: What do you think that other people thought of you?

77. H: They thought I was weird and they thought I was erm and they thought I was
 78. silly....erm and I sort of knew that they were bullying me at first they were like at
 79. first like not all the class but it was most of the class that actually did some kids
 80. would errrm call me weird and errrm or like say that I'm being rude even though I
 81. didn't know when I was meant to have been being rude because I was just like every
 82. time I had an idea I would just stop being included like this time in P:E we were
 83. playing a game and I justsorry if I'm talking a lot

84. I: No go for it...it's perfect! I want to hear everything that you've got to say, you just
 85. carry on you are doing beautifully I want to hear what was going on for you so you
 86. go ahead.

87. H: Thank you. And then back in PE if we were like playing basketball outside, I would
 88. always be the one closest to the net and like, if we were playing football id be the
 89. one closest to the net to like kick it and like they never really pass it over to me and I
 90. wasn't very reactive and fussy in football or especially in those sort of games and I
 91. have been a bit more active but not as active.

92. I: Errrrm I see so that was in primary school you didn't feel very included?

93. H: Yeah

94. I: do you think the staff? What do you think the staff or anybody at school or parents
 95. or anybody at school kind of help with that?

96. H: well a few did yeah some were really nice but errrm another thing about the trust
 97. thing was

98. I: Mmmmmhmmmm

99. H: I errrm there was this teacher who was the deputy head his name was Mr errrrm

100. (NAME OMMITTED) and erm what happened was there were these two
 101. bullying kids...I don't think meant to be mean but he and one of them said
 102. that I had sort of mental anger issues cause he had a bit like what I had

103. I: One of the bullying kids?

104. H: Mmmmmhmmm, yeah he wasn't very good at learning...he either said
 105. that I had anger issue or mental issues, or mental health problems yeah and
 106. one of the kids who was ,a bit mean a bit mean like we were on and off again
 107. and at the time when we were off again she said she came in at the part
 108. when he said that I have anger issues so instead of saying the mental part
 109. and she said "yeah she yeah she does a bit"

110. I: Oh so one of the teachers said that?

111. H: No one of the kids

112. I: Oh Okay

113. H: yeah and then she said yeah she does....So I decided to go and tell the
 114. teacher who was the deputy head and I told him I didn't tell him about the
 115. mental part I just told him about the anger issue problem that he said and
 116. then he said....and I was really angry at that time and I was really fuming and
 117. bursting and he said "well yeah look at you" and then that's what made me

118. stop trusting in a few adults at that time.
119. I: Ahhh okay so you went for help and you don't feel like...
120. H: Yeah he didn't help at all
121. I: Ahhh okay, how long did you feel that way for?
122. H: Well I felt that way well it was mainly towards him for a while because he
123. sort of...I sort of lost all my trust in him and I didn't know how to react to him
124. and.....especially when I teacher had to go off cause his wife was having a
125. baby and he had to be our supply teacher for a while so I had him for about 6
126. so I had him for a week and it wasn't very nice.
127. I: Ahhh okay that's really helpful. So do you feel like the difficulties that you
128. had then affected your learning and social life when you were trying to get
129. used to year 7?
130. H: Errrrm well one of the things I promised I would do...like a few things... one
131. of the things is that I would ignore bullies and there were a few bullies at the
132. time there were a few bullies in the school that did bully me
133. I: In primary school?
134. H: Errrrm in both but they didn't all come to this school except only two did
135. but I didn't really bother about them, there was one bully who did come to
136. this school and I'll tell you about her a bit later
137. I:Mmmmmhmmmmmm
138. H: But when I went into this... so one of the things I did promise myself is that
139. I wasn't going to make any friends because I feel like then cause one of the
140. things is I didn't know who they would be with me and I dint know how to
141. start a conversation and I just worry that they'd just start thinking that I'm
142. weird...And another thing would be that I wouldn't that I shouldn't care what
143. all the adults and what all the big kids say about me
144. I: How do you feel about that now? Because that was your promise to
145. yourself before you started secondary school. Now that you've started how
146. do you feel about that? Do you still feel like you don't want to make friends?
147. H: I actually have friends here now
148. I: Okay so that changed? What do you think changed that?
149. H: Well I guess I...I remember I was sitting in RE and I had this girl sitting next
150. to me and I said hi and we and that's when we became friends and errrrr I've
151. been trying really hard and I'm still a bit worried that they don't like me and
152. that's another thing I have... I constantly say sorry a lot when I think that
153. someone is annoyed with me or they are scared of me well not like scared of
154. me that just came out I mean like I mean when they think that I'm weird or
155. that I just start panicking cause what if I start to get too attached or and then
156. I start I just start apologising way too quickly.
157. I: So what is the apologies about? Why do you feel you apologise
158. H: That I'm gonna upset someone, or that they are not going to like me and

159. that I'm going to screw up.
160. I: Has that gotten better or worse since your time between year 6 and 7 ?H:
161. It's become a big thing in year 8 but to be honest when I was in year 6 and 7
162. it wasn't really a big thing for me. I didn't really worry about it that
163. much...well in year 7 I started worrying about it sometimes.
164. I:Can you tell me more about what happened in year 7 when it started?
165. H:Errrrrm, well I guess it's when I errrm.....hmmmmm I don't actually
166. remember cause it's been so long now.
167. I: Okay so before you started in year 7 when you were in year 6 and you
168. thought ahhh I'm going to secondary school, was there anything that worried
169. you about this? At that time?
170. H: Errrrm one of the.... Well not really because especially cause I had my
171. mums help. Cause my mum helped cause for the first week of summer my
172. mum signed me up to come here for a week (CURRENT SECONDARY SCHOOL)
173. in the first week of summer.
174. So like it helped me to know about the place and learn all about the place
175. and that's when the bully came in.
176. I: Oh
177. H: It weren't all bad it was a good thing cause I met this girl call Mary (REAL
178. NAME REPLACED) and we actually met then and we became good friends.
179. I: Ahhh okay so having that summer to come here first before you started in
180. September really helped?
181. H: Yeah it did
182. I: How did you feel about the fact that you knew that some people from your
183. primary school were coming here?
184. H: Yeah... it didn't really bother me cause I knew who they were and I could
185. just ignore them and keep away from them. I don't even remember now who
186. they are actually.
187. I: So it helped that you could avoid them completely?
188. H: Yeah cause the school has more people and I mean this school cause it has
189. more people I can just ignore them and forget about them.
190. I: So is it that coming to a bigger school is....
191. H: Yeah it's better it helps because there is not just the same few classes and
192. kids who you have to put up with every day. And the classes...cause we get
193. mixed up all the time now as long as I know which class I'm in.
194. I: Ahh does it get confusing sometimes?
195. H: well yeah it did used to but I know now and now I'm used to it.
196. I: so do you feel that having more people in the school was helpful?
197. H: Well yeah cause then I didn't have to see the bullies much.
198. I: Ahhh okay I see.
199. H: How would you describe yourself as a member of the school community?

200. If an adult who knew you from school now was to describe you what would
201. they say?
202. I: I would describe myself as a bit short tempered because I especially more
203. on these days now because I'm growing up and it's sort of well often people
204. do things and it really gets me angry. Like ones I was in technology and I felt
205. this thing hit the back of my head and beside me there was a pen and id
206. never seen that pen before and it landed on my stuff, and then I turned
207. around and behind me there was a kid and he had a rubber next to him and
208. then when I turned around again I felt the rubber hit the side of my head and
209. I turned around and his rubber was gone then it was next to me so he threw
210. the pen and the rubber at me. And I was so angry at the time I really wanted
211. to errrrgh yeah I was so angry. And then I told the teacher but then it
212. I: So what helps you in this school to manage at times when you feel angry
213. like that what helps?
214. H: Errrrrm I really get so angry and I sometimes....sometimes I just wanna
215. walk out of the class and I do walk out sometimes but I'm trying my hardest
216. to stop that so now when I feel like that.....I do I walk out but I'll tell the
217. teacher and sometimes walk out but then I'll tell the teacher and then I walk
218. back in.
219. I: Mmmmmhmmm is there any other things that help you to manage in this
220. school when you are feeling this way?
221. H: Well when I started year 8 I developed a lot and I wasn't as angry.
222. I: So was that different to year 7
223. H: Yeah cause in year 7 I was a bit nervous that things would be like it was in
224. primary so like I really felt nervous that it would all happen again.
225. I: So you felt nervous in year 7 and quiet angry
226. H: Yeah I was just trying to deal with everything and I was just scared and just
227. but then in year 8 I didn't much.
228. I: Mmmmmhmmm....what happened in this school? What do you think helped
229. you to feel less angry and less scared?
230. H: Well at first when I get so upset and I get really angry sometimes I just feel
231. like I really can't do my work because of it I just like leave it for a second until
232. I feel more calm and until it goes a bit quiet and then I just focus back on
233. what I was doing before.
234. I: Okay so you've learnt some ways to do that for yourself?
235. H:Yeah
236. I: What about the adults or other things around this school did anything
237. related to them help you?
238. H: Errrrm well yeah the adults help cause they really helped me to calm down
239. and to think about things and stop getting angry especially when I'm really
240. angry or when we have tests because the adults will let you sit in a quiet

241. room and when your angry you talk to them instead of just staying angry and
242. then they listen to when to what makes you angry and it helps me to calm
243. down.
244. I: Is there a particular adult or are there loads of different adults that help
245. with that.
246. H: Well there are a few but most of the time a lot of them are busy
247. H: Yeah.... One of the things that helped me and didn't phase me was the
248. changing from different classes and all of the moving up and down, at first I
249. did get lost but then now I can find my way around I think for the first two
250. days I would get lost but then I manage to find my way around.
251. I: Can you tell me more about how the changing and moving around helped
252. you?
253. H: Yeah well so like it was better cause you didn't have to sit with the same
254. bullies or same people being annoying all the...like for the full day you kinda
255. know that when we have the lesson we are going to be most likely with other
256. people.
257. I: What helped with that? To stop you getting lost?
258. H: I think it was cause we had a planner and we had to write it all down in
259. pen
260. I: Do you feel like any of the difficulties that you experienced affected your
261. learning?
262. H: Yeah but yeah it makes it hard sometimes and I really want to work and do
263. hard and it gets me so upset.
264. I: So when you were in primary school for instance were there any people or
265. things in particular that helped you at times when things were feeling
266. particularly difficult ?
267. H: Yeah well specially because my mum worked in the school when I was in
268. primary
269. I: Ahh did she?
270. H: Yeah and it was good but I couldn't go to her especially at times when I
271. was feeling bad. Well the only times I did go to her was when I was younger
272. and in the playground and then if something would go wrong and she was
273. monitoring the play- ground but then I had to stop it cause I always called her
274. mum.
275. I: Oky so that was in primary school and then you came to this bigger
276. secondary school and your mum wasn't here, what helped?
277. H: It was a bit.... It was actually a lot easier in primary because all the kids well
278. most of the kids I knew wasn't going to come to this school. My mum made
279. sure that I never went to the other schools cause my bullies were going
280. there. Most people who go to my primary school wouldn't usually choose this
281. school.

282. I: So it helped to know that there were not going to be many people from
283. your primary school coming to this school? Knowing that helped you to feel
284. good in this school? Have I got that right?
285. H: Yeah it felt better like leaving it all behind
286. I: Yep okay I understand that.
287. H: This was the third school we visited and I really liked this one.
288. I: How do think the staff at this school helped you to settle well from year 6
289. to year 7
290. H: If it was a lot more quieter it would be better for me
291. I: So when you got here from year six to now are there any times that it feels
292. particularly difficult.
293. H: I Guess a bit cause I have a group of friends and they are really nice and
294. lovely and I know that K and N are really good friends and have known each
295. other since they were babies so they are like sisters and we are all good
296. friends.
297. I: Is there anyone in the school that you can go to, to share at times when
298. things aren't going well.
299. In year 7 what did you find more difficult ?
300. H: Well the teachers name is Ms M she's my key worker and she's been
301. working with me for a while and she helps. And sometimes I just ignore it and
302. deal with it.
303. I: What sort of things do you work on that helps?
304. H: Well we work on my breathing, my singing lessons, she helps me to be
305. calm and think about how I'm feeling and just breathing generally.
306. I: Did you have anyone like that in your primary school?
307. H: I did but it was more like kinda my therapist than more like my key worker
308. helper.
309. I: Ahh so you had someone in primary school helping you?
310. H: Yeah
311. I: Did they help you to think about coming to primary school?
312. H: Not really
313. I: okay so you have a key worker who helps you here at this school.
314. H: Yeah
315. I: How do you feel about your experience here at secondary school? How do
316. you feel it is going?
317. H: Errrm its been alright, I like it much more.
318. I: What do you like about it? What's been the best parts?
319. H: Err well getting away from the bullies and from the teachers cause I didn't
320. trust them.
321. I: Do you feel like you trust the adults here then?
322. H: Yeah definitely, they.... But even-though they are well some of them are

323. always busy but I still get to talk to them when I get angry or upset. The thing
324. I like the best is we have food tech and I like doing that. I wanna be a pastry
325. chef when I grow up so that's why I really like doing that so.
326. I: How do you feel about yourself within the school community.
327. H: It's play like I do try to be part of the school community. Well I always tried
328. to join things like school parliament and I nearly got close.
329. I: You nearly got there though?
330. H: Yeah
331. I: So H what advice would you give to someone who is in year 6 now who has
332. similar difficulties to you to help them to come to secondary school and have
333. a good time?
334. H: Well try your best, everything will be fine and if you just try to ignore
335. everyone else when they are annoying you you will be fine
336. I: That's great that's good advice. What would you say to the adults who help
337. people to make a happy journey from year 6 to year 7?
338. H: Errrrrm I'd say well hear them out first and if they have ideas about how to
339. make things better or good, let them try to figure it out and if it doesn't work
340. for them try and compromise and include yours and their ideas try and add
341. an idea to their idea to help that will mix together.
342. I: Yeah I see what you mean so compromise, hearing you, listening to you.
343. H: Ahhh and another thing cause I didn't trust the people well lots of people
344. before I would say just.....Not everyone is going to be the same kids that are
345. mean to you or bully you so try and trust them and try and ignore them the
346. bullies cause once you ignore them they ignore you and then you won't have
347. to deal with them and you can find friends and make new ones.
348. I: So nearly don H you are doing really well.
349. I: Is there anything else that you wanted to ask me anything?
350. H: Well is it just today you are coming in cause it really helps to have
351. someone like you to come in for me to talk to.
352. I: I won't be no I'm a visitor for today. But I'm really happy that you feel
353. comfortable speaking to me and I have found your interview so interesting
354. and so helpful thank you.
355. H: It's okay.

Appendix: 11: Interview with Asif.

Interview 5: "Asif" Year 8

A= Participant

R= Researcher

R: Hi...so the first question is can you tell me about your experience of school so far? Well tell me about some of the difficulties that you had in school from primary and onwards?

A: Errrrm well

R: Do you think that you had any difficulties in school?

A: Yeah...probably a, a few.

R: Ahh okay so tell me what...what was difficult for you?

A: Errrrr when I was like in year 5 when we started going swimming and we started getting changed in the boys changing room and the teacher told off me.

R: So you feel that the difficulties started in year 5?

A: Yeah....when we started going swimming in the boys changing rooms...(pause).

R: Can you tell me a bit more about that?

A: Basically boys had to take our clothes off and go to the shower and we had to cover ourselves and basically everyone started to laugh at me.

R: They started laughing at you?

A: Yeah

R: What was it that they were laughing at?

A: Well saying "ahh you're a slow coach" and things like that. And everyone would laugh at me.

R: Was this all of the time?

A: Yeah....well not all the time cause sometimes they would have to stay outside. So people wouldn't come next to me...like they would have to stay out of the changing room.

R: So you would get told off

A: Yeah

R: Ahhh I see. Why were you getting told off?

A: Because people would tell of me and say I've done things.

R: What other problems did you have to deal with? What else happened? It sounds like things got difficult for you in year 5. Have I got that right?

A: Yeah

R: Ahh okay. So what else was happening in year 5 and 6? What other things did you have difficulties with?

A: Someone accused me of stealing...in year 6. I went to my mentor in the morning and she was like "you've been accused of stealing a phone a camera and"... another thing I don't remember what it was...but I was accused of stealing it from the computer rooms in school.

R: So do you feel like the mentor supported you?

A: No she was asking me questions and she was like "think about what you are gonna do". So I started thinking but like she wouldn't like say anything that would help me. Cause she was on the phone.

R: To who?

A: To the office about something.

R: And you felt like you needed and wanted help in that situation.

A: Yeah but she was too busy. And she didn't help me anyway.

R: Oh okay. What do you think she could have done to help you?

A: Like she could have just like she could have at least asked me like showed me what I should have done. Because like...this kid told me to take the camera and like I told him I wasn't gonna do it...and then. But Miss wouldn't listen. But then I quickly took it and gave it to him and said "I'm gonna run now" and then he said "why you running for? You're such a scaredy cat" and I ran away. And I said "I'm not gonna get caught and get into trouble or take the blame for you" I said cause at; first I said I'm not taking them and then the kid...he said "we can just take the stickers off and pretend it was mine". He said "Look I'll take all the stickers off and put it in my bag and bring it back tomorrow and tell

everyone it's my phone". And then after he just put it in his bag. And then after... the next day they found something in a bag and accused me of stealing it. And I just ran away and told him I'm not having anything to do with it. So I gave them to him and so he took them and I...I'm the one who got the blame for it...So she should have listened to me. My mentor should have listened to me then I could explain and I'm the only one that got into trouble for that it so Miss should of listened.

R: Oh I see. So that was in the case of that situation. Do you think that before this happened your mentor listened to you?

A: No

R: Can you give me another example?

A: Well they could have at least let me bring the other kid in and let him say what he done. But they didn't listen.

R: They didn't listen?

A: No.

R: You say they who do you mean by they?

A: Well the teachers all of the adults. Cause and then they called my parents in but they didn't listen to me.

R: Ahhh okay so by "they" you mean the adults?

A: Yeah.

R: Is that all the adults at school or outside of school?

A: Errr the ones in school cause all the adults in school just blamed just me.

R: Was that the first time that something like this had happened?

A: Yeah I never ever done something like this in my entire life and then the entire school knew about it.

R: The entire school knew about it?

A: Yeah

R: How was that for you? Knowing that the entire school knew about it?

A: Well everyone started to like going away from me and be like “you’re gonna steal my stuff” (Long pause and held head down).

R: How did you manage that?

A: I just sat or played football with my friends in the cage. And you could just go and sit in a inside sometimes for like half an hour whilst all the other kids go outside.

R: So that was year 5. What was year 6 like?

A: Year 6 was kind of normal. Normal stuff nothing happened to me at that time. It was just ike stuff was really hard so I used to just leave the class and run to my mentor and stuff and my mentor would like take me out sometimes when I got stressed cause I’d get stressed sometimes. And she used to take me out and we would do some drawing and stuff...to help me.

And then I would just run to her and then she’d be like “what are you doing here now?” You have your pass, you should have used your pass” and tell me off and like...so yeah I was just like “ahh there’s no point” then I’d carry on drawing.

R: So were there times when you felt like your mentor helped sometimes?

A: sometimes when I was being like when I was being hard on myself.

R: Was there anyone else in primary school that helped you?

A: Errrr hmm no.

R: What help would you have found useful do you think?

A: I could have had a teacher like close to me so that they could see what was actually happening.

R: So they could see what’s happening?

A: Yeah like so that they could write it down and show my mentor when I did good things and not just sometimes when I did bad things. And to help me when I do stuff.

R: Ahh do you mean to help you to manage your behaviour?

A: Yeah

R: What sort of behaviours do you think?

A: Well when like I get really upset and like throw the table over and then when they tell me to do something I don't want to do I got really stressed and hid and run away.

R: How were these situations dealt with?

A: The teachers would always come and find me and ask me why I didn't want to do the things they said. And like it was near Christmas and like we did pass the parcel and they did pass the parcel dear and I didn't want to do the deal because everyone would laugh at me and I told my teacher id didn't want to do it and she said "you have to it's the game". And then I ran off to my mentor and told her and she was like said the same thing and said I have to cause it's the game...and then I just got mad and stressed cause I told them I didn't want to do it but they didn't listen.

R: So you had a mentor in primary school to go to?

A: Yeah but she didn't listen to me sometimes.

R: Yep I do hear that you felt like you were not being listened to quiet a lot of the time.

A: Yeah and she wasn't always there like sometimes throughout days she would leave me...like when I needed to find her she wasn't always in on all the days that I needed her.

R: Ahh I see. I'm sorry to hear that.

A: It's okay.

R: So that was a bit about primary school. Can you tell me about how things were for you when you started this school? When you started secondary school? Can you tell me a bit first about the beginning. How it was for you in the beginning?

A: Errrm well during like transition I did see some people from like other schools. And I saw people from religious class. Cause I go to religious class outside of school so like so my family sends me there.

R: Was that a good thing?

A: Yeah

R: So seeing different and new people helped you?

A: Yeah. Cause they didn't know me from my primary school and they didn't know about me what people in like year 5 and 6 knew. And then some people from my religious class, they left. So like after like in year 7 I just moved on from what happened.

R: You moved on?

A: Yeah

R: How did you move on? What helped you? What did you tell yourself to help you to move on?

A: I just decided that I had to just forget about what happened in year 5 and 6 yeah and then after I would come home I would go home and tell my mum about stuff that used to happen in primary school and she would be like "can you just forget that now, It's just stupid nonsense" cause I also used to use like inappropriate words and stuff...at school when I got stressed.

R: Ahhh okay. So who do you think helped you the most at that time?

A: Well nobody really, until I came here and then my teachers and SPL helped me towards the end of year 7. So basically, if I was finding it hard my team would help me like they would get someone to get Mrs Hollins (pseudonym) and so they would help...cause they knew how I sometimes get when I get stressed or upset or something. And basically so when I got upset once basically someone must have gone inside and told Mrs Hollins and then my team knew I would sometimes lose my temper and get upset or something, or something and my team would come and calm me down. So they would call Mrs Collins and then she left and then Ms Ball (pseudonym) took over.

R: What does SPL stand for?

A: Errrm basically the head of the team.

R: Ahh okay What sort of things did your team do to help?

A: They gave me like an exit pass, a new timetable and I moved class.

R: you moved class?

A: Yeah. Cuase in my old class I would get into fights or get upset cause people would say mean stuff to me sometimes.

R: So at the beginning of year 7 things were a bit tricky for you and because of this your team gave you an exit pass, new timetable and moved you to a different class?

A: Yeah

R: Did you find that these things helped you at this time?

A: Yeah cause I wasn't getting on well in the first class...in the beginning of year 7

R: Ahh okay. And what else would happen what else would help that your team would do?

A: Like, at the end of break they would ask like "did anything happen at break time?" and like every day in tutorial my tutor would ask did anything happen yesterday.

R: Ahh right so at breaks, or after breaks and every day in the morning adults at this school would speak to you to check that everything was going okay?

A: Yeah. And then like every day someone would come and take me to talk and see if things were okay.

R: How was that? Was it helpful?

A: Yeah. Well sometimes I'd tell them all the same things like normal things and then sometimes if I had a problem I would tell them. Like this one time somebody punched me in the back and I told them.

R: Ahh okay and what would happen when you told them things like this?

A: They would usually deal with it and that person would get a phone call home.

R: How would you know that they were dealing with it?

A: Because they would take the details and then the teacher would tell me to take them to who did things and then I would tell the teacher where they would normally sit and then the teacher would take them out of the class and talk to them and deal with it.

R: Right. So if you were to compare your experience in primary school to your experience in secondary school how would you compare them?

A: I'd say secondary school is much better. Because when they deal with the person the person would leave me alone and they wouldn't talk to me or wind me up ever again.

R: Ahh okay is that what happens?

A: Yeah

R: So it sounds like you feel like things are dealt with differently at secondary.

A: Yeah. They deal with things here.

R: So imagine if you could give me a list of things that people here have done to help you when things were feeling difficult what would be on the list?

A: So there was a time when people were messing around in the shower and someone wet me so I punched him and I told them told them that I punched him for a reason and then the teacher listened and dealt with it. And I called the teacher and said "Sir he turned the shower on me while I was trying to get changed" and then the teacher said well you shouldn't have punched him you should have just called a teacher, and then I said I couldn't cause I was trying to get changed and then the teacher gave me a note and told me to give it to his SPL and then so I did and his SPL spoke to me in private to find out what happened and I told him and he dealt with it. And then the teachers asked like very one what happened and every one told them because they all knew what happened because they saw when it happened. And so they dealt with it.

R: Ahh okay. So it sounds like when things are getting difficult for you, you tell an adult and you feel like the adults listen to you?

A: Yeah

R: And when you tell the adults they deal with it and then they show you and tell you how they are dealing with things.

A: Yeah

R: So these things have helped you in secondary school at times when things are feeling difficult? And these things seem to help you to not get into trouble?

A: Yeah.

R: Is there anything else that helps you not to get into trouble since being in secondary school?

A: Errrrm like kind of I ask some of the PE teachers if I could get like a sponge ball or something to like squeeze for when I get angry and I got one. They gave me one.

and I lost it just last week.

R: Ahh okay but when you asked for it they listened and gave you it?

A: Yeah.

R: So during the transition period what else do you think helped you?

A: Errrrm, there was like errrm like when teachers used to help me they would like used to talk to me and they would just move along with what they was saying. Cause sometimes I would ask the teachers if I could sit in a corner or something for a while. Like just to cool down and I would and they would let me. And then I'd come back to the table and then I'd just carry on doing my work.

R: Ahh okay. So it sounds like they understood?

A: Yeah

R: What do you think they understood?

A: That I was kinda like I was kinda stressed and so I needed to get away from people at the table for a little while and that I need to get away for a little while before I get to finish my work.

R: So it felt like they understood that you needed space at times like that?

A: Yeah

R: To cool down?

A: Yeah

R: Was this with all teachers or most?

A: Most because in some classes some teachers don't like have space for me to go and cool down cause tables and stuff are in the way.

R: So most teachers seem to understand that you are a child who needs time out space sometimes?

A: Yeah

R: Do you feel like there were particular times when you got to secondary school which were more difficult? During the settling and moving from primary to

secondary school?

A: Hmmmmm no

R: Nothing in particular? Like timetables or moving around to different classes?

A: Do you mean when they changed my timetable?

R: Any particular time?

A: No it was just normal. Well not before that cause there were people that I kept getting into arguments with cause they would keep saying inappropriate stuff to me. In the beginning of year 7. So then they moved me and it was just normal.

R: If there was anything then and now that was bothering you who would you got to?

A: Errm I would go to my SPL if they're not teaching or my tutor if they're not Teaching.

R: Mmmmmhmmm

A: Or I'd just tell the teacher that I just need to sit out for a bit. And yeah student support.

R: Student support?

1. A: Yeah

2. R: So your SPL and your mentor because you know you mentioned about you having

3. a mentor in year 6 ?

4. A: Yeah.

5. R: So are they different or did they do similar things to help you?

6. A: Yeah so well like the SPL listens more and they deal with things better.

7. R: How do you feel about your secondary school experience so far? How do you think it's going so far?

9. A: Like pretty good. Not in the start cause in the beginning I had to have some

10. changes, but the teachers said like they changed some things they changed like a

11. few thing in the beginning of year 7 when it was going bad and then it was good.

12. R: So the changes you mentioned like moving class, exit pass and new timetable is

13. that what you mean about them changing things earlier.

14. A: Yeah. And like when you tell the teachers things they listen to you and they deal

15. with stuff. And my friends here are much better than my friends in primary school.
- 16.R: Ahh okay. So would you say your friendships in primary school were different
17. the ones in secondary school?
- 18.A: Yeah cause they tell you good things and tell you to do good things so like if you
19. get angry if I get angry then they would be like "stop cause like they ain't worth it
20. and they ain't worth you getting into trouble for" and they tell you good things like
21. that. But in primary in primary some people just tell you to do bad things and they
22. don't care and like they don't care if you get into trouble or anything.
- 23.R: So having different friends helped you to have a better time in secondary school?
- 24.A: Yeah cause I got new friends now.
- 25.R: Ahh that's nice, it's nice to have new friends who help you to do the right thing.
- 26.A: Yeah it is.
- 27.R: Anything else? So the other children and friends help you.
- 28.A: Yeah cause my friends will go and call the teachers if people say anything to stress
29. me out and then the teachers deal with it cause they know that I have the same
30. problems as some of the kids who try to upset me or say bad things to me.
- 31.R: So the teachers knew that you sometimes find it hard and they knew that you
32. have some problems?
- 33.A: Yeah so they help because they know I have the same problems as the other kids
34. who some of them who do some bad things sometimes too.
- 35.R: So having staff who know that you might struggle sometimes really helped?
- 36.A: Yeah
- 37.R: Yeah I hear that. I hear what you are saying. How has being here at this school
38. helped you to learn and develop?
- 39.A: Well I'd do like I'd learn more stuff like what job people do and how they do their
40. jobs and like how much they get paid.
- 41.R: Ahh like life skills?
- 42.A: Yeah
- 43.R: How do you see yourself as part of the school community?
- 44.A: I see myself as like a person who is like just trying to get on with things and just
45. trying to get over a situation.
- 46.R: Who helps you with that?
- 47.A: Errm my SPL.

- 48.R: Anyone else? Like anyone else in your life that helps?
- 49.A: Mmmmm my mum and my dad.
- 50.R: So it sounds like things that have been said to you by your SPL , your teachers and
51. your mum and dad have helped you to try and “get over things” and move on?
I’m
52. guessing. Have I got that right?
- 53.A: Yeah
- 54.R: So last few questions now. What advice would you give to another person who
55. was similar to you who had similar problems and difficulties and they were coming
56. from primary to start year 7 in secondary school. What advice would you give them
57. to help them to have a good time and settle well into secondary?
- 58.A: I’d say like if anyone stresses you out or calls you names or anything I’d say like go
59. to your SPL and like just ignore it and like find a place where you can be comfortable
60. with yourself.
- 61.R: And where is your place where you are comfortable with yourself?
- 62.A: Like outside for a little while. Sometimes away from people.
- 63.R: ahh right. That’s really good advice. Anything else you’d tell them?.
- 64.A: I’d say...(pause)...just try your best.
- 65.R: Okay and another question which is a bit similar. What advice would you give to
66. the adults like, your learning mentor in primary, teachers your SPL and tutor. What
67. advice would you give them to help them to best help someone like you?
68. A: I’d say if, if something happens and they, kids tells you should deal with it and
69. deal with it as soon as possible...so that person like so if they say they’re going to do
70. something they should like do it as soon as possible and like do like as in and do
71. what they should have done like. I can’t like kind of explain it but I can think of it.
- 72.R: That’s great just keep saying what you need to say.
- 73.A: Like so it’s like, if I was to say that like to some kid in year 7 that like someone was
74. saying mean things to him he should be able to like just leave his bag and leave the
75. classroom and go find and tell his SPL because that’s more important than like all
76. the other stuff and more important than learning.

77.R: Right so I see what you mean. That's a really good point. So sort of like allow
78. students to go and find a member of staff straight away, and make sure that its
dealt

79. with straight away regardless of whether or not lessons are going on or not.

80.A: Yeah

81.R: Great. Any other advice for the adults who are trying to support children who
82. sometimes find it hard like you did?

83.A: And that when they are doing a seating plan they should like sort out
people...say

84. for example not put friends together cause like that's gonna disturb the learning
85. cause they will just start chatting and mucking about. And spread people around
so

86. that you be comfortable with the person next to you and behind you.

87.R: Yep so having a seating plan so that people are comfortable.

88.A: Yeah

89.R: Any other advice?

90.A: Nah

91.R: Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about your experience of being a
child

92. who finds it difficult to not get stressed and not get angry and not get into
trouble.

93.A: Like they write things down and keep a note and keep track of people so for
94. instance there is this girl and she has epilepsy and the teachers keep a track on
her,

95. and they tell us the SPL and tutors told us all like everyone should not stare and
not

96. be like talk about it or tease her or anything otherwise they'd get a piece of their
97. minds that's what the SPL and tutor said.

98.R: Awww okay.

99.A: So the SPL would have done something about it and said like there' this girl
and

100. she has this disease and we need to look after her. Cause my mum and her
mum

101. used to be best friends and she lives right near me. And she goes of to ATL
when she

102. feels ill and at one point I thought she left but then I knew that she was in
ATL the

103. whole time. So they like they help her too.

104. R: They help her too.

105. A: Yeah

106. R: Does it help you to know that other children are getting help from the
school.

107. A: Yeah cause they help people who have any problems in school and they
deal with

108. things and they are like “go to your SPL or tutor and go to ATL and stuff. And they do
109. that with lots of people.
110. R: So do you think that the fact that you know that there are other children who are
111. having problems and who are getting support. Do you think that knowing this
112. helps?
113. A: Yeah
114. R: In which ways does this help the most?
115. A: Cause like you know that you’re in safe hands. You know that they like that they
116. listen and they will help you even when you do the wrong thing they still like say like
117. awww you shouldn’t have dealt with it like next time try to do this or that but they
118. deal with it as well.
119. R: thanks for that. So being listened to is important to and has helped?
120. A: Yeah.
121. R: And being told or given examples of what you could have done to better manage
122. the situation?
123. A: Yeah
124. R: And also knowing that things are going to be dealt with by the adults?
125. A: Yeah
126. R: great. Anything else you’d like to tell me about this?
127. A: Mmmm nah.
128. R Great well thank you so much for this it’s been so useful.
129. A: Ok.

Appendix 12- Main codes which coincide with Codes

Axial Code – Relationships

| # | Open Codes |
|----|---|
| 1 | Allocation of key named staff for support. |
| 2 | Shift in perceptions of how adults are perceived. |
| 3 | Having someone to go to. |
| 4 | Specific key named person/people. |
| 5 | Adults reaching out early onset. |
| 6 | Feeling that it's okay to be "annoyed angry or upset". |
| 7 | Message from adults that it's okay to be angry, annoyed or upset. |
| 8 | Pupil's attention to school staff infrastructure supporting relationship development |
| 9 | Hierarchy relevant in relation to support. |
| 10 | SLT Involvement important and recognised by participants. |
| 11 | SLT input promoting a wider circle of support. |
| 12 | - Experience of staff reaching out in a supportive and non-reactive way as enhancing relationships. |
| 13 | - Early positive interactions with key staff members post-transition. |
| 14 | Having staff members in class who were aware of needs developing relationships. |
| 15 | Accessibility of support staff to go to. |
| 16 | Historically in primary school, getting into trouble linked to peers/relationships |
| 17 | -Relationships seen as less positive |
| 18 | - Difficult relationships with peers in primary setting. |
| 19 | - Mixed feelings about peers joining same secondary school |
| 20 | - Trying to make sense of difficult peer relationships in primary school. |
| 21 | - Friendships and quality of friendships as key. In Primary. |
| 22 | Encouraged to socialise with wider peer groups. |
| 23 | Increase in extension of positive peer relationships from school outside of school post-transition/Going to the cinema and meeting friends outside of school. . |
| 24 | Wider scope of investments in friendships post-transition. |
| 25 | Finding a better fit of friends post transition. |
| 26 | Peers who did not know full details of primary school "reputation" and experiences seen as more favourable peer relationships. |

Axial Code- Trust

| # | Open Codes |
|----|---|
| 1 | Developing trust in peers and adults. |
| 2 | Developing trust in adults/Key staff members. Negative associations made with primary school experiences. |
| 3 | Negative experience in primary school resulted in not being able to trust people in general. |
| 4 | A sense of despondency. |
| 5 | Associations and difficult feelings carried over from primary school experiences |
| 6 | The need to feel like key people understand before being able to trust. |
| 7 | Feeling understood very early on post-transition. |
| 8 | The need for staff and peers to prove themselves as trustworthy. |
| 9 | Trust developed = Freedom. |
| 10 | Building trust by making friends/Finding trust through new found friendships. |
| 11 | Fears that history would repeat itself re peer and staff relational challenges. |
| 12 | Continued possibility of and opportunities to make new friendships. |
| 13 | Quality of friendships in secondary supports a sense of belonging and trust. |
| 14 | Historically in primary school, getting into trouble linked to peers/relationships. |
| 15 | Advised others to start process by trusting more. |
| 16 | Lack of trust that feelings of being heard about important aspects of school. Links with trust |

| | |
|--|---|
| 17 | Difficulties trusting peers pre- transition |
| 18 | Difficulties trusting peers post-transition |
| 19 | Difficulties trusting peers permeating willingness to trust peers and adults post-transition. |
| 20 | Difficulties trusting adults permeating willingness to trust peers and adults post-transition. |
| 21 | Feeling let down |
| 22 | - Relaying of vivid memories related to moments when trust was loss/Definitive moments of broken trust. |
| 23 | - Feeling let down by adults |
| 24 | - Feeling let down by peers |
| 25 | Sustained trust in parental figures pre-and post-transition |
| 26 | Trusting family ties/sustained trust in peers outside of school context |
| 27 | - Expressed fear of being rejected by peers pre and post transition. |
| 28 | - Peers seen as “predators” |
| 29 | - Lack of motivation to build relationships with peers. |
| 30 | - Feeling used by peers impacting willingness to build peer relationships. |
| 31 | - Experience of feeling bullied by peers leading to lack of drive to build new relationships |
| 32 | - Overcoming previous relationship based fears and anxieties leading to enhanced relationships with peers. |
| Axial Code – Needing to feel heard and understood | |
| # | Open Codes |
| 1 | Feeling unheard |
| 2 | - Feeling like adults are not listening in times of need. |
| 3 | - Feelings like adults do not understand their expressions. |
| 4 | Questioning own abilities to clearly express ones-self/Through expressions such as “I don’t know” and or “I cant explain it”. |
| 5 | Feeling greatly misunderstood by adults |
| 6 | Adults actions seen as conveying a lack of understanding. |
| 7 | Communication break down with key adults attributed to feeling unheard. |
| 8 | “They don’t listen” – (Speaking about adults). |
| 9 | Experiencing being listened to in early onset post-transition. |
| 10 | Feeling heard perceived though adult responses in times of need - |
| 11 | - Adults taking action results in participants feeling heard and understood. |
| 12 | - Feeling frustrated due to perceived lack of action by adults. |
| 13 | Feelings that peers do not understand them. |
| 14 | Association of experience of being listened to linked explicitly to secondary school experiences. |
| 15 | - Positive turning points associated with times when they felt listened to. |
| 16 | - Positive turning points associated with feeling that staff show that they are on participant’s side. |
| 17 | Difficulties believing that adults were listening. |
| 18 | Feeling unheard linked to shutting down of communication. |
| 19 | Feeling not listened to leading to partial disengagement with adults and peers |
| 20 | Feeling misunderstood resulting in lower levels of trust. |
| 21 | Feeling unheard linked to frustrations with peers |
| 22 | Perception of “action closely linked to feeling supported and understood. |
| 23 | Helpful verses unhelpful responses from adults/school systems- linked to feeling of being unheard |
| 24 | The need to feel understood by peers |
| 25 | - Feeling lack of understanding from peers leading to a sense of isolation. |
| 26 | - Feeling lack of understanding from peers leading to rejection of peers (“I just stayed by myself”, “I avoided my friends”) |
| 27 | - Having a familiar peer as support post transition enhancing feelings of being understood |
| 28 | Knowing that peers also had challenges enhanced feelings of being understood “it’s not just me”, “other people have such things”. |
| 29 | Staff sharing minimal information about peer’s challenges leading to feeling of being understood. |
| 30 | Staff remaining transparent about consequences of actions following peer conflict support feelings of being heard and understood. |
| 31 | Having familiar peers and adults who understand needs and challenges seen as supportive. |

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| 32 | - Linked to feeling able to ask adults for help. |
| 33 | - Also linked to feeling listened to. |
| 34 | Adults advised to listen-Feeling listened to. |
| 35 | Adults advised to take action/feeling heard. |
| 36 | Distinction made between the perceived experience of being <i>heard and listened to</i> . |
| Axial codes- Reminders and continuity of pre- transition interventions and support post-transition. | |
| # | Open codes |
| 1 | Self -recognition of signs of successful interventions remembered and identified in ways which effected change. |
| 2 | Remembering and holding in mind that interventions were put in place pre and post transition. |
| 3 | Intervention implementation outside of class room deemed helpful. |
| 4 | - Strategies learned during support from a counsellor pre transition. |
| 5 | - Calming art based activities considered helpful |
| 6 | - Breathing exercises recalled and used when appropriate to calm and help to distil anger. |
| 7 | - Interventions to link feelings with thoughts and physiology. |
| 8 | Expressed desire to have access to a designated time or person to talk to in- depth deemed helpful. |
| 9 | Reminder and prompts from staff of avenues within school to get support |
| 10 | Being approached by staff and given verbal reminders support put in place. |
| 11 | Peers as an alternative to getting help in times of need deemed helpful |
| 12 | Home school and school, to school liaison to outline support plans which is reinforced by same staff early post transition. |
| Axial code - School orientation visits pre-transition deemed helpful post-transition. | |
| # | Open codes |
| 1 | Visits from school staff deemed helpful in primary school setting |
| 2 | Visit supported a sense of knowing |
| 3 | The Support from parents again deemed particularly strong |
| 4 | Transition day was anticipated mainly positively |
| 5 | Fears about transitioning with peers from secondary school experienced as strong / helped by transition day. |
| 6 | Although significant at the time memories of transition day failing. |
| 7 | Intervention mostly informal. |
| Axial code - School making reasonable adjustments as required following early onset of transition. | |
| # | Open codes |
| 1 | Responses from adults at time or crises experienced as pivotal points. |
| 2 | Experienced challenges early on set of transitions |
| 3 | Seeing others who had challenges through schools response/adjustments made for others. |
| 4 | School staffs approach during crisis points and ad hoc deemed helpful |
| 5 | School support adjustments fostered a sense of acceptance for participants. |
| 6 | Feeling allowed to "move on" and start afresh |
| 7 | Feeling able to ask for what is required for support/asking to sit out of the class when required. |
| 8 | Recognition of needs and adjustments required. |
| 9 | School supportive/responses through adjustments deemed helpful |
| 10 | Adaptation of different ways of managing difficulties supported by adjustments. |
| 11 | Being give a new timetable and |
| Axial code - Impact of school environment and infrastructure. | |
| # | Open codes |
| 1 | Bigger school community seen as preferable and safer. |
| 2 | A wider selection of staff to draw upon to gain SEMH support deemed preferable by participants. |
| 3 | Wanting to feel liked by staff |
| 4 | Feeling liked by staff resulted in liking staff led to |
| 5 | Not all teachers are seen in a positive light. |

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| 6 | Possible need to express and be seen to have a dislike of some staff members-expected ways of relating? |
| 7 | More adults are seen as a safety net |
| 8 | Adults linked with feelings of safety |
| 9 | Expressed suspicions of adults and peers. |
| 10 | School timetable fostered security as help when lost (possible this is about autonomy?). |
| 11 | Extended recollections of difficulties being with the same peer within primary settings. |
| 12 | Wanting to feel liked by staff |
| 13 | Feeling liked by staff resulted in liking staff led to |
| 14 | Not all teachers are seen in a positive light. |
| 15 | Possible need to express and be seen to have a dislike of some staff members-expected ways of relating? |
| 16 | More adults are seen as a safety net |
| 17 | Adults linked with feelings of safety |
| Axial code- Association of origins of negative self -perceptions deemed to be rooted in Primary school. | |
| # | Open codes |
| 1 | "They all saw when I got mad. |
| 2 | "I'm not like that now" |
| 3 | Experiences a sense of embarrassment about actions. |
| 4 | Experiences of being shunned by peers in primary school/ Rejection experienced. |
| 5 | Feeling that everyone was "better" behaviour and academic |
| 6 | A sense of shame instilled following difficult experiences- |
| 7 | Shaping primary school experiences and perception. |
| 8 | Severed relationship sometimes due to staff leaving. |
| 9 | A sense of being left- Abandonment. |
| 10 | Feeling trapped/ no escape/ |
| 11 | Positive experienced expressed minimal. |
| 12 | Having higher level of dependency on relationships at home. Mum mentioned regularly. |
| 13 | Mum as a support to survive difficulties at school |
| 14 | The need to feel nurtured – sometimes shutting down at home after school. |
| 15 | Feeling disliked by some adults and peers in primary school. Primary school associated with feelings which needed to be shut off from. Muted. |
| 16 | Frustrations about limits of amount of peers within primary phase/ same class. |
| 17 | New beginning associated with secondary school transition. |
| Axial code-Polar opposite perceptions of current and previous schooling experiences. | |
| # | Open codes primary school as negative |
| 1 | Discussions regarding relationships with peers within primary school seemingly upsetting . |
| 2 | Difficulties are expressing any positive experiences related to time in primary school. |
| 3 | A sense of feeling let down located within primary school |
| 4 | "I had to live through it" primary school likened to a sentence/punishment |
| 5 | "it was hell""it was " down there and this school is much higher" |
| 6 | Associations of primary settings made with a range of difficulties |
| 7 | Primary school =Experience of being bullied |
| 8 | Primary school associated with feelings of feeling unheard. |
| 9 | Primary school associated with feelings of being unheard. |
| 10 | "they didn't care" –Primary narrative predominated with difficulties. |
| 11 | Feelings of not being held in mind by adults. |
| 12 | Difficulties with adults and peers |
| 13 | School refusal occurring |

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| 14 | They didn't listen |
| 16 | Feeling that support mechanisms were non-supportive. |