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**The Unheard Voices of Nurture: Exploring
Children's Experiences of a Secondary School
Nurture Group.**

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Abstract

The first Nurture Group (NG) was established by Marjorie Boxall in 1969 to improve the emotional wellbeing of children in schools (Kirkbride, 2014). They aim to provide support to meet the individual needs of children with a focus on social and emotional growth away from the mainstream classroom in a safe and secure environment. There has been substantial evidence on the effectiveness of NGs (O'Connor & Colwell, 2002; Cooper & Whitebread, 2007 and Griffiths, Stenner & Hicks, 2014), but little research to attain the views of the children who attend NGs, this research aimed to do this.

The two research questions aimed to explore the experiences of children attending a secondary school NG and whether these experiences were helpful, and if they were similar to or different from their mainstream classroom experiences. Participants were six children who were attending a secondary school NG in one Local Authority in the North of England, who took part in individual semi-structured interviews. Transcripts were analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009).

Five superordinate themes emerged from the interpretative analysis; control, systems, structural and physical elements, purpose of the NG and inter-relationships. The children's experiences supported previous findings in that NGs provide a secure base where children can form positive relationships with their peers and adults whom they can trust and rely upon, something which they did not experience in the mainstream classroom. They also attributed an improvement in academic skills and feelings of confidence to their NG experience. However, the NG does not appear to be seen by the children or by their peers and mainstream teachers as an inclusive part of school with participants expressing a desire to return to their "normal" classrooms due to feeling different by being in the NG. Lack of power and choice over entering the NG and when they could leave was experienced by the children with no involvement from mainstream staff. Confusion over the purpose of the intervention is also apparent. These findings are discussed in relation to implications for Educational Psychologists supporting children and schools as well as making a set of recommendations for further research.

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Abbreviations

BESD	Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (SEND Code of Practice, DfE, 2001)
BPS	British Psychology Society
DfE	Department for Education
EP	Educational Psychologist
HCPC	Health and Care Professionals Council
IPA	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
LA	Local Authority
NG	Nurture Group
NGN	Nurture Group Network

NICE	National Institute for Health and Care Excellence
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
SEMH	Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs (SEND Code of Practice, DfE, 2014)
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disability
TA	Teaching Assistant
TEP	Trainee Educational Psychologist

Definitions

For clarity and transparency, the following terms which have been used throughout this research will be clarified.

BESD & SEMH	The terms BESD and SEMH are used intermittently throughout the research to reflect the historical context. Research conducted before publication of the new SEND Code of Practice (DfE, 2014) uses the category BESD, and those after, such as this research uses the category SEMH. This research acknowledges this but for transparency kept to the originality of the literature.
Parents	Although this research acknowledges that children can be in the care of the Local Authority or other family members, this research uses the term parent to describe any adult who has legal responsibility.
Children	For this research, the participants were classed as children. This was thought about in relation to whether participants would be classed as 'young people'. However, as five out of the six participants were in year seven and the other in year eight, this appeared to be appropriate. The United Nations on the Rights of the Child (1989) defines a child as a human being below the age of eighteen. Biologically, a child is seen to be anyone between birth and puberty. In addition, after meeting the participants and completing the interviews, they appeared to me as being immature for their age.

Chapter 1 – Introduction

Background

Government concerns in the UK regarding children's mental health difficulties (DfE, 2016b) has led to an increase in the popularity of Nurture Groups (NGs). They were originally created by Marjorie Boxall in 1969, an EP who was working with children in London, who had been permanently excluded from school. NGs offer a safe, secure and predictable environment where opportunity is given to form secure attachments with key adults. Children who were seen to exhibit challenging behaviours were identified as having a special educational need (SEN), categorised as having, behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD), reflected in the Code of Practice (DfE; 2001). In 2014, the new SEND Code of Practice (DfE; 2014b) was introduced where the term BESD had been replaced to reflect the idea that children's behaviour is a result of their social, emotional and mental health difficulties (SEMH). However, the term BESD is still commonly used in the literature (Sheffield & Morgan, 2017).

In 2011, the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) highlighted how NGs can have a positive impact on children and their families. There has been considerable research into the effectiveness of NG settings (Binnie & Allen, 2008; Colley, 2009 & Griffiths, Stenner & Hicks, 2014) although the majority of this literature has been conducted in a primary setting. A widely-accepted limitation of this research is that there is a lack of child voice on the effectiveness of NGs. This research aims to explore voice through listening to children's experiences of a secondary school NG.

Personal Interest

Throughout my career, I have always worked with children who exhibit challenging behaviour; firstly, as a support assistant and then, as a teacher in a Young Offenders Institute. I then moved to a large secondary school where I took on the role as Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinator (SENCo), looking at ways I can support the pupils

who exhibited challenging behaviour. I heard about NGs and consequently attended the Nurture Group Network (NGN) accredited training, after which I established a NG in the school. At the time, I gave little thought as to how the children would view it and did not take their perspectives into account. As I began my first year as a Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP) my interest developed.

Working with schools in my role as a TEP, I developed an understanding of the importance of gaining children's views. This was the starting point to my research.

Positionality

Due to my previous involvement in establishing a NG in a school and attending the accredited training I felt that I needed to be transparent. Biggerstaff & Thompson (2008) highlight the importance of this and as a result I kept a reflexive diary throughout the process (see Appendix 10). In addition, reflexive comments have been used throughout the main narrative to record my thoughts.

Thesis Chapters

This thesis has seven chapters, which present the research process.

Chapter two is a review on the current literature around NGs. This highlights an area of need in terms of more research is needed from the voices of children. The research questions are also presented.

Chapter three is the methodology chapter which offers a rationale as to why the chosen methodology was used. In addition to this, the chapter includes how steps were taken to ensure that a quality piece of research had been taken place.

Chapter four contains procedural information, such as facts about the participants and the context of the school. The design of the study is described in a linear way.

Chapter five presents the research findings from the interpretative analysis. This includes the subordinate and superordinate themes that emerged from the data. Extracts

from the participants are included throughout to support the interpretations that were made and increase transparency.

Chapter six discusses the interpreted findings in relation to the current literature.

Chapter seven draws a conclusion from the research. Limitations of the study are also discussed. Future recommendations are made in both relation to wider school and EP practice.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter reviews the current literature surrounding the research topic of Nurture Groups (NGs). It is split into three sections. Firstly, I will address how schools are needing to meet the needs of some of their most vulnerable and challenging pupils, and how exclusion ignores the real needs. This will be related to government policy. I will then go on to discuss the literature around NG, in terms of their rise, aims of practice and effectiveness both within primary and secondary settings. This section will also address concerns surrounding the NG approach such as the labelling of children. The remainder of the chapter will focus on the importance of child voice and what this can bring to the research. Finally, a conclusion will be presented regarding the literature review which will lead to this research aims. This literature review was carried out using the funnel method, which begins with a broad search and then becomes more defined and specific (Hofstee, 2006; see Appendix 1).

Mental Health and Exclusion

A report by the government (Dfe, 2016a) stated that the number of permanent exclusions in England between 2014 and 2015 had risen to 5,800. This on average is 31 permanent exclusions a day (ibid). Persistent disruptive behaviour remains the most common reason for permanent exclusion in both primary and secondary schools accounting for 32.8% of all permanent exclusions. Further to this, pupils who have a special educational need (SEN) accounts for just over half of all permanent and fixed term exclusions. Pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or with a Statement of SEN have the highest fixed period exclusion rate and were almost seven times more likely to receive a fixed period of exclusion than pupils with no SEN (ibid). These figures indicate that schools find it difficult to meet the needs of children and young people who are exhibiting challenging behaviour, believing they have no other

option to exclusion. However, this does nothing to address the cause of the issue and implies that the problem, “resides solely within the children rather than in an interactive process between child and environment” (O’Connor & Colwell, 2002 p. 96).

In 2014, the government issued two major reforms to the area of SEND with the introduction of the Children and Families Act (DfE, 2014a) which places the child at the centre of assessing needs and the need for more collaborative working, and the new SEND Code of Practice (DfE, 2014b). One considerable change to this document was the re-naming of one of the need category names, (DfE, 2001) from Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD) to Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs (SEMH). This removal of the word behaviour acknowledges that behaviour is not a direct need but an outcome of a social, emotional or mental health need. Although this is acknowledged, the previous terminology of BESD will be used throughout this research to reflect the literature (DfE, 2001).

This is further highlighted by another government paper addressing mental health and behaviour in schools (DfE, 2014c) suggesting that, “children exposed to multiple risks such as social disadvantage, family adversity and cognitive or attention problems are much more likely to develop behavioural problems” (ibid, p.7). It further states that 9.8% of children and young people aged five to 16 have a clinically diagnosed disorder and a further 15% have less severe problems but are more at an increased risk of developing difficulties in the future. This indicates the important role that schools and Educational Psychologists (EPs), play in identifying, addressing and supporting the needs of these children. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) Guidelines (2008) suggest that schools should provide a range of interventions to support these children and young people. This was further supported by the Department of Health’s Future in Mind (2015) paper and the Department for Education (DfE; 2016b) advice on Mental Health and Behaviour in schools, stating that “in order to help their pupils succeed, schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy” (p. 6).

The Foundations of NGs

Marjorie Boxall developed the first NG in 1969 when she was working in London with primary aged children who were described as having severe behavioural needs. These children were perceived to be unable to form trusting relationships with adults or respond appropriately to other children (Nurture Group Network, 2017). A NG is a, “school-based learning environment, specifically designed to address the unmet social, emotional and behavioural needs of children” (Colley, 2009; p. 291).

The ‘classic’ Boxall NG involves the child attending full time with either one full day or half day attendance in their mainstream classroom, this tends to be in the primary setting (Cooper & Tiknaz, 2005). Cooper, Arnold and Boyd (2001) refer to their early research in 1999 where they identified three variants to the classic Boxall Model. The first variant is groups that differ in terms of structure and organisation to the classic model but still adhere to the NG principles. The second is groups that are named NG but do not follow the principles. Finally, the third are groups that call themselves NG but undermine or distort the principles. The first variant is becoming more popular in secondary schools where the groups follow the NG principles but children attend on a part time basis.

Features of a Classic NG

Relationships

A classic NG consists of between eight to ten children and two adults. One adult is a teacher and the other is usually a teaching assistant (TA), two members of staff are not only needed to support each other but to be positive role models for the children. This relationship between staff and the children is considered to be of vital importance for the change and support of these vulnerable children (Billington, 2012). The children in the NG maintain important links with their mainstream class by registering with their peers and spending some time back in the classroom, before returning fully after two terms. The underlying principle is for children to develop a close and supportive

relationship with staff as well as preparing them for returning to their mainstream classroom (Cooper & Tiknaz, 2005).

Not only do the children form trusting relationships with adults but some studies report children feeling a sense of belonging and an opportunity to feel part of a group (Kourmoulaki, 2013 & Griffiths, et al, 2014). As proposed in Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1979 as cited by McLeod, 2008), belonging to a group gives a person a sense of pride and self-esteem as well as feeling that they belong to an 'in-group'.

The Room

An important aspect of the NG is the room itself which is a crucial part of the NG model (Billington, 2012). As part of providing a safe and secure environment the room doesn't look like a typical classroom. Generally, there is an area with comfortable seating for discussion to take place, play areas, a table for all children and adults to sit around and perhaps kitchen facilities where food can be prepared. In addition to these core aspects of a NG, six principles need to be adhered to as set out by Boxall (Colley, 2009; p.292).

1. *Learning is understood developmentally*
2. *The classroom offers a safe base*
3. *The importance of nurture for the development of self-esteem*
4. *Language is a vital means of communication*
5. *All behaviour is communication*
6. *The importance of transition in children's lives*

Selection

Children are carefully selected to join a NG by the use of the Boxall Profile, of which there are two versions dependent on a child's age (one for primary and one for secondary). This was developed to identify the needs of each individual child in order that the appropriate support can be given (Bennathan & Boxall, 1998). The Boxall

Profile is a detailed, normative diagnostic tool used to assess a child's social, emotional and behavioural functioning (Colley, 2009). It is arranged into two sections, each consisting of 34 items which when scored fall into one of ten sub-strands. Section one is the developmental strand which consists of statements which examine a child's cognitive and emotional development, for example, "listens with interest" (Boxall Profile; Bennathan & Boxall, 1998). The second section is the diagnostic profile which looks at behaviours, for example, "always has to be the first, or the best" (ibid). Each of the 34 items are scored between zero and four and these scores are put on a histogram. Positive progress on the diagnostic profile is determined by a declining score whilst positive progress on the developmental strand is highlighted by an increase in score (Cooper & Whitebread, 2007).

Theory behind NG provision

The rationale of NGs is that of attachment theory, originally proposed by John Bowlby (1944; as cited in Bomber, 2007). He concluded that if children were separated from their mothers or primary care givers in their early stages of life it could have lasting psychological damage. He thought that it was necessary for a child's mental health that children "should experience a warm, intimate and continuous relationship with their mother" (Bowlby, 1952 in Geddes, 2006 p.37). Bowlby also developed the concept of 'good enough parenting' in that if a child has their basic needs met then the child would develop a secure attachment (Bomber, 2007). If a secure attachment is not formed either through poor parenting or separation then the child expresses the effects of this in other ways such as a poor sense of self, difficulty trusting others, inability to cope with the unexpected and exhibition of aggressive behaviour (ibid). These behaviours are often seen in schools which can result in exclusions. Further to the work of Bowlby was that of Mary Ainsworth (1989) who worked with Bowlby's ideas to formulate an attachment classification system (Barth, Crea, Thorburns & Quinton, 2005). Ainsworth examined differences in children's use of the attachment figure and consequently developed individual differences in attachment styles, secure, avoidant and ambivalent. A fourth style, disorganised was added later (ibid). These different

characteristics were seen as being able to help education staff assess attachment styles and personalise support for children (Bomber, 2007).

Critique of Attachment Theory

Attachment theory has been the basis for many interventions and initiatives, such as NGs, but many psychologists, especially educational psychologists remain sceptical as to whether attachment disorders exists (Slater, 2007). Although others such as, Geddes (2003) state that children's capabilities to learn are affected by their early attachments.

The use of attachment theory has been particularly applied to schools and the role of teachers as it gives an explanation to children's behaviour and therefore enabling teachers to respond appropriately to address the child's needs (Verschueren & Koomen, 2012). Attachment theory also reduces the position of within-child explanations of their behaviour, as instead behaviours can be explained to be more environmental or relationship based (Slater, 2007), therefore reducing the 'blame' on the child.

However, Bowlby's early work stated that if children were separated from their mother's or primary care givers in their early stages of life, it would have lasting psychological damage (Geddes, 2006). This "enrages" some educational psychologists (Slater, 2007; pp. 210) as this suggests that if children have a bad start to life then this is predictive of poor life outcomes and there is little hope for anything positive throughout their lives. Therefore, poor attachments do not necessitate later difficulties (Charles & Alexander, 2014). Roisman, Pardon, Sroufe & Egeland (2002) conducted a longitudinal study where they followed a sample of children who were deemed to be 'high-risk' and 'maltreated' to adulthood. They found that there was substantial discrepancies between predictions based on early child assessments of attachment and adult relationship outcomes. The same could be said for children who are Looked After, in that many children who have spent time in the care system go on to lead typical adult lives (Skilbred, Iversen & Moldestad, 2016). This suggests that Attachment Theory cannot be used to predict how children will develop over longer

periods of time. Instead, any difficulties that a child may have needs to be supported in the child's current environment (Barth, et al 2005).

Attachment Theory also does not consider different human differences, in that it doesn't provide us with a model of understanding all human behaviour (Slater, 2007). Charles & Alexander (2014) state that practitioners, such as educational psychologists, need to be aware not to overly narrow their focus in formulating responses to complex situations such as children's behaviour. Children especially are continuously developing and therefore it is important to acknowledge other environmental and social factors, such as other people they may interact with on a daily basis are likely to have an impact.

It is important to note that the key aspect to the development of attachment is based upon a child's relationship with their primary care-giver which tends to be the mother. During Bowlby's time of writing, it was common place for mothers to stay at home and look after their children rather than working. However, in today's society this is no longer the case. Slater (2007, pp. 213) suggests that Attachment Theory is another "weapon to the guilt of mothers" especially those who are working mothers. Therefore, suggesting that children identified as having attachment difficulties could be seen as unfairly blaming the mother, especially as fathers are rarely mentioned. Scott-Brown & Wright (2001) highlighted that secondary attachment figures are more influential than originally thought.

Mary Ainsworth's work to develop an attachment classification system should also be questioned. Ainsworth's 'strange situation' tests where she examined differences in children's use of the attachment figure, treating children's distress as the variable under investigation should be considered unethical (Burman, 2008). In addition, Scott-Brown et al (2001) state that individuals do not fit neatly into the categories as outlined by Ainsworth. Instead most people tend to show a complex profile moving through the categories.

Finally, Attachment Theory is culture specific only occurring in the western world (Barth et al, 2005). Other countries and cultures have a different view on child-rearing where instead of the sole responsibility residing with the mother, children are reared by

a group of people. These children are still deemed to grow as well-adjusted members of society.

Attachment theory does not explain why some children, after completing the intervention still need support beyond the NG. Garner & Thomas (2011) studied NGs in secondary schools and suggested that attachment theory does not account for some aspects of NG such as replacing the early experiences of childhood. They see that NG can be justified by the sociocultural theory of learning via Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). He emphasised the child's development level in terms of what they can achieve when they have a more competent helper who knows their individual need to support and model, as well as understanding their next development level known as 'cognitive scaffolding' (Cooper & Whitebread, 2007). As the child becomes to understand more they move their learning towards what is termed as 'mastery' in that it is their ZPD. The relationship that NG staff have with the children supports this in that they model and support the child with tasks in order for them to acquire new skills at their own developmental level. However, this would suggest that Boxall's time restriction of a maximum of three terms in the NG may need to be altered in that the amount of time should be based on individual developments.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs can also account for some of the progress that children make (Cooper & Whitebread, 2007) in that attending a NG gives them an opportunity to feel safe and secure, thus meeting their basic needs.

Primary and Secondary School Evidence

A review of the literature shows the majority of evidence supporting NG intervention has been carried out in primary school settings (Iszatt & Wasilewska, 1997; O'Connor & Colwell, 2002; Binnie & Allen, 2008; Reynolds, Mackay & Kearney, 2009; Billington, 2012 & Griffiths et al, 2014). Although the transition from primary to secondary school is one of the biggest transitions that a child can make (Colley, 2009), there has been little research on the effectiveness of secondary NGs (Cooke, Yeomans & Parkes, 2008; Colley, 2009; Garner & Thomas, 2011 & Kourmoulaki, 2013).

Part-time NGs are more widely used in secondary settings due to the sheer number of pupils in secondary schools compared to primary schools (Colley, 2009), in that there would not be enough full-time places in the NG available. In addition to needing a safe space, there are other issues that teenagers are likely to need support with, such as around drugs, alcohol and sex (Cooke et al, 2008).

Although NG research can be split into different settings, the next section will instead look at the effectiveness of NGs from either an emotional/behavioural effect or a cognitive/educational effect.

Emotional/Behavioural Effects

Most commonly reported amongst NG literature is the emotional and behavioural effects (Reynolds et al, 2009). This generally tends to be found through quantitative data by comparing pre-and post-scores on a Boxall Profile. One such study, O'Connor et al (2002) compared the scores of the Boxall Profile of 68 infant aged children who attended a NG full time in schools around London. Boxall Profiles were obtained for each child on entry and exit. The short-term effectiveness was seen in that it was found that the emotional and behavioural difficulties of the children who had attended the NG had significantly reduced upon leaving the NG, returning to mainstream. However, two years later the effects of the NG showed an insignificant effect, but it should be noted that out of the original 68 children only twelve children participated in the follow-up two years after.

Binnie et al (2008) looked at 36 primary aged children who attended on a part time basis, four mornings a week. They compared scores on the Boxall Profile as well as analysing 23 parent and 46 staff questionnaires. They found that the NG intervention had a significant effect on the children. Both parents and staff reported that that it also had a positive impact on their progress and development.

Cooke, Yeomans & Parkes (2008) conducted a small- scale research project which compared entry and exit scores of years seven and eight pupils from a recently established secondary school NG. They found that improvements were seen on the Boxall Scores, although no statistical data was reported. They also presented a case

study of a year seven girl, who showed that time spent in the NG resulted in “dramatic” (Cooke et al, 2008; p. 301) improvement in her Boxall Profile scores as well as her general behaviour, suggesting that it is not too late to offer a nurturing environment to adolescents.

Gerrard (2006) reported data from a pilot study involving thirteen schools in Scotland. He found that 100 out of 108 children who attended a NG significantly improved their Boxall profile scores. He compared these to children who attended matched schools where there were no significant improvements.

In addition to quantitative data, some studies have obtained qualitative findings which support the emotional and behavioural effect of NGs. Kourmoulaki (2013) interviewed ten staff, twelve present members of a secondary school NG, four former members and six parents. Findings were consistent with previous research in that participants valued the safety, calmness and belonging they experienced in the group. The development of social skills and making friends were identified as key gains.

Griffiths et al (2014) used a focus group but solely with eight children aged between eight and eleven attending a primary NG. Four themes were identified which included, environment, learning, self-regulatory behaviour and relationships. The children had a focus within the relationship theme on the quality of the interactions between peers and teachers and particularly the feeling of belonging to their NG ‘family’.

Cognitive/Educational Effects

Researchers have indicated that children who have been identified as BESD, can lead to high levels of educational under achievement (Mackay, Reynolds & Kearney, 2010). There has been little data that has looked at the cognitive/educational effects of attending a NG. However, some studies report that attendance does have a positive effect on a child’s academic progress.

Iszatt & Wasilewska (1997) found that out of 308 children who had been placed in six primary school NGs in north-east London between 1984 and 1996, 87% of the children were able to return to their mainstream classroom without additional support. These results were compared to twenty additional children who had been unable to gain a

place in the NG. From those additional children, 50% (compared to 87%) were able to remain in mainstream without additional support.

Sanders (2007) and Binnie et al (2008) all refer to academic progress, however this was based upon teacher rating scores rather than data. Reynolds et al (2009) conducted a large scale controlled study across 32 schools in the City of Glasgow. They found that there were significant quantitative gains in academic achievement when the progress of the pupils who attended the NG was compared with that of matched children in mainstream classes. However, as reported by Svrnky (2014), attachment related factors contributed to over 50% of the variance of academic measure, strengthening the case of attachment as an important factor for academic attainment.

However, it can be argued that the emotional and behavioural effects of NGs can contribute towards academic progression. As the NG offers a safe place for pupils, where they have built trusting relationships with key adults and have some experience of achievement which gives them confidence. Having succeeded at overcoming one challenge, confidence is gained to try another and so forth (Cefai & Cooper, 2010). This can also be transferred to academic challenges, therefore improving academic progress.

The role of Parents

It should be noted that the foundation that NGs were originally built upon, in that children may have attachment difficulties, could mean that parents feel blame and criticism. This may lead to parents distancing themselves further from the school and even their own child, especially if they have made a strong attachment to a member of staff, hence Taylor and Gulliford (2011) suggest that schools need to be sensitive when speaking to parents about the benefits that a NG provision could bring.

Literature which examines the effectiveness of NGs have often reported that parents have seen a positive impact on their child (Bishop & Swain. 2000; Cooper, Arnold & Boyd, 2001; Cooper & Whitebread, 2007; Binnie et al 2008 & Garner & Thomas, 2011). However, there does appear to be some difficulties between both home and school. Bishop et al (2000) suggested that having partnership between both parties is

difficult if they have different starting points in that parents are keen for their child to remain in a mainstream school, avoiding exclusion where mainstream teachers are keen for the children to adhere to the school rules, where their behaviour is no longer an issue in the classroom. However, only two parent's views were sought in this study. Within the NG, staff saw that their relationship with parents was to pass on skills and expertise, a version of a transplant model (ibid), this implies hierarchy of authority where there may be no democratic partnerships.

Taylor & Guilford (2011) interviewed fifteen parents and eleven NG staff and found that there was little collaboration between them, even though the NG offered an 'open door' policy. Kirkbride (2014) supported this further, finding that the four parents interviewed perceived the intervention as positive for their child, but the four members of staff who were interviewed indicated that there was a lack engagement from the parents, and when it did occur it tended to be instigated by the staff.

Parents lack of involvement may be due to them feeling blame or embarrassment for their child's behaviour or their own personal negative experiences of school. The lack of partnership between parents and the NG can be detrimental to supporting the needs of the child, as in order for change to occur, both need to work together in order to break down barriers.

Different systems and the impact on identity

This notion of NG bridging the gap between home and school resonates with Bronfenbrenner's (1979 as cited by Taylor et al, 2011) Ecological Systems theory in that a child's development is affected by everything in their surrounding multiple environments. The child is part of an intimate system in the home, to more distal systems such as school and then society. The number of supportive links between the systems determines the extent to which the child is able to reach their potential (Garner et al, 2011). A NG could also be explained in terms of Miller and Leyden's (1999) framework, in that the NG creates a temporary system which overlaps the home and school system whilst at the same time preserving the rules and cultures of the other systems (Taylor et al, 2011).

However, children may find it difficult to manage the transitions between two or three not necessarily compatible systems, especially if there are different rules and regulations for each, which for children labelled as BESD may find especially difficult. This is likely to have an impact on their identity in each of the systems. This is due to that each setting a child enters, “will have an allied identity with an associated set of meanings” (O’Riordan, 2015; p. 417) and consequently behave differently depending on the situation that they are in. This then indicates that support is needed to be given in all situations that children are in. To support children in managing the transitions there will need to be a supported and considered plan. The NG needs to be immersed into the whole school and valued by staff, parents and pupils, which should be reflected in whole school policy (Colley, 2009).

Nurturing Schools

Whilst the effectiveness of NGs for children has already been stated (see earlier in this chapter), the principles of nurture are equally important in the wider school environment (Doyle, 2003). Due to the small restricted size of a NG not all children are able to access it when needed and adopting nurturing practices in the wider school will help support those who is at risk of exclusion and continue to support those who are returning to the mainstream classroom after attending a NG. Extending the principles of nurture to the wider school system is, central to all children’s development in that adults are seen as reliable and predictable in the learning environment (Boorn, Hopkins-Dunn & Page, 2010). In addition, following nurturing principles as a whole school, promotes the relationship with parents, involving them as much as possible, valuing their views, therefore bridging the gap between the systems of home and school (Doyle, 2004).

Doyle (2003) states that schools do not need to make vast changes to accommodate nurturing principles, but what is important is that the whole school understands the practices and staff especially are supportive of one another. This corroborates Lucas (1999) in that the key aspects of a nurturing school are that there are clear aims which are agreed and supported. When this occurs and NG principles are applied to the whole

school, “a positive cycle of growth and development is set in motion, teaching and learning become more effective” (Lucas, 1999; p. 14).

Boorn, et al (2010) believed that due to the nature of attachment between the teacher and the child having an important influence on attainment and behaviour, developed the ‘Growing a Nurturing Classroom’ course which promotes the underlying principles of a NG into the mainstream classroom. They found that not only did it support the children, but also teachers in helping the to understand children’s behaviour. However, this course was currently only run in primary schools.

The benefits of a NG and the nurturing schools approach have been discussed in relation to the support it can offer to vulnerable children. However, it should also be noted that there are limitations, namely the labelling and stigmatisation of children along with possible effects on peer relationships, both will be discussed now.

Limitations of NG

Labelling & Stigmatisation

Colley (2009) states that there are several systemic issues for NGs especially in secondary schools such as the demands of the curriculum, timetable, size of the school and the variety of issues that needs to be addressed. It can also be difficult for mainstream staff to establish relationships with children due to the amount of contact hours they have each week. It can be assumed that any intervention that is to support the needs of a child with SEN is to be beneficial to them. However, it can be argued that this may risk labelling and stigmatisation (Mowat, 2015).

The labelling of children in schools is common practice which can be done on a daily basis within the classroom or the categorisation of children’s needs. Macleod (2012) states that the dominant discourse around BESD tends to be a negative, which gives a child a reputation which can be difficult for them to shift (Mowat, 2010b).

Another major concern of labelling a child and placing them in an intervention such as a NG, is how that label impacts negatively on the child's sense of identity. The child can take on the characteristics of that label, and then no further investigations are explored, as the label explains it all (Mowat, 2015). To avoid this then the use of labels should be discouraged, however it is very likely that people will create their own.

Sheffield & Morgan (2017) explored the perceptions of nine young people aged between thirteen and sixteen with a Statement of SEN where BESD was the primary need who attended a school in London. Participants were asked to rate the new terminology of SEMH and all rated the label negatively, believing that the label did not apply to them.

Peer Relationships

Labelling children as BESD/SEMH can have an impact on the attitudes of peers (Sheffield et al, 2017). Visser & Dubsky (2009) state that the attitudes of teachers are critical in influencing the perceptions of peers towards children with BESD. For children, whose behaviours are directed at the external environment such as disobeying rules and physical aggression, this impacts upon their peers. This can result in them seen as disruptive and consequently rejected, although sometimes displaying aggressive behaviour can gain popularity but this tends to decline with age (ibid). Therefore, secondary school children are more likely to be shunned by their peers.

Attending an intervention such as a NG can be seen to have a detrimental effect on the development of peer relationships. Howes, Emanuel & Farrell (2005) in their review of the inclusivity of three NG, questioned the cost incurred by participants in the NG, particularly whether the children lost out by spending significant amounts of time away from their peers. However, it could be argued that they are still with some selected peers in a NG, rather than none, which would happen if they were excluded.

The benefits and limitations to NGs have been discussed, however it is acknowledged that there is a lack of child voice in the research (Griffiths et al, 2014).

Child Voice in Research

In a systematic review of the literature, Hughes & Schlösser (2014) found that out of the eleven studies they reviewed all but one relied upon quantitative data. The voice of the child should rightfully underpin and be an integral part of all professional practice when working with children and young people (Griffiths et al, 2014). The introduction of the new SEND Code of Practice (DfE, 2014b) brought child voice at the centre of the assessment and planning process for children with SEN. The new Code signified the change with the word ‘must’ included where on the earlier version the wording was ‘should’.

Although current legislation indicates that professionals ‘must’ listen to the voice of the child, it is important to do so to understand their perspectives, this is because; “children see, experience and interact with the world differently from the way adults do” (Yardley, 2014, p.49). Adults have their own set of beliefs and understandings about NGs, but children are the actual ones experiencing it, and giving them a voice means that adults get to have an insight into their experiences (Mercieca & Mercieca, 2014).

Although the number of studies on pupil voice is increasing, those for the voice of children with SEN are still relatively few. Cefai & Cooper (2010) found that children who were identified as BESD felt particularly vulnerable when teachers refused to listen to them and their concerns. They had no say in what was happening to them and were not given opportunity to explain themselves which led to them being unfairly punished. Selleman (2009) believes that this tendency to resist pupil empowerment is because teachers are concerned about giving power and control to pupils, especially those who are more difficult to manage.

Conclusion

From a review of the literature it appears that there is a lack of evidence in two areas, firstly evidence on the effectiveness of secondary school NGs, and the second, is the lack of perspectives from the children themselves who attend.

It can be suggested that to truly find out the effectiveness of NGs and what this means for the children and young people who experience it, is to make them the centre of the research so that their thoughts, perceptions and ideas can implement further intervention and support.

Aims of the Research

The aim of this research is to put children at the centre of the research by exploring their experiences of a secondary school NG. Due to the amount of research that explores the effectiveness, it was further aimed whether through the children's experiences what, if any, features were helpful to them which could be transferred to the mainstream classroom. To achieve this, the research aims to explore two broad questions:

Research Question 1: How do children experience a secondary school NG?

Research Question 2: What features of NG experiences do children identify as helpful to them, and how do these appear similar to or different from their mainstream classroom experiences?

Chapter 3 - Methodology

Introduction

This chapter will aim to address the methodological principles of this research. I will begin by introducing my research and then discuss my chosen methodology; Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), providing an overview of the philosophical underpinnings. With this I will also state my ontological and epistemological position as a researcher. I will then go on to discuss the rationale for selecting IPA, before finally discussing the ethical considerations that were made.

Research Design

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

The aim of this research is to gain an understanding of children's experiences in a secondary school NG, therefore it was deemed appropriate to use Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) which was developed by Jonathan Smith in 1996, with most IPA research being based within health psychology (Reid, Flowers & Larkin, 2005). However, it has rapidly become one of the best known and most commonly used qualitative methodologies in psychology (Smith, 2011). IPA gives participants the opportunity to tell their stories, speak freely and reflectively develop their thoughts and ideas and focusses on how individual's make sense of their experience which provides an "in-depth understanding of both the idiosyncratic and culturally aspects of a person's being in the world" (Shaw, 2001).

Overview

IPA's theoretical underpinnings stem from three areas; phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography (Smith et al, 2009). It is important for these areas to be addressed as well as the ontological and epistemological positioning to understand the implications that they play when analysing the results of an IPA study such as this one.

Phenomenology

Phenomenology is the philosophical approach to the study of experience. It concentrates on what the experience of being a human is really like and is particularly concerned with the things that are important to us which makes our experience (Smith et al, 2009). It is not concerned with understanding how our brain processes such experiences as in cognitive psychology but focuses on the experience of things in our conscious (Langdridge, 2007).

The founding father of phenomenology was the philosopher, Edmund Husserl (1859-1938; as cited by Brooks, 2015). He was concerned with looking at how things appear to individuals in their own experience of a particular phenomenon and being able to identify these essential qualities, through a process known as transcendental phenomenology (Pietkiewicz, & Smith, 2012). This involved being able to step away from everyday experiences that occur (he called this 'our natural attitude') and being able to turn and reflect upon it (Smith et al, 2009). Every day, we as humans are experiencing things, however not all these experiences appear in our conscious experience or everyday life, as these are taken for granted. To be phenomenologically aware we need to be aware of these experiences (essences) to be able to consciously reflect upon them; Husserl termed this a process of 'intentionality' which allows objects to appear as phenomenon (Willig, 2013). Intentionality can be described as the process occurring in consciousness and the object of attention for that process" (Smith et al, p.13). An intentional relationship is between what has been seen and an awareness of it.

Husserl (1927) argued that we, “should go back to the things themselves” (as quoted in Smith et al, 2009; p.12) which suggests that to be phenomenological we need to be able to identify and isolate the essence of what makes a phenomenon (Brooks, 2015). This process is known as epoché or bracketing. To achieve this, we attempt to suspend our preconceived ideas that we might have about the things that we are investigating. Husserl (1927) suggested that we do this to concentrate on the perception of our world as, “putting it in brackets shuts out from the phenomenological field as it exists for the subject in simple absoluteness; its place however, is taken by the world as given in consciousness” (as quoted in Smith et al, 2009; p.13). This is part a phenomenological reduction which introduces a different way of thinking about the phenomenon (Smith et al, 2009). Willig (2013) states that this process makes us become aware of what the experience actually is. However, it does not mean that we are to be unconscious of these other sources but instead not to engage with them so it doesn’t influence on what we are reflecting upon (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2008). Transcendental phenomenologists such as Husserl argues that such bracketing helps one to achieve and transcend your own experience of the world (Langdridge, 2007).

However, there is a lot of contention around this subject in terms of how far is it possible to fully engage with bracketing (Brooks, 2015). Heidegger (1889-1976), a pupil of Husserl’s offered a different approach, one that is associated with the development of existential phenomenology. Heidegger, was more concerned with the ontological question of existence itself (Smith et al, 2009). He believed in the concept of Dasein (literally, ‘there-being’) in that we as human beings cannot be separated from the world that we live in, as we exist inside it rather than outside of it (Brooks, 2015). This implies that as human beings our very nature is to be always there, involved with some kind of meaningful context (Larkin et al, 2006). In terms of Dasein we are in a world surrounded by other factors such as other people, objects, language and culture that we cannot be meaningful detached from (Smith et al, 2009). Heidegger was interested to know how as individuals do we live in the world and experience it in our individual way. This is known as intersubjectivity, which refers to a shared, overlapping and relational involvement with our world (ibid).

IPA lends itself to Heidegger’s understanding of phenomenology, in that researchers are interested in a person’s individual subjective experience. This suggests that

individuals who are in the same experience, such as attending a NG, will all have different personal experiences. Therefore, suggesting that people attribute different meanings to their own experiences. This indicates that IPA subscribes to a relativist positionality in that multiple subjective realities exist, and the intention is not to establish what is “true” or “false” (Willig, 2013).

Heidegger also did not believe that bracketing was possible due to that we are social beings and our individual experiences overlap with other factors, he felt that it was impossible as, “all people are inseparable from the world they inhabit” (Langdrige, 2007; p.27), and therefore, unable to suspend their preconceptions. Although you should try to achieve epoché, it can never be truly achieved as you can’t bracket all presuppositions. (Langridge, 2007). He suggested that as humans, our way of existing must be seen in its historical and culturally context and understood with the role of language. Therefore, each individual experience is influenced by an individual’s own thoughts, beliefs and assumptions (Willig, 2013) which are also impacted upon social interactions. Therefore, this research also acknowledges that people’s social interactions with the world also impacts on how a particular situation is experienced which therefore, “endorses social constructionism’s claim that sociocultural and historical processes are central to how we experience and understand our lives, including the stories we tell about our lives” (Eatough & Smith, 2008; p.184). This indicates that how people ascribe meaning to their experience is also shaped by the interactions that occur in the social world. This position acknowledges that contextual, linguistic and relational factors also contribute to how the participants will view their world (Raskin, 2002).

Similar to Heidegger is the work of Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961) who was inspired by the work of Heidegger (Brooks, 2015). Although he and Heidegger both emphasised the interpretative quality of our knowledge, Merleau-Ponty believed that we as humans, are looking at the world rather than within it and therefore see ourselves as different (Smith et al, 2009). Merleau-Ponty suggested that as people we are ‘embodied-beings’ and when considering our human experience, we cannot detach our mind from our body (Brooks, 2015). Therefore, we cannot also have the same experience as somebody else in the same situation as their experience belongs in their embodied position in the world, again subscribing to a relativist ontology. This is an

important implication for IPA researchers in that our bodies shapes the fundamental character of knowing about the world (Smith et al, 2009).

For this research, I will be taking Heidegger's view of phenomenology as cited by Brooks (2015) who along with other researchers suggest that it is not possible to completely suspend prior knowledge, assumptions and experience completely. This is especially relevant to me due to my prior knowledge and experience of establishing a NG in a secondary school. However, one way in this can be attempted is suggested by Finlay (2014) who states that a researcher can try and achieve bracketing off their own experience in the first instance and not assuming any commonality of experience. In order to do this before any data collection or analysis takes place the researcher should make a list of assumptions, expectations and hopes for the findings. Finlay (2014) further states that it is a mistake for researchers to think that they need to "obliterate" their past understandings but instead need to take part in reflexive processes. I therefore made a list of my assumptions, expectations and hopes as Finlay (2014) suggests (Appendix 2). In addition to this a reflexive diary was also maintained throughout the research process (Appendix 10).

Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics is the theory of interpretation (Pietkiewicz et al, 2012). Schleiermacher (1768-1834) was one of the first to write about hermeneutics. He suggested that interpretation should involve both grammatical and psychological reflection in that not only the actual text is examined but the writer's intention behind it. Schleiermacher claimed that this process would lead to the interpreter being able to understand the author better than themselves (Smith et al, 2009).

Another key philosopher of hermeneutics was Heidegger, who, (as previously outlined) believed in the concept of 'Dasein', that humans engage with the world through interpretation. This interpretation for Heidegger has dual quality in that things can be very visible in terms of their meanings but there can also be concealed or hidden meanings (Smith et al, 2009). He argued that whenever something is interpreted as something, the interpreter always brings a fore- conception (ibid), which is described

as a person's preconceptions, beliefs and experiences. This is an important aspect to consider when conducting IPA research, in that Heidegger argued that an interpreter cannot but help to bring their previous experiences into the interpretation. This therefore suggests that IPA is located within a contextual constructionist epistemology as outlined by Madill, Jordan & Shirley (2000). This position argues that there are multiple realities and both the researcher and the participant are "both conscious beings interpreting and acting on the world around them" (Madill et al, 2000; p.9). It also maintains the possibility of grounding research in participants accounts. This position acknowledges that all knowledge is local, provisional and situation dependent (Jaegar & Rosnow, 1988) which suggests that results of the research will vary according to the context to which the data was collected and analysed (Madill et al, 2000).

Furthermore, Gadamer (1900-2002) emphasised the importance of history and the effect of tradition on the interpretative process, in how we can learn from the past (Smith et al, 2009). He disagreed with Schleiermacher in that an interpreter will know the author better than themselves. He argued that the most important aspect of interpretation was the text itself especially due to a historical gap. Gadamer believed that full understanding comes only through language, which is influenced through culture and history (Langdrige, 2007). This is also consistent with contextual constructionism (Madill et al, 2000) in that how knowledge is produced can be affected by four different variables; the participants own understanding, researcher's interpretations, the cultural meaning systems which inform both participants' and researchers' interpretations and the acts of judging particular interpretations as valid by scientific communities (Pidgeon & Henwood, 1997). This research therefore acknowledges that as a researcher I will bring my own previous experiences of establishing and running a NG into the interpretation the participants experiences.

According to Langdrige (2007) and his description of Ricoeur (1970), who distinguished two essential approaches for understanding meaning: a demythologizing (empathy) position or a demystifying (suspicion) position. The empathetic position tries to reconstruct the original experience in its own terms, in that the interpreter is trying to gain an understanding of a person's experience from their view point. Whereas the suspicious position uses theoretical perspectives from the outside, assuming there is something hidden and needs to be found (ibid). Smith et al, (2009)

suggest that IPA is in the middle of these two positions, a term that they deemed a hermeneutics of ‘questioning’. This is where the researcher is trying to see what it is like from the participant’s perspective but also to stand alongside them to question what they’re saying. This means that the analysis moves away from a pure description from the participant but also has an interpretation from the researcher.

Hermeneutic Cycle

The hermeneutic circle especially resonates with IPA in that it is concerned with the “dynamic relationship between the part and the whole on a series of levels” (Smith et al, 2009; p.28). This suggests that if you want to look at the whole text you need to look at part of the text and vice-versa. This can be applied when looking at single words to the sentence it is in to a single extract to the complete text or then on a wider level of the interview itself to the whole research project (ibid). This is important to IPA that the whole process is iterative in that we move forwards and backwards through the data.

IPA is seen as a dynamic process with the researcher playing an active role. Firstly, the participants make meaning of their world and secondly the researcher tries to interpret the participant’s interpretation of that experience (Pietkiewicz et al, 2012). Smith & Osborn (2008) termed this a double hermeneutic.

Idiography

Idiography refers to the particular, which is in contrast to nomothetic studies where groups and populations are studied (Pietkiewicz et al, 2012). Therefore, IPA tends to use small purposefully selected samples, where “less is more” (Hefferon & Gil-Rodriguez, 2011). IPA’s commitment to the particular operates at two levels; first in the amount of detail and depth of the analysis and how the particular phenomena has been understood from the perspectives of the particular people in a particular context, such as a NG (Smith et al, 2009). An idiographic commitment applies to this analysis. This is because each participant’s transcript is explored as a single-case study where

the aim is to generate rich and detailed description of how each individual is experiencing the phenomena under investigation (Pietkiewicz et al, 2012). Once a detailed examination of each account has occurred then the researcher can, “cautiously moves to an examination of similarities and differences across the cases (Smith et al, 2009; p.38).

In addition, IPA is idiographic in that it is committed to the, “detailed examination of the particular case” (Smith, Larkin & Flowers, 2009), as well as understanding a perspective in a particular context. Larkin, Watts & Clifton (2006; p 109) state that there will be different variations due to a person’s current positioning, “in relation to the world of object”. This is because, for each participant although they are having a shared experience of a situation, each will have a different perspective and interpretation of the experience. This also supports the belief that there are multiple realities as each reality is real to that one individual person.

Hefferon et al (2011) state that whereas within traditional psychology, generalisability is the object for any research, with IPA the goal is more about transferability of findings. Through the detailed idiographic analyses which IPA aims to do, can make a significant contribution in not only how it adds to existing nomothetic research but how it can have theoretical transferability. This is where the reader is encouraged to add to their own knowledge base and the implications for their own work (Smith et al, 2009).

Rationale for selecting IPA

IPA is concerned with the detailed examination of personal lived experience, the meaning of that experience and how participants make sense of their experience. This indicated that it would be the most appropriate method when attempting to explore my research questions.

One important aspect of choosing this methodology is that IPA seeks out to gain an understanding of a participants lived experience, which will give this research the opportunity to hear the missing voices of previous NG research in that it will be children’s experience of being in an NG that will be sought. Baker & Bishop (2015)

suggest that IPA allows the voice of the child to be elicited and clearly apparent through the examination of their lived experience.

As my participants were children, who attended a specific intervention, I acknowledged that the idiographic element of IPA would be beneficial to me. This became especially apparent when there was only one secondary school NG in the Local Authority (LA) that I was working within, that met the research criteria. Therefore, conducting research with a small sample size would be advantageous.

Finally, as a researcher, IPA offers some guidance in how to carry out and analyse the data through various stages. Smith et al (2009) state that these steps are not concrete and can be flexible but offers the novice researcher, such as myself, some guidance. This gave me some reassurance on the procedure but also gave me the opportunity to think creatively such as using other materials to help draw out participant's individual experiences.

Alternative Methodologies

Before choosing IPA as the methodology for this research, I did consider other approaches such as, Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), Grounded Theory (as cited by Smith et al, 2009) and other phenomenological approaches such as Descriptive Phenomenology (Brooks, 2015). For an overview of alternative methodologies considered, please see Appendix 3.

Ethical Considerations

This research was designed in accordance to the Code of Human Research Ethics (BPS, 2014) and the Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics (HCPC, 2016). Ethical approval was also granted by The University of Sheffield's School of Education Ethics Panel in March 2016 (see Appendix 4). Ethical consideration was considered carefully for this study, due to the participants being children.

All potential participants were under the age of sixteen and the BPS guidance (2014; 10.1.1) states that, “researchers should ensure that parents or guardians are informed about the nature of the study and given the option to withdraw their child if they so wish” and therefore needed the permission of their parents to participate. Letters and information sheets were sent out to all parents of the children who attended the NG (see Appendix 5). This was then followed up with a phone call so that further questions or clarification could be sought if needed. Once parental consent was given, I then spoke to the potential participants directly whilst they were in school.

Due to the aim of gaining child voice in this research I produced a child version of the consent letter and information sheet (see Appendix 6). The information sheet was read to each potential participant and after they were given the opportunity to ask further questions to ensure that they understood the nature and purpose of the study (BPS, 2014; 10.1). It was explained to each child that there would be no expectation for them to participate if they did not wish to and this would have no future consequences. For both parents and participants, it was made clear that they could withdraw from the research at any time. At the beginning of the interview, the agreed participants were reminded again that they could stop and/or withdraw at any time. To try and reduce any anxiety that they may have had I let them know how long the interview would roughly take, where it would take place and when it would be. I also assured them that interviewing would not take place during break time.

Although written and verbal consent was given by the participants I also acknowledged that there may be non-verbal cues that I would need to identify such as through body language.

To begin to make a relationship with the participants and to immerse myself in their experience I spent two mornings in the NG following their routine (see next chapter). Griffiths et al (2014) had found this to be valuable before conducting a focus group with children in a NG. This gave the opportunity for potential participants to meet me beforehand which I hoped would make them feel more at ease during the interview.

To make the participants feel further at ease with the questioning in terms of feeling safe and secure the interviews were held in the NG room itself. I provided refreshments (juice and biscuits) for each participant. In planning this research, I was aware that the

interview may go in a different direction to the open-ended questions that would be asked, as for an IPA study it is important to let the participant expand their answers and talk about the topic they want (Smith et al, 2009). I was also prepared that if topics were to bring distress to any participant in terms of memories or trying to understand the experience for themselves. I needed to make sure that they were alright at the beginning and throughout the interview. If I suspected that they were becoming distressed I would stop.

Following each individual interview, I spent time with each participant checking that they were feeling alright and asked them if they had any further questions they wanted to ask me. In accordance with the HCPC guidance (2016; 7.1) I was aware that I was to “report any concerns about the safety or well-being of the participants promptly and appropriately” I therefore spoke to the NG teacher and offered my support to any of the participants if she felt that they needed it, although I believed this to be unlikely.

The interviews were recorded using a voice recorder so that I could transcribe the data later. This meant that I could concentrate on listening to the participant rather than writing notes. The recordings of the interviews and the transcripts were stored on my home computer which is password protected. Once this research has been finalised, recordings will be deleted from all devices. All participants and staff members were given pseudonyms to maintain their anonymity as outlined by the HCPC guidance (2016; 5.1). Each participant was told of this and were given different names. Only I know what each participant and staff member’s pseudonym is.

Chapter 4 – Procedure

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the steps that were taken to carry out the research. Although this process appears as a linear process, the actual process was iterative which Smith et al (2009) describes as moving back and forth, thinking about things before returning back. This chapter will discuss the sample, pilot study and how data was collected. The process for completing the analysis will be highlighted, and finally the chapter will conclude with a discussion on the quality of the research.

Context

This study was conducted in a large secondary school within one Local Authority (LA) in the North of England. Contextual information on the school can be found on both in Appendix 7. The NG in this case was a variant group (Cooper et al 2001) in that the NG followed and adhered to Boxall's model, but differed in terms of structure and organisation. More information can be found in Appendix 8.

Sample

Participants were selected purposefully, to offer insight into their particular experience or phenomenon. As IPA is an idiographic approach a small sample size meant that a case by case analysis can be carried out. Smith et al (2009) suggest that for students undertaking a professional doctorate between four and ten interviews would be appropriate.

The individuals selected in this study were from a homogenous sample. Smith et al (2009) describe this as individuals who are experiencing a particular phenomenon together, in this case attending a NG. Within this research, I needed to find children who were attending a secondary school NG.

Firstly, I asked in the Local Authority which schools had a NG. I decided that to gain a true insight of the experiences of children in a NG then I would only consider those that were either an example of the classic model or a variant model (Cooper et al, 2001). From this criteria, there was only one NG in the LA that I was working in that fulfilled these standards.

At the time of selecting my sample a total of fourteen children were accessing the NG. All were attending for a different number of hours depending on their need with the rest of their time being spent in the mainstream classroom.

I contacted all parents through letters, (see Appendix 5) which was then followed up with a phone call several weeks later. I found this whole process rather stressful due to the small number of participants that were potentially available. There were concerns over whether I would have enough participants. I was mindful that I did not want to contact parents too much since I did not want them to feel pressurised into giving consent.

From this, six parents gave permission for their child to take part in the research. I then approached each of the individual children with a child friendly information sheet and consent form (see Appendix 6) so that they could give consent. If parents agreed, but the child did not, then they would be discounted from the research. Participants only took part if there was mutual consent. All six children agreed to participate. None of the children were Looked After by the LA. All the children were in Key Stage three (Year seven or eight) and had been identified as SEMH. All the participants entered the NG at the beginning of year seven.

All children's names have been changed and pseudonyms have been given.

Table one gives information about each participant.

Table 1: Information on each Participant

	Name	Sex	Age at time of data collection	School Year Group	Hours currently spent in NG	Literacy National Curriculum (NC) Level on entry to NG	Known to the Education Psychology Service
Participant 1	Sophie	Female	12	7	3	< NC level 3	No
Participant 2	Joshua	Male	12	7	9	< NC level 3	No
Participant 3	Luke	Male	12	7	5	< NC level 3	No
Participant 4	Ryan	Male	13	8	10	< NC level 3	Yes
Participant 5	Gemma	Female	12	7	3	< NC level 3	No
Participant 6	Alex	Male	12	7	7	< NC level 3	No

Detailed information was gathered after the interviews about each participant from the NG teacher who was in charge. These pen portraits can be seen in Appendix 9. Details about the participants were purposefully not gained until after the interviews had taken place. This was to aid my attempt at bracketing, in that I had no preconceptions based on prior knowledge about the participants at the time of interviewing, other than being

aware that they had been identified by the school as needing support due to their supposed SEMH needs.

Observations Made

Before conducting their focus group, Griffiths et al (2014) spent a morning in the NG following the children's routine, which they found helpful in establishing a relationship with the participants. I also decided to do this as felt that it would help put the children at ease during my interviews. I therefore spent two separate sessions in the NG before I conducted the interviews. The first session, an English lesson and a social skills group was observed through non-participatory observation. The second session, I took a more active role where I sat amongst the pupils during a maths lesson. After my interview with Ryan, the NG teacher remarked that she was surprised that he had consented to it as he usually does not like speaking to strangers. During my last observation of the NG I had sat with Ryan during a maths lesson and answered any questions that he asked of me and felt that this had helped us to establish a relationship and for him to agree to speak to me.

In addition to this, spending time in the NG beforehand was helpful, as rather than just trying to understand the children's experiences of the NG from what they told me during the interview I could get "experience close" (Smith, 2011; p.10). This would then enable me to gain a more in-depth understanding of the participant's world. I felt that this would aid the double hermeneutic element of the analysis in that I too had experienced some time of being in the NG. This was especially helpful during the interviews as I could recall things that I had seen such as the social skills group that I had observed and asked them further about this.

Interviews and Schedule

Smith et al (2009) state that one-to-one interviews is the preferred way to collect data from participants as this allows the participant time and space to think and for both the

participant and the researcher to develop a rapport. This was something that I was especially mindful of due to the participants being children.

After the interviews had taken place, I made notes on my thought and feelings which can be seen in Appendix 10.

Interviews tend to be semi-structured (Reid et al, 2005) in IPA studies, so that participants are able to share their experiences and not be constrained by only answering certain questions. The questions are there to help steer the conversation but, “the participant is the experiential expert on the topic in hand” (Smith et al, 2009; p.58) therefore during the interview if the schedule is not kept this does not matter.

An interview schedule is usually made prior to the interview taking place which helps the researcher organise their thoughts. Questions are open ended to give the participant chance to talk and expand on their answer giving as much detail as possible. Prompts can also be used to encourage further detail or thought from the participant (Smith et al, 2009).

Brocki & Wearden (2006), in their review of IPA research found that there was little description on how interview schedules were developed. For this research, I followed the guidance set out by Smith et al (2009). The following stages occurred:

- I made a mind map of all the different topics that I wanted to discuss (see Appendix 11).
- I put these topics into a logical order.
- I then attempted to write some open-ended questions around these topics trying to use a variety of different types of questions (narrative, descriptive, evaluative)
- I re-drafted the questions over and over, changing the wording slightly or discounting them if they were repeated. I did this until I was left with ten questions.
- I then sought advice on the questions from my research supervisor and another EP.

Using these processes, I developed my interview schedule (see Appendix 12).

Pilot Study

To try out my interview questions I conducted a pilot study. I chose at random one participant from the sample who had given consent.

I met with Sophie in the NG which gave me the opportunity to try my interview schedule and technique.

After the interview, I reflected on the process and found that my questions had seemed suitable as this had enabled Sophie to talk about her experience in the NG. I found that she did need a lot of verbal prompting such as “can you tell me more about that”, but this was something that I was expecting due to her age. Conducting the interview in the NG also seemed to help her talk about her experience and she spoke about a lot of things in the room, often pointing at them. As she was doing this I noted that she went into more detail and this was part of the experience of being in the NG.

Sophie’s interview was transcribed and initial notes were made with discussions with my supervisor. It was decided to include Sophie’s data in the main body of the research due to that no major changes being needed to the interview schedule (see Appendix 12) and Sophie had talked at length regarding her experience and I did not want to lose her experience.

Use of Photographs

Due to Sophie pointing to a variety of things in the NG when talking about her experience, and after speaking to my research tutor, it was suggested that I could take some photographs of the room to help the children expand their answers when describing their experiences, this is known as photo elicitation (Aldridge, 2007). Hill (2014) used photographs in her IPA study of children with a diagnosis of autism. She found that the photographs acted as a focus for discussion and that it enabled them to discuss their experiences. Hill (2014) further reflected that the use of photos was also helpful in eliciting the views of children identified as SEMH such as my sample.

To assist my data gathering I took photographs of different angles of the room and walls (see Appendix 13).

Data Collection

After completion of the pilot I went back into the NG to conduct my interviews. Each interview was held in the NG with no other person present to ensure confidentiality. Refreshments were offered to each participant and we had a little general chat about how their day had gone before starting the interview. Interviews were held in the NG for two reasons. The first, was that I felt that being somewhere where the children felt safe and comfortable would enable them to give me a rich description of their experience. Also, the interview taking place where they experienced the phenomena would hopefully aid their description due to there being visual reminders of their experience.

The interview schedule and prompts were used but not all questions were asked, or in the same order and further questions were asked depending on what was spoken about.

The photographs were printed and laminated onto A4 paper and placed on a table so that the participants could look and decide if they wanted to discuss anything further about the image. This was to try and reduce researcher bias. After each interview, I recorded my thoughts and feelings so that I could try and improve my interview technique as well as attempt to bracket off any preconceptions that I had about the interview (Appendix 10).

Each interview was transcribed using the recorded audio of the interview. As IPA aims to primarily interpret the meaning of the content of the participants account, Smith et al (2009) suggest that it does not require a detailed transcription of the prosodic aspects. However, in my transcriptions I did note if there was a particularly long pause or laughter as this could add to the later interpretation, such as being unsure or nervous.

Analysis

Data analysis was completed by a number of common process set out by Smith et al (2009) although this was followed flexibly. One important element of this process is moving between the part and the whole of the hermeneutic cycle, as described in the previous chapter. This involved looking at the text line by line as well as a whole conversation to gain context, and then at all the transcripts. The table below gives the indicated processes established by Smith et al (2009).

Table 2: Table developed by the researcher based on Smith et al (2009) to show steps followed.

Step	Process	Description
1	Reading and re-reading	The first step is to immerse oneself in the data by repeated reading and listening to the recording.
2	Initial Noting	This part of the analysis can be very time consuming due to the level of detail. There are three levels of comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descriptive Comments – focussing on the content of what the participant has said – the subject of talk. • <i>Linguistic Comments – focussing on the specific use of language by the participant.</i> • <u>Conceptual Comments – more interrogative/interpretative, comments at a conceptual level.</u>
3	Development of Emergent Themes	The main task is turning the above notes into themes. A concise and brief statement is required. Themes reflect not only the participant’s thoughts but also the interpretations of the researcher. See Appendix 14 for one participant’s transcript which shows steps two and three.
4	Searching for Connections across emergent themes	Themes so far are in chronological order. The next step involves mapping. Each theme is presented on a piece of paper and moved around to match with other themes which represent parallel or similar understandings. A graphic representation of the structure of the emergent themes should then be produced. See Appendix 15 and 16.

5	Moving on to the next case	The next step involves moving on to the next participant and repeating the above process. It is important to treat each case individually.
6	Looking for patterns across cases	This step involves looking for patterns across the cases from the emergent themes. Subordinate themes are then created, with an overarching name being described as a superordinate theme. See Appendix 17, 18 and 19.

73 emergent themes were developed from the research, (Appendix 17), however three were discarded (Dislike of school, Reluctance & Injustice) as these were not directly about NG experience. During the development of the superordinate themes I consulted my research tutor and a critical friend (another EP) who had used IPA with her own doctoral thesis. From this some changes were made. Five superordinate themes were developed from the analysis. Appendix 19 shows how each theme was developed.

Quality of Research

The quality of qualitative research has often been judged as lacking scientific rigour, poor justification, lack of transparency in the procedures and the findings being described as just a collection of personal opinions which is open to bias (Noble & Smith, 2015). Terms such as validity, reliability, generalisability and objectivity are what 'good' quantitative research aims for (Winter, 2000). It can be argued that these terms should not be applied to qualitative research due to there being different ontological positions to that of quantitative research (Mertens, 2010). However, if qualitative research is not going to abide by the same criteria as quantitative research this means that it is open to criticism and remains vulnerable. As a result, researchers have developed criteria for qualitative research (Guba & Lincoln, 1985; Yardley, 2000; & Tracy, 2010).

For the purpose of my research I will aim to follow Tracy's (2010) eight criteria which are designed to be flexible.

Worthy Topic: Tracy (2010) advocates that for these criteria to be met then the research should be relevant, significant and interesting. As previously discussed, mental health of children is currently very prominent and schools are looking at ways in which they can support their pupils through interventions such as NG. The majority of research also tends to be quantitative or around the adults rather than gathering the voice of the child. I also have a personal interest in the topic with having established a NG in a secondary school where I worked.

Rich Rigor: This refers to the thoroughness of a study and can be especially applied to IPA studies in terms of a sample being carefully selected to answer the research question. Smith et al (2009) state that as data for IPA is usually collected by in-depth interviews this demonstrates rigour as well as commitment from the researcher in ensuring that the participant is comfortable and listening closely. To ensure this, I conducted the interviews in the NG and brought along refreshments. I also spent time in the NG beforehand to develop relationships with the participants and to help them feel more at ease. Once I had drafted my interview schedule I discussed this with my tutor and practiced the questions to be able to probe further. Smith et al (2009) state that for an IPA study to have rigor the analysis must be conducted thoroughly with sufficient idiographic engagement. Therefore, a simple description is not enough but should say something about the individual as well as the themes the participants share.

Sincerity: This is achieved through self-reflexivity, honesty and transparency. As previously stated I have kept a research diary throughout where I have recorded my thoughts and feelings and reflected upon the choices I have made (Appendix 10).

Through the use of IPA, a clear trail will also be evident in term of the processes highlighted by Smith et al (2009) in that there will be an interview schedule, audio tapes, annotated transcripts, tables of themes and the final version where readers will be able to 'check' my evidence if needed.

Credibility: This is achieved according to Tracy (2010), if the readers feel that the research is trustworthy enough to act upon it. For qualitative research this is achieved through a thick description. IPA is especially suited to this due to its idiographic focus

in that each participant is studied as a case study before overall themes are drawn upon. This gives the reader an opportunity to be able to see depth in the description. This process can be further strengthened by triangulation, where more than one data set is acquired. However, Smith et al (2009) state that these multi-perspectival studies do help the IPA analyst to develop a more detailed and multifaceted account of the phenomenon but it is very time consuming. In addition, credibility can be further strengthened by member checks during the analysis process where the researcher goes back to the participants and checks they have understood the meaning. However, this is not consistent with IPA in that the process relies on the double hermeneutics element insofar as that the researcher is interpreting what they think the participants mean. To go and check this with participants, especially if there was a difference of opinion would not be helpful.

Resonance: Tracy (2010) states that this is the transferability of the research which can be achieved through a study's potential to be valuable across a variety of contexts or situations. Smith et al (2009; p. 51) state that transferability for an IPA analysis is done theoretically rather than by empirical generalisability in that the reader, "makes links between the analysis of their own IPA study, their own personal and professional experience, and the claims in the extant literature". This then allows the reader to transfer the situation to their own similar context. Therefore, when writing I need to ensure that all terminology is explained and it is comprehensible so that the reader can act upon it if they so wish.

Significant Contribution: Tracy (2010) states that this is whether the knowledge gained from the study is useful. My aim for this research is that it does contribute to the reader in some way which is likely to be related to their own practice. This could be in terms of developing further NGs in schools or applying what the participants found helpful to them in mainstream classrooms.

Ethical: Tracy (2010) describes ethics as, "not just a means, but rather constitute a universal end goal of qualitative quality". This was discussed further in the previous chapter, but every effort was made to ensure that the study was ethical and the participants, especially being children were at the forefront.

Meaningful Coherence: This is determined if the research has achieved its purpose and accomplished what was originally set out.

Although I would aim to follow Tracy's (2010) criteria throughout my research, some of the criterion would not fit into the phenomenological approach. In response to this Smith (2011) developed criteria that is specific to IPA. For a piece of research to be deemed as 'acceptable' it needed to show the following criteria:

- *Clearly subscribes to the theoretical principles of IPA (phenomenological, hermeneutic and idiographic).*
- *Transparent so that the reader can see what has been done.*
- *Coherent, plausible and interesting analysis.*
- *Sufficient sampling to show density of evidence from each theme.*

(Smith, 2011; p.17)

Smith (2011) suggests that for a sample size of between four and eight participants extracts from at least three participants should be evident in each theme.

However, if the researcher was aiming for a 'good' IPA paper further criteria needed to be met (ibid):

- *Contain a clear focus.*
- *Will have strong data.*
- *Rigorous in terms of analysis.*
- *Sufficient space must be given to the elaboration of each theme.*
- *Analysis should be interpretative and not just descriptive.*
- *The analysis should be pointing to both convergence and divergence.*
- *Paper needs to be carefully written with the researcher considering what they have learnt about the participants' experience.*

(Smith, 2011; p.17)

I aim to use Smith's (2011) guidelines with the hope of writing a 'good' piece of IPA research, and find it more relevant to the IPA study that I am conducting. However, I do think that the general assurance criteria proposed by Tracy (2010) are beneficial as not only does this study need to be a 'good' piece of IPA work it also needs to be a 'good' piece of qualitative research. Therefore, I applied both criteria to my research.

Chapter 5 - Research Findings

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to provide an interpretative and narrative account of the research findings, following procedures as outlined by Smith et al (2009). From the analysis of the transcripts using IPA, five superordinate themes emerged; control, systems, structural and physical elements, purpose and inter-relationships. Each superordinate theme was shared by all six participants. Each of the superordinate themes were formulated from several related subordinate themes which are presented in the table below.

Table 3: Superordinate and subordinate themes

Superordinate Theme	Subordinate Themes
Control	Dimensions of feeling safe and secure Power
Systems	Part of wider mainstream school system Pupil Identity
Structural & Physical Elements	Positives of structural and physical elements Negatives of structural and physical elements
Purpose of Nurture Group	Confusion Academics SEMH
Inter-Relationships	Professional Relationships Peer Relationships Family Relationships

Each of the superordinate themes including the related subordinate themes within will be discussed in turn. A table will be presented for each superordinate theme to indicate each individual participant's contribution of subordinate themes. However, for clarity the table following, shows participants contributions to all of the superordinate themes.

Table 4: Table showing representativeness of participant's contributions to all superordinate themes

Subordinate Theme	<i>Sophie</i>	<i>Joshua</i>	<i>Luke</i>	<i>Ryan</i>	<i>Gemma</i>	<i>Alex</i>
Superordinate Theme of Control						
Dimensions of feeling safe and secure	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Power	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Superordinate Theme of Systems						
Experience of wider mainstream school	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pupil Identity	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Superordinate Theme of Structural and Physical Elements						
Positives of structural/physical elements	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Negatives of structural/physical elements			✓	✓	✓	
Superordinate Theme of Purpose of the NG						
Academics	✓				✓	✓
SEMH	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Confusion		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Superordinate Theme of Inter-Relationships						
Mainstream school professional relationships	✓			✓		✓
Peer Relationships	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Family Relationships	✓		✓	✓		

Although these subordinate themes have been separated to look for patterns, many of them are related which is evident through the interpretation and commentary. This is explained by the dynamic relationship of the hermeneutic cycle in that to understand a part of the findings, you also need to look at the whole and vice versa (Smith et al, 2009).

For each individual participant’s voice to be heard, extracts from the transcripts will also be used to support the interpretation, which I will aim to do using a selection from each participant. At least three extracts will be used for each subordinate theme as indicated by Smith (2011) when carrying out ‘good’ IPA research.

Control

This superordinate theme describes how the participants experienced being safe and secure in the NG environment but how there was little involvement with them in the decision process of entering or when they were to leave the NG, leaving the participants feeling powerless. It appeared as though there were control issues in that they liked having a safe and secure environment but at the same time lacked any involvement in the decision process wanting their independence. The table below shows the subordinate themes and the participant’s contributions to it.

Table 5: Superordinate Theme of Control

Subordinate Theme	Sophie	Joshua	Luke	Ryan	Gemma	Alex
Dimensions of feeling safe and secure	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Power	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Dimensions of feeling safe and secure

All six of the participants appeared to value the safety and security that the NG offered to them. This was especially reflected in the trusting relationships that they had built with the NG staff. Although another theme later emerged which was called inter-relationships, it was interpreted that the participant's relationship with NG staff was due to their experience of feeling safe and secure, unrelated to theme of inter-relationships. The participants referred to the NG teacher by her name, "Mrs Smith" (Sophie: line 311; Luke: line 147; Alex: line 194) and knew by name any other adults in the NG; "Mrs Davidson or Miss Stephenson" (Sophie: lines 380-381) and "Tracy" (Joshua: line 24), indicating this relationship as the school's policy was for pupils to call staff either 'Sir' or 'Madam'.

As the participants developed their relationship with staff they began to trust them:

"I can trust teachers outside and in the nurture group, but before I could only like trust them in the nurture group" (Gemma: 119-120)

This seems to suggest that for Gemma it took time for her to develop a trusting relationship, but once she had established this in the NG then this allowed her to feel safe and secure in order to make other relationships with mainstream teachers, in the knowledge that NG staff would be there if needed.

The development of trusting relationships has enabled Gemma and the other participants feel able that they can talk to the NG teacher valuing being listened to, as when a person feels listened to it builds on trust and helps develop relationships:

"they just like listen, like Mrs Smith does" (Alex:194)

"But sometimes when Miss Smith wants to talk to us alone she sits us on the couches and talks to us" (Sophie: 223-224)

Both Sophie and Alex appear to value being treated individually, that an adult is taking an interest in them rather than having other distractions. Both of them refer to the NG teacher by name indicating the importance of the relationship. Conveying a need for school staff to take time and speak to pupils on an individual basis. Joshua confirms this when talking about the NG where he experiences staff getting to know him:

*“cos people know what you like, like what’s your best thing and what you love”
(Joshua:267-268)*

Joshua appears to indicate that through his talks with NG staff he has an opportunity to share his thoughts and feel valued as an individual, but this doesn’t appear to happen in other parts of school when he compares his NG experience to mainstream, this again highlights a possible need for vulnerable children in school to have an opportunity to speak to a trusted adult.

In addition to having a trusted relationship with NG staff, participants appeared to find having a secure base of value. A major change for children when transitioning to secondary school is the moving around from classroom to classroom unlike the primary environment where pupils remain in one classroom. Having somewhere secure can help children feel safe.

“better cos I can feel comfortable in it” (Luke:118)

For Luke having a secure base means that he can experience feelings of comfort rather than a constant feeling of being on edge through the change of environment. Being in a familiar environment where children know where things are makes it predictable and therefore safe.

“so then you can keep your stuff safe” (Alex: 374)

Alex appears to have concerns about the safety of his possessions and wants to ensure that he knows that they are safe and secure. This indicates that for Alex, this has previously been an issue for him where this has not happened and is therefore important to him.

Power

Again, all six of the participants contributed to this subordinate theme. The common aspect to this theme appeared to be the lack of power that the participants felt at entering the NG, with only two participants being aware that they would be attending the NG at the beginning of their secondary school education. For most of the participants, they found out on their first day of school.

“I got told I was coming in right at the beginning” (Ryan:131)

The use of the phrase ‘I got told’ suggests that there was no discussion beforehand with Ryan about this and he was powerless to have an opinion on what he thought.

This resulted in the participants experiencing anxiety and confusion as to what was happening.

“nervous cos I didn’t know what it was about” (Joshua:115)

“nervous, cos I didn’t know what was going to happen” (Alex: 90-92)

Both Joshua and Alex use the word ‘nervous’ in describing how they felt about finding they would be coming into the NG. This may have been alleviated if prior discussion with each of them had taken place before, in that they would have felt more powerful being involved with the decision process. This would have also ensured that these

vulnerable children were prepared in advance for any changes so that they might have felt more at ease with the situation. This highlights a need for children to at least be aware of what will be happening.

There also seems to be a lack of power from the mainstream teachers who were unaware that members of their form would be attending the NG and were unable to tell the participants what it was about, only the NG teacher seemed to be able to do this.

“Madam, mine just says nurture and she was like that, she pointed me out as to where it was and then when I came in Miss Smith told me about what nurture was” (Sophie: 48-50)

Sophie describes how her form tutor helped by pointing it out rather than taking her to the room. This may indicate a possible tension within school between the NG and mainstream staff where due to the lack of power and involvement that the teachers have they are either unwilling or unable to take members of their form to the room.

Sophie’s experience would have also added to feeling nervous on her first day, in that her form tutor was unaware of where she should be and unable to tell her about the NG directly. It can also be suggested that Sophie, Joshua and Alex’s parents were powerless over the decision for their child to be in the NG, as it can be inferred that if they were aware that their child was to be placed in the NG when they started school they would have said something previously to their child. However, this would appear not to have happened and for most participants it was unexpected.

Participants also spoke about being powerless over any decisions that were made about when they returned to mainstream and when that would be. Sophie especially experienced frustration by the situation, as she wasn’t even able to try mainstream first before being placed in the NG. This does not appear to have helped her self-confidence

as although she thinks she would have done well in mainstream lessons, the adults around her did not, hence the decision to place her in the NG.

“I think that I should’ve done well in, I would have done okay in normal classes at the beginning in school” (Sophie:58-59)

Luke was the only participant who had known about coming to the NG before he started school and had been for a look around with his family. However, this did not seem to have helped him, and he too felt that he was powerless in that he wanted to be in his mainstream classes rather than the NG. Luke appeared to understand why he was in the NG, due to his behaviour, describing himself as “hyperactive” (line:230). He then used this to his own advantage by using the only power he had available, his behaviour. Luke started to comply with what he thought the NG wanted, in that he was quiet and got on with lessons but he admitted that;

*“I probably just been quiet all the time so they think that I’ve probably been listening”
(Luke:416-418)*

Therefore, Luke had the power over his behaviour in order to get what he wanted, returning to his mainstream classroom. It also suggested that the NG teacher was unaware of this and thought that Luke had been paying attention but he suggests that this isn’t the case at all.

Systems

This superordinate theme describes the contrasting systems that the participants belong to. Although some of the participants feel that they belong to a group there is also polarisation, in that they feel very isolated and segregated from the rest of the school. This in turn effects their personal identity in wanting to feel ‘normal’ and the image that they portray, which appears to be of some importance to them.

Table 6: Superordinate Theme of Systems

	Sophie	Joshua	Luke	Ryan	Gemma	Alex
Experience of wider mainstream school system	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pupil Identity	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓

Experience of wider mainstream school

All the participants contributed to this subordinate theme, either through their own individual experiences or through the perception of others such as their friends. This contrasted with their feelings of belonging to a group.

Although the NG was located within mainstream school, the participants appeared to feel that it was different. Terminology to describe the NG was often referred to as ‘in here’ where the word “normal” was used to describe mainstream school when talking about the different classrooms.

“Becky stayed in her normal lessons” (Joshua:153)

This seems to imply that the participant's do not see the NG as another classroom in school, that it is not typical. The use of the word 'normal' implies that they see themselves as being different to their peers in a negative way and that being in the NG is not particularly experienced as something that is positive.

Linked to the experience that the NG is not seen as a typical classroom is the curriculum experience that is offered.

"because like if you go in like proper lessons" (Gemma: 8)

For Gemma, the reason that the NG is different is that it is not a 'proper' lesson. It is perhaps the case that the typical expectation of a classroom seems related to how a mainstream classroom is run, that there is more of an academic focus, which appears that Gemma and the other participants value more.

This distinction between the two systems of being "normal" and "proper" may also be the result of their peers' perception of the NG thus isolating them because they are somewhere different.

"They were saying like that, well just random people say that 'oh nurture's boring and all you do is just hide away" (Alex:299-300)

The perception of others is something that is likely to be important to the participants due to their age, in that all of the participant were aged between twelve and thirteen and in the early stages of adolescence wanting to be socially accepted. Even though Alex describes them as 'random people' it would seem that he still cares about what they think.

Alex paraphrases others by saying that they ‘hide away’. This is very powerful in that it indicates that the pupils in the NG should not be seen by others and that they have something to be ashamed of which needs to be hidden from the rest of the school population, thus contributing to the segregation from the rest of school.

One other aspect to the participant’s NG experience is how the differing systems have affected their friendships, especially those who attend the NG. Sophie spoke about her best friend who also attended the NG.

“Alice, this girl who’s also in here, she’s , she’s become my best friend mmm, but I’ve never heard of her cos she’s like not in my normal classes that I’m in” (Sophie:149-151)

Sophie implies that the NG is isolated within the school in that not only would she not have met Alice but not heard of her either, if she too didn’t attend the NG, almost as though the pupils who attend the NG are a secret. Sophie uses the word ‘normal’ when talking about her mainstream lessons again implying that the NG classroom is not seen as typical.

These feelings of being isolated and different from their peers contrasts with their experiences of being in the NG with the other participants in terms of feeling a sense of belonging. When talking about their experiences of the NG, the participants tend to use ‘we’ when talking about the other pupils who attend.

“we sometimes, we just like rarely watch a movie or we do writing” (Ryan:33)

The collective use of the personal pronoun ‘we’ indicates that for Ryan he experiences feeling a sense of belonging to the group. Sophie also uses the word ‘we’ a lot when talking about the others in the NG. For her, this feeling of belonging to a group has its advantages in that it has given her the opportunity to develop strong relationships

within the group. This feeling of belonging overlaps other themes which will be discussed later.

“I know them well enough erm, to talk to them and to like and yeah just to talk to them, and tell them stuff” (Sophie: 289-292)

This implies that although the NG is seen as being different and isolated from the rest of the school, one benefit is the relationships that are formed within the group which is unlikely to have happened in mainstream school.

Pupil Identity

This theme centred around their own personal image that they portrayed. For most of the participants this was about no longer being in the NG and appearing to fit in amongst their peers in mainstream.

When Gemma was asked about what her ideal classroom would be like she described something similar to how the NG was arranged. However, as she began to talk about an English classroom she described the room very differently.

“Make it look older.. put English displays on, erm have like a box with all books in, erm tables, erm and that’s it” (Gemma:365-368)

This change in description suggests that although Gemma likes the NG design she wants to be like her peers and fit into the wider system of school. The use of the word ‘older’ suggests that she wants to be seen as being more mature, perhaps indicating her need to feel that she is the same as her peers and therefore socially accepted.

One way to try and fit in, is to perhaps portray the image that you don’t belong in the NG. As the participants appeared to have no control or choice over attending the NG,

participants like Sophie attempted to distance themselves from the others in terms of their own identity as not part of the NG.

“personally, I’m not in here much” (Sophie: 14)

Sophie was very quick in stating she no longer attends the NG as much (line 14) which appeared to very important to her and she repeated this several times throughout our conversation, emphasising its importance to her. The image that she portrayed was that she was unsuitable for the NG and would not be returning in the new academic year. This may be due to her wanting to be accepted by others and not seen as being different. She also distanced herself when talking about improvements that could be made by referring to the other participants as “kids” (line:255) suggesting that she thinks she is too mature to be attending the NG.

“I’ve been acting like the same for a while but a bit different to primary” (Luke: 85-86)

The use of the word ‘acting’ suggests that Luke is knowingly behaving differently in order to behave in a way which he thinks will allow him to be more socially accepted, or that he perceives this is how he can leave the NG. He does acknowledge that his behaviour has changed from primary school. Luke’s main motivation is to leave the NG.

“to try and get out of nurture faster like fast” (Luke: 60)

Luke uses repetition of the word ‘fast’ to highlight its importance to him. However, portraying an image to be socially accepted is not the identity that all of the participants wanted to give.

“in year seven I basically got excluded well, there was one week I got excluded five times in one week!” (Ryan:103-104)

Ryan’s image is different in that he appears to be proud of his behaviour in terms of how many exclusions that he received in a week. It may be that this is the image that school are used to seeing and it’s hard for him to break the cycle and be different. He instead gives a different image which may explain his attendance in the NG, therefore justifying his position in the NG by behaving ‘badly’.

Structural and Physical Elements

This superordinate theme is about the positive and the negative aspects to the structural and physical elements to the NG. Participants liked how the room was structured and the difference between that and mainstream. However, for some participants this was not seen as positive believing the NG to be too childish. The table below shows each participant’s contribution to the theme.

Table 7: Superordinate Theme of Structural and Physical Elements

	Sophie	Joshua	Luke	Ryan	Gemma	Alex
Positives of structural/physical elements	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Negatives of structural//physical elements			✓	✓	✓	

Positives of structural/physical elements

Although the participants talk about maintaining their image whilst attending the NG as outlined in the previous theme, all of the participants had something positive to say about the structural and physical elements of the room.

One particular element was having an area that had a “comfy” (Ryan: 301) seating area such as the couches and beanbags.

*“It feels more important when you’re on a couch. I don’t know why, it just does”
(Sophie:230-231)*

Sophie experiences that the couches are not just a comfy place to sit but a place where she is able to talk to adults or her peers which makes her feel important. Having somewhere that is not a formal area seems to aid the children in sharing and exploring their feelings. This may be due to the replication of home in that they feel safe and secure which is mirrored in the NG.

One structural aspect that appeared to be important to some of the children was the small number of pupils that attending the NG.

“at first I thought it was gonna be like erm with loads of children in but once I’ve been in I was happy” (Gemma: 103-104)

“I like the fact that you’re not like crowded by tonnes of like thirty people, there’s only like ten” (Sophie:79-83)

It appears that for both Gemma and Sophie large numbers of people in the classroom cause them anxiety. Gemma appeared to be worried about it until she had experienced

the room and then she was settled. Sophie appears to concur with Gemma in that she exaggerates with describing thirty people as being “tonnes”. This may have also aided the group relationship that was previously mentioned.

Unlike primary school, secondary school requires pupils to move around from classroom to classroom being responsible for their own possessions. However, this for some participants was a benefit of attending the NG in that everything has a particular place.

“if you need to come here it isn’t scattered all over the place” (Alex:425-426)

Alex appears to find it pleasing in knowing where things are located in the NG classroom. The use of the word ‘scattered’ seems to suggest that his perception of a mainstream classroom is one where things cannot be easily located.

Other aspects of the NG that the participants find appealing is the displays on the walls.

“I like to show people my work” (Gemma: 213)

Gemma is proud of her work and appears to strive for the positive feedback that she would receive from showing others her work. It also gives her the opportunity to feel a sense of achievement and gives her confidence to be able to show people that she doesn’t know.

The participants also spoke about the class pet that they have.

“the terrapin, it’s funny” (Ryan: 321-323)

This gave the participants an opportunity to look after the pet together, practising their group working skills but also an opportunity to care and look after another creature. This also gave the participants a common interest and an experience that they all shared in.

Negatives of structural/physical elements

Only three of the participants contributed to this theme. Although they all had described positive experiences of aspects to the elements of the NG there were some aspects that they didn't like.

“it's boring” (Ryan:5)

Ryan is very negative about the whole of his experience in the NG and this is reflected in the repeated use of the word 'boring'. This repetition suggests that Ryan is finding it difficult to articulate his meaning and doesn't know what else he can say and relies on using the same word over and over. For Ryan being in the NG has not been a positive experience, which appears to be extended to his overall school experience.

“I'd just leave it and knock it down” (Ryan: 248)

Ryan indicates that he would prefer to have the whole physical structure of the school destroyed and not just the NG. His description to knock the building down is very final and rather than to say that he didn't want to attend any more indicates that Ryan needs to see the destruction of the system that he doesn't like.

For other participants, the key issue for their dislike is the immaturity of the room.

“you wouldn’t have couches with pillows and that there in a high school, like do you know that little car thing it’s a box and you wouldn’t have a bunch of ‘Where’s Wally?’ really colourful drawings all over the walls (Luke:185-188)

For Luke, he finds the NG too immature for him. He uses the word ‘you’ at the beginning rather than ‘I’ to suggest that he is wanting to create distance between the NG and himself. Unlike the other participants who spoke about the couches and work on the walls as something that they value, this is not the case for Luke. This is likely to be related to the image that he is trying to portray especially now that he is in high school. Throughout the discussion, Luke kept reiterating comments about the immaturity of the NG, which indicated Luke’s importance to this. Later he described the NG as being childish.

“it’s like er a nursery thing that you do” (Luke:373)

The use of the word ‘nursery’ indicates that he thinks that the NG should be for much younger children than what he is. The use of this word suggests how strongly Luke feels about the physical environment of the NG. Again, his use of the word ‘you’ creates distance from himself.

As for Luke, the supposed immaturity of the room echoed in Gemma’s account, who although had no dislikes herself spoke about the items in the NG.

“people sometimes put the teddies on the knees” (Gemma:546-547)

For some children who attend the NG these experiences are important for their social and emotional development but for Luke this appears to be his main objection to

attending the room especially at his age, of early adolescence where he is trying to socially conform amongst his peers and feel accepted.

Purpose of the NG

This superordinate theme highlighted the confusion over the purpose of the NG. There appeared to be no clarity amongst participants about why they were attending the group. Through analysis of the transcripts, there appeared two different representations made by the participants, these being academic and, social emotional and mental health needs. The table below shows the related subordinate themes.

Table 8: Superordinate Theme of Purpose of NG

	Sophie	Joshua	Luke	Ryan	Gemma	Alex
Academics	✓				✓	✓
SEMH	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Confusion		✓	✓	✓	✓	

Academics

For three of the participants, their belief was that they were attending the NG to improve their academic ability.

“It’s making me err like get higher levels cos my grades have also gone up” (Sophie: 179-180)

Sophie’s experience is that, attending the NG has improved her academic ability. The importance of this is reflected in that she states how she has improved twice (levels and

grades) in the same sentence giving significance to academics. It is interesting in how this has been achieved through the linguistic components she uses ‘it’s making me’. This can be interpreted in two different ways; where it is giving her the motivation to leave the NG or it is helping her to work hard in her academic subjects which is a reflection on the NG environment and the support that is offered to her.

This focus on academics is also supported by other pupils of the NG such as Alex and Gemma.

“I got to learn a bit more things” (Gemma:137-138)

“in all the work that you do here cos you get pushed and then like if you’re really stuck you get more help” (Alex:183-184)

Both imply that this wouldn’t have happened in their mainstream lessons. Alex especially believes this to be due to the additional help that he has received. Participants felt that this could be attributed to the one-to-one support they had.

“my handwriting has got a lot neater cos Miss Smith has been like, teaching me different ways of how to get my handwriting neater” (Sophie: 138-140)

“cos you get more one-to-one” (Alex:276)

For Sophie having individual time with Miss Smith, the NG teacher has given her the opportunity to develop an area of need. She attributes this to the support given rather than the effort or practice that she has likely given to improving her handwriting. Alex also confirms this believing that his academic achievement is due to the support offered to him.

The participants appear more aware of their perceived academic progress experienced in the NG. This may be a result of the participants being able to see directly the improvement such as an increase in attainment levels or handwriting ability as this can be seen externally.

Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)

This subordinate theme captured two other aspects of the purpose of the NG either improving self-confidence or unwanted behaviour.

Confidence seems to be a key feature where participants feel that they have improved since attending the NG.

“It’s given me more confidence in other lessons” (Joshua: 66)

For Joshua, his new-found confidence has been transferable to other aspects of school such as his attendance in mainstream lessons. This again may be due to the relationships that he has established within the NG which has enabled him to feel secure enough to go to other lessons.

Sophie also believes that her confidence has improved due to attending the NG.

“I think I’ve got more confident” (Sophie: 159)

Sophie uses the words “I think” when describing her new-found confidence suggesting that she is not sure as to whether this is true. This is linked to discussion about her friends and their academic achievement.

“one of them was a level five in maths and now she’s gone right down to a level three so she could end up in here but I doubt that” (Sophie:191-193)

Sophie has a lack of confidence at this point in that even if her friend’s grades went down and were lower than hers they would still not come into the NG. As the conversation continues Sophie again doubts herself thinking that she wouldn’t be able to help her friends.

“I doubt that it would do any good” (Sophie:199)

Perhaps Sophie’s confidence is situational in that when she is attending the NG with similar pupils with whom she has developed relationships and has the support from staff whom she trusts. She finds it easier to be confident, however when she is attending mainstream lessons and with friends that do not attend the NG this becomes an issue for her, suggesting that perhaps this is still an area of need for Sophie.

In addition to the purpose of the NG being to improve self-confidence, three of the participants discussed their previous behaviour which implied the reason as to why they may have been placed in the NG.

“I used to kick off, barge doors open. In here; barge doors open, kick off, shout at students, shout at teachers, used to walk out and gets lots of detentions and also in Lowden I used to get into a lot of fights” (Ryan:71-74)

Ryan describes his behaviour both in mainstream and the NG as a list of things that he does and did not appear to show remorse or be embarrassed by his behaviour. Ryan

appeared as though he was proud of his behaviour and exclusions, even going so far as to draw my attention back to them later.

“don't forget I nearly got fully excluded” (Ryan: 83)

It appears from Ryan's behaviour that the purpose of his time being spent in the NG is to avoid permanent exclusion. Ryan seems to use his behaviour as a way of coping with school and other difficulties and justifies this in a way that he can be proud of.

Alex appears to have acknowledged his previous behaviour and changed his outlook due to his experience of attending the NG:

“I can work instead of messing about” (Alex:64-65)

Alex's priorities appear to have changed in that the NG has given the opportunity to engage with his work rather than disruptive behaviour of 'messing about'. This implies that the purpose of the NG for Alex was also to look at his behaviour.

Confusion

The participants appeared to be unaware of the purpose of the NG and experienced confusion as to why they were there:

“not bothered, didn't know what it was” (Ryan:133)

For Ryan, he was not told what the NG was or why he was there. He indicates that he doesn't care about this by using the words 'not bothered' which appears to link to Ryan's image that he wants to portray which was discussed in the identity subordinate theme.

A number of participants felt that the NG had a common purpose, the homogeneity of the group was that they were all there due to needing some form of 'help'. This either appeared to be in terms of their academic ability or their perceived social, emotional and mental health needs.

"in here, you get more support and help" (Joshua: 121)

"that it's helped me" (Gemma: 343)

For both Gemma and Joshua, the repeated use of the word 'help' indicates that this was why they thought they were in the NG. Both appeared to value this additional support seeing this as a positive. However, this may be especially confusing for them if they are unaware as to what they actually need help with and it may create an identity of being helpless. Rather than being angry with being placed in the NG without explanation both appeared to accept it.

Further confusion is apparent over the success of the intervention, as for some participants they believed that once their academic progress had improved they would be able to leave. For others, success is perceived as a change in their behaviour. For Gemma progress is about an improvement in academics and once this happened she would then leave the NG.

"full time..., cos erm I learnt a lot, now I'm in my proper lessons" (Gemma: 21-23)

Success for Luke is different, he doesn't seem to appear to measure his progress in terms of how much he has learnt academically like Gemma, but instead how he now behaves in lessons.

“I don't really talk at all I just keep quiet and get on with my work” (Luke: 291-292)

This juxtaposition of the NG leaves the participants to feel confused over its purpose. Either academic or behaviour progress is perceived by the participants as the purpose but this has not been clarified to them. As the participants are confused about the purpose, it will be difficult to measure any impact that the intervention has had upon them, as if they are unaware of the intentions of the NG, then they will find it more difficult to work towards any desired targets.

Inter-Relationships

This superordinate theme captured the relationships that the participants had with others. This included their relationship with their family, friends and mainstream teachers. The table below shows the different subordinate themes and the how the participants contributed to the theme.

Table 9: Superordinate Theme of Inter-Relationships

	Sophie	Joshua	Luke	Ryan	Gemma	Alex
Mainstream School Professional Relationships	✓			✓		✓
Peer Relationships	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Family Relationships	✓		✓	✓		

Mainstream School Professional Relationships

This subordinate theme captured how the participants viewed their relationships with the mainstream school staff. NG staff were seen as a dimension of feeling safe and secure so have been discussed previously in the superordinate theme of control, as the participants seemed to experience a different type of relationship with the mainstream school and staff.

Unlike the NG staff, mainstream staff were not known by name.

*“I don’t really know most of my teacher’s names as I just call them Madam and Sir”
(Sophie:308-309)*

Although it is common practice for secondary school teachers to be called something formal it is very impersonal for children. Sophie admits that she doesn’t know the names of her teachers and the use of ‘Sir’ and ‘Madam’ gives her the opportunity not to seek this out and keeps this lack of information hidden. It also infers that the mainstream teachers have not introduced themselves to Sophie, expecting her to know such information even though she did not attend mainstream lessons at the beginning of the academic year. In addition to this, Sophie’s attendance in the NG may have caused teachers to have a negative opinion about her, in that she needs support for her social and emotional needs which has impacted on their perception about her.

This lack of positive relationships was further supported by Ryan who appeared to experience a difficult relationship with his teachers.

“they’re irritating” (Ryan:156) & “they talk a lot” (Ryan:160)

Ryan previously had difficulty in articulating his feelings when talking about school in that it was ‘boring’ (line:5). In contrast, however, when talking about the teachers, Ryan felt very strongly using the word ‘irritating’ suggesting that it’s not that he

doesn't like them but something they do that annoys him. He later states that they talk a lot, and due to his behaviour, it may be that they talk *at* him rather than *to* him where there is a lack of understanding as to why he is behaving in that way and teacher's negative perception of him, caused by the behaviours he described earlier.

Alex has a different experience, in that it is not the specific relationship that he has with the mainstream teachers but the pressure that he feels he is under in mainstream compared to that in the NG.

“you don't get like put pressure on you” (Alex:4)

Alex uses the collective 'you' rather than 'I' to suggest perhaps that there are others who feel the same as him. Alex feels anxious about being in mainstream lessons in terms of keeping up with the work load, believing that if he had more help and support similar to that he receives in the NG then he wouldn't feel pressured.

“you get more help than you do in class, in other classes, cos in other, well, in other classes there's just one main person getting all the help” (Alex:184-186)

Alex also feels that he is being forgotten about in the mainstream lessons, as he believes that others get more help. In the NG, due to the small class size he does get more support which adds to his frustration in mainstream lessons where he doesn't receive the same.

Peer Relationships

All six of the participants contributed to this subordinate theme, and it appeared to be a very important aspect of their school life. For the participants, attending the NG gave them additional friends. Interestingly, this was thought about differently by the boys

and the girls. The boys talked about friendships that they had gained coming into the NG and felt that they had added to their friendship circle.

“I’ve come better friends with people who just come in here” (Luke:218)

Luke sees that an advantage of attending the NG is that he has developed his friendships with other pupils. The use of the word ‘better’ suggests that the NG has helped to improve this as without attending, it wouldn’t be as positive. Joshua agreed with Luke about this being an advantage to attending the NG.

“you get to make new friends” (Joshua:4)

Joshua saw the NG as an extension to making further new friends that he perhaps wouldn’t have made if he was just in mainstream lessons. This could be situational in that due to the participants attending the NG full time, there is little option to experience other situations where friendships can be formed.

In addition to making new friends, Alex found that the formation of friendships was easier in the NG due to the familiarity of some of the other pupils.

“some of them went to my primary as well” (Alex:101)

This might have made the transition into the NG easier for Alex as there were some familiar friends that gave him confidence to make new friends.

For the two girls, there were systemic difficulties in that they saw their NG friends as being different to their mainstream ones.

“I have friends outside of nurture which I had at primary school but then I’ve got friends in nurture as well” (Sophie:97-98)

Sophie highlights her difference in friendships by using ‘in’ and ‘out’ of nurture to describe her friendship groups. This suggests that she sees them as two different entities, not as a whole group. This may be due to how the NG is seen by the whole school, in that those who attend the NG are not seen as ‘normal’ and Sophie’s need to feel accepted by her peers.

Gemma also has similar systemic friendship groups, using the same terminology as Sophie.

“cos I’ve got some friends in here as well” (Gemma:300)

Once again, she describes her NG friends as being ‘in here’ suggesting that like Sophie she sees her friendship groups as being separate. Gemma also does not appear to value her NG friendships as much as her mainstream ones as later in the discussion when we were discussing leaving the NG and she spoke about what she would miss, Gemma stated the “support” (line:416) and that she would be happy when she returned to mainstream as she would be back “with my friends” (line:419). Although Gemma does feel that she has made friends in the NG, she appears not to value them in the same way as her mainstream friends.

Attending the NG straight away when the participants started school, may have affected their chance to make new friends.

“But then my friends out of nurture, cos my normal friends, my friends from primary school made new friends” (Sophie:104-106)

Again, Sophie separates her friendship groups stating that her mainstream friends are the ‘normal’ ones. Also, due to not starting in mainstream lessons with her peers she needed to rely on her primary school friends to establish relationships and when she did return to mainstream she only developed new friendships due to her primary friends establishing these in her absence. There is a sense in which she has missed out on this important part of her life.

Family Relationships

Involvement from the participant’s family was not widely discussed by the participants, suggesting that there was either a lack of involvement from the families of the children who attended the NG or that there were issues within the family that they didn’t want to discuss.

For Ryan, the topic of his family appeared to be something that he did not want to discuss. Each time it was mentioned, he tended to change the subject or divert the attention somewhere else.

“what phone is that?” (Ryan:220)

This implies that there may be difficulties for Ryan regarding his family which he did not want to discuss and therefore tried to divert the attention to anything as quickly as possible such as the phone he could see.

The other two participants who discussed their family were Sophie and Luke, who both viewed their experience of being in the NG differently. Luke seemed to experience his time in the NG as a negative one which may be due to his family’s previous involvement with the NG.

“my brother, as he was in here before as well. He absolutely hated it and got kicked out of the room” (Luke:243-245)

Luke’s brother was in the NG before him, suggesting that he was older than Luke and likely to have looked up to him. This may have caused Luke to have negative thoughts and feelings towards the NG before he even started. Luke described his brother’s feelings using very emotive language; ‘absolutely hated’. This gave Luke no other impression of the NG other than a negative one. He also states that his brother was ‘kicked out’ which would have questioned the success of the intervention for Luke.

Sophie, however overall seemed to have a positive NG experience which was reinforced by her parent’s perceptions of the group.

“my parents think like, its giving me er, like a better chance to work” (Sophie: 176-177)

Sophie’s parents may value the NG for the support it has offered in relation to her academic achievement. This was also why Sophie appeared to value academics and felt that this was the purpose of the NG, which was reflected in that subordinate theme. The use of the words ‘better chance’ give the impression that Sophie’s parents felt that she needed the extra support in order to progress and that the NG would be able to offer it to her.

Conclusion

This chapter presented five superordinate themes that emerged from the data, and made interpretations of the children’s experiences. These themes will be discussed further in relation to the literature in the following chapter.

Chapter 6 - Discussion

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the research findings in relation to the previous literature in this area which was presented in chapter two. I will discuss how the findings can support and add to the current literature. Individual experiences and group experiences will emerge through the discussion to aid understanding. Although the majority of literature was previously introduced some unforeseeable topics emerged from the children's experiences of NGs. Therefore, some new literature will be introduced to discuss these interpretative findings.

This research aimed to answer two broad research questions:

Research Question 1: How do children experience a secondary school NG?

Research Question 2: What features of NG experiences do children identify as helpful to them, and how do these appear similar to or different from their mainstream classroom experiences?

In attempt to answer these questions, each of the five superordinate themes which emerged from the analysis, will be presented. It should be acknowledged that some of the themes coincide with each other. The superordinate themes were: 'control', 'systems', 'structural and physical elements', 'purpose of NG' and 'Inter-relationships'. Each will now be discussed in relation to theory and research.

Control

The DfE (2016b) advised that schools should be a place where children feel able to trust and talk to adults openly about their problems. However, as stated by Marjorie Boxall, who recognised that one of the main difficulties presented by large numbers of children identified as BESD was them being unable to make trusting relationships with adults (Binnie et al, 2008). For children who have not had the opportunity to develop

these relationships, they do not have the skills or the knowledge to then thrive in typical mainstream settings (Syrnyk, 2014). Therefore, the NG approach is established in both Bowlby's Attachment Theory and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, ensuring that their basic needs are being met.

One of the underlying principles of a NG is to enable close, supportive and caring relationships between staff and pupils (Cooper et al, 2005). This can be especially important in a secondary school NG as unlike a primary mainstream classroom where pupils are with their teacher all day, secondary pupils can experience between ten and fifteen different teachers a week, therefore making it especially difficult for pupils to develop trusting relationships with staff.

Various studies to examine the effectiveness of NG found that a key aspect to its success was the relationship that pupils developed with the staff (Cooper et al, 2007; Garner et al 2011; Billington, 2012; Kourmoulaki, 2013; Griffiths et al, 2014; & Syrnyk, 2014). For the children in this research, all contributed to feeling safe and secure with a key aspect of this being the relationship that they had developed with the NG teacher, Mrs Smith (subordinate theme of; dimensions of feeling safe and secure). This is in agreement with Kourmoulaki (2013) whose research in a Scottish secondary school showed staff appearing to be at the heart of the group, and consistently being there for pupils meant they were able to build trust. The children in this research experienced a relationship with the NG where they trusted them unlike other staff in school. This was further highlighted by that the children referred to the NG staff by name rather than by 'Sir' or 'Madam' which was what mainstream staff were known by.

Part of developing a trusting relationship enables a person to feel valued. Syrnyk (2014) in a study of six primary aged children, found that through examining the experiences of pupils attending a NG that, they felt valued by staff who had taken a nurturing approach by getting to know them. This research was consistent with these findings. Children spoke about how the NG staff had taken the time to find out personal information. This aided the development of the relationship in that the children felt valued, in that an adult had wanted to find out about them. This again, can be especially difficult in secondary mainstream classes when there is a lack of contact time.

Part of having trusting relationships also incorporates feeling safe and secure. The second core principle of the NG approach is that the NG classroom should offer a safe space (Colley, 2009). Garner et al (2011) highlighted that pupils, parents and teachers felt that the NG was perceived as a safe haven which created feelings of safety and protection. This enabled the children who attended cope with both inside and outside of school. This they stated was the result of the pupil's relationships with staff. Pupils in this research highlighted their need for having a safe environment, where possessions and other items would be left where they had put them, given them a feeling of predictability and security (subordinate theme of; dimensions of feeling safe and secure). For one participant, this predictability made him feel comfortable in the NG.

Having adults that children can trust alongside a safe and predictable environment helps children who have attachment difficulties feel that they are in control (Bomber, 2007). Although the children in this research appeared to experience this in the NG there was a lack of power experienced in regard to their entrance to the NG and when they started reintegrating back to mainstream. This was a surprising finding in the interpretation of the findings, in that most of the children experienced no transition to the NG or even any prior warning or consultation that they would be joining the group.

Although the number of studies is increasing on pupil voice, there is relatively little on the voices of children identified as BESD (Cefai & Cooper, 2010). When voice is given to pupils this can often be tokenistic for example, periodic school councils (Selleman, 2009), it is also unlikely that pupils who are identified as having behavioural needs are invited to be on these councils due to the challenging behaviour that they can often exhibit. However, only pupils in the school have the expertise of knowing what it is like to be a pupil in that school – to experience being a pupil. As Cefai et al (2010) states, there are repeated fundamental differences in research between the pupils and adult's views on learning experiences. This is also the same for NG in that most research which attempts to gain views on the topic is through adults – often teaching staff themselves. This offers a very different perspective on experience.

Giving pupils the opportunity to gain an insight into their experience empowers them to take more control and responsibility for their own behaviour and behaviour change (Cefai et al, 2010). However, Selleman (2009) states that this is due to teachers overtly or covertly resisting pupil empowerment due to having concerns over conceding power

and control to pupils identified as having SEN. This is further exacerbated by teachers who are working with children exhibiting difficult behaviour.

For most of the participants who participated in this research they were unaware that they would be entering the NG. Some of the children told of their experience of only finding out, when they were sat with their new form tutor, having just been given their new timetable. Two of the children found this experience to be anxiety provoking in that they became very nervous of what was going to happen and where they were to go (subordinate theme of; power). This was a surprising finding, in that a core principle in nurture is the importance of transition (Colley, 2009), and one of the biggest transitions that a child experiences is the move from primary to secondary school.

Although the children appeared to adapt well to this change and established positive trusting relationships with NG staff, it may have been aided if the children had prior warning so that they could meet with the staff and see the room, not only adhering to NG principles but giving the children an opportunity to prepare for the change and not feeling anxious.

The children also experienced a lack of involvement in the decision process for when they would reintegrate back into mainstream classes which during the interviews, appeared to frustrate the children as they couldn't understand why they were having to remain in the NG. This again shows a lack of empowerment for the children who reported feelings of helplessness and alienation, alongside having no responsibility for their behaviour or behaviour change (Cefai et al, 2010).

For one pupil in this NG, he chose to find power, by changing his behaviour. This was interpreted not as a positive change that he wanted to make but a change he could control, as he stated that he pretended to behave in a positive way. His conscious choice for him, was the only way that he could gain some power and control over the situation. This is supported by Selleman (2009), who states that children identified as having behavioural needs express their voice in other ways, through their behaviour which is represented in the exclusion figures.

It can also be interpreted that parents had a lack of choice and power over the decision for their child to start secondary school in the NG. Due to most of the children being unaware that they were going to be participating in the NG until their first day, it was

interpreted that parents were unaware until after the event, as surely, they would have mentioned something to their child. This again was a surprising finding especially as the government is wanting parents to have a real choice over the child's education (Veck, 2014) as reflected in the SEND Code of Practice (DfE, 2014b).

Both Taylor et al (2011) and Kirkbride (2014) highlighted the importance for NG to have a strong working relationship with parents as there is more likely to be positive outcomes for the child. This also refers to Bronfenbrenner's (1979, as cited in Taylor et al, 2011) Ecological Systems theory in that the NG is to bridge the gap between school and home, to promote joint working to support the child, however for the NG in this research this doesn't seem to be the case. Parents may not have objected to the lack of involvement they had due to the feeling that the school was giving support to their child.

From most of the children's first day experience of finding out that they were to be entering the NG that day, it was interpreted that there was a lack of power from the mainstream teachers. As for one participant, their form tutor was unable to explain what the NG was, only the NG teacher could do this, giving the perception that the NG was 'secret'. It can also be inferred that the mainstream staff did not know in advance that the child would be in the NG. Colley (2009) encourages the involvement of all staff in the principles of nurture so that it can be valued by all staff to support the children.

Therefore, although the children in the NG did experience trusting relationships with staff in a safe and secure environment which supported them to feel an element of control, this cannot be said over the decision for them to join or remain in the NG, which gave them no control.

Systems

For all the children in this research, experience of the wider school system was pertinent to them. As previously stated, Bronfenbrenner's (1979, as cited by Taylor et al, 2011) systems theory states that the number of supportive links between the systems around the child determines the extent to which the child is able to fulfil their potential

(Garner et al 2011). However, there appeared to be tensions between the NG system and the wider school system.

Cefai & Cooper (2010) state that the largest challenge that NGs face is the perception of other mainstream staff, especially if seen as a control measure in terms of the NG being the place where excluded pupils go. Mowat (2010a) devised a support group for children identified as BESD and found that the initial response to the intervention had been, “at best, lukewarm and at worst, hostile” (p.644) due that mainstream teachers needed persuading that children identified as BESD were deserving of the support. This labelling and stigmatisation of these pupils often carries negative connotations about the child which can have a lasting effect as children, “can find themselves frozen in the labels that have been attached to them” (Veck, 2014; p. 794).

Mowat (2015) argues that the act of labelling children with SEMH often has associated negative constructs. Teachers categorise pupils every day for a variety of reasons, but for children who are labelled as SEMH is likely to have negative implications about the child. In addition, another highlighted concern is how the label is impacted upon the child themselves, in that the child takes on the characteristics of the label and identifies themselves as the label does.

However, Macleod (2012) described how for children identified as BESD, who had been removed from mainstream provision, did experience stigmatisation, but it wasn't the label itself that was difficult to the child but rather how they were treated by the mainstream teachers.

For the children in this study the NG and the wider school system did not appear to be compatible, in that they referred to mainstream classes and friends as “normal” with the connotation that they and the NG were not ‘normal’ (subordinate theme of; experiences of wider mainstream school). This implies that for these children they had taken an element of their label given to them in that they were different from the others in the school and didn't see themselves as being ‘normal’. This was also further exacerbated by peer perceptions of the group in that all the pupils in the NG ‘hide away” (Alex: 299-300), suggesting that peers saw them as being labelled as different to them and excluded from the wider mainstream system, perhaps feeling that due to any disruptive behaviours this was justified and thus reinforcing the stigmatisation.

Although this research acknowledges the on-going debate as to what is inclusion, its aim is not to add to this further, therefore for the purpose of this research, inclusion will be referred to as the “process of maximum participation for all learners, notwithstanding SEN, race, gender, religion and sexual orientation” (Pillay, Dunbar-Krige & Mostert, 2013: p. 312). It can be interpreted from the children’s experiences that they did not find the NG to be inclusive in the wider school, making them feel different to others.

Even though that the children felt different to the wider school they experienced a sense of belonging within the group (subordinate theme of; experiences of wider mainstream school). Throughout the interviews the children referred to themselves as a group by using the pronoun “we”. This gave a sense of solidarity with each other which can perhaps be explained through Tajfel’s (1979; as cited by McLeod, 2008) Social Identity Theory. This suggests that our social identity is a person’s knowledge that they belong to a group offering a person a sense of pride and self-esteem as well as a sense of belonging in our social world. McLeod (2008) states that being in a group can increase one’s self-image by enhancing their status and can lead to discrimination and prejudice against the out. Therefore, people divide their world into ‘them’ and ‘us’ to enhance their own self- image. People come to see themselves as members of a group when they compare themselves with another (Stets & Burke, 2000). The children in this NG appeared to feel part of a group, with children such as Sophie experiencing a positive relationship with the others to the extent as naming another group member as her “best friend” and being able to talk to them.

The previous research of Kourmoulaki (2013) highlighted that for the children that were interviewed, they too felt a sense of belonging which was instigated through interacting and playing games with peers.

However, it could be suggested that in this case, the pupils had no choice than to become a group in that they were put together at the beginning of the year and spent all of their time together. Throughout the interviews, the children spoke about each other positively and there appeared to be a forming of genuine friendships and relationships.

In addition to the systems that the children belong to outside the NG, their internal system, or perception of themselves (O’Riordan, 2015) can lead to ‘multiple identities’.

This suggests that for each group or setting a child enters there is an associated identity where, “the situation that they are in will determine the aspects of themselves that they allow to dominate” (O’Riordan, 2015; p. 417). The children in this NG would appear to have a variety of identities which are dependent on the setting or group that they are currently in. This may lead them to behave differently depending on the associated meanings, in a manner that they wished to be seen, which are both unconsciously and consciously achieved (subordinate theme of; pupil identity).

Luke clearly shows different identities, as although he does feel a sense of belonging to the group where he has an associated set of meanings for that identity, he also is very conscious that he has a different set of meanings and identity for outside the NG which he wants to leave. This is perhaps due to the conflicting identities along with conforming to what he sees as socially accepted. Like Luke, Sophie also appears to have conflicting identities, as although she spoke about her NG experience positively in terms of what it had done to help her, she reiterated on many occasions that she was different to the others in the NG. This can be explained by Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1979; as cited in McLeod, 2008), since although she does have a sense of belonging to the NG, the NG is devalued by others, such as peers and other staff. This then leads to permeability in that if a person still believes that they can progress in the ‘out’ group despite membership with the ‘in’ group then the person will try and distance themselves from the group to be seen as an individual (ibid). This appeared to be the case for Sophie, as although she belonged to the NG she tried to distance herself, stating that she was different to others.

Some children in the NG would appear to be experiencing inter-group relations, in that they are concerned how people come to see them and the consequences that this may have, such as categorisation (Stets et al, 2000). This may arise due to a need of being socially accepted by their peers in the wider school system. Peer acceptance can be defined as the degree to which adolescents are liked and accepted by their peer group (Waldrip, Malcolm & Jensen-Campbell, 2008) and during the school years, the views of peers are especially important (Taylor, Hume & Welsh, 2010). If the NG is not valued in the wider school system, especially by their peers it is likely for some of the children who attended the NG, such as Luke and Sophie, to try and distance themselves

from the group so that they can still be part of the wider school group and thus avoid rejection.

For one child in this research, Ryan, who experienced behavioural difficulties in all systems (NG, wider school, previous school and home) appeared to have internalised and accepted his label and defined himself through his behaviour. This seemed apparent when he spoke about his behaviour and appeared to be almost proud of what he had done and the consequences around it. Taylor et al (2010) state that for those whose label comes to define them they are more likely to be socially excluded by others. Ryan appeared to have experienced this especially outside the NG.

Structural and Physical Elements

There has been considerable reference in the literature as to how a NG should look like (Colley, 2009) which is based upon the original work of Marjorie Boxall (1969, as cited by Bennathan, 1997), but there is very little research on how children perceive the structural and physical elements of the room, with only Griffiths et al (2014) study referring to the physical environment of the NG, “we have sofas” (p.130).

Billington (2012) describes one NG room as being more like “home” where children can feel relaxed and comfortable. Due to that the room looks so different to other rooms in school it encourages the formation of relationships between both staff and peers. Although the room physical locality of the room was described earlier by the children in this research as being a base where they felt safe and secure, the structural and physical elements also appeared to have been experienced positively.

The children described the room as being “comfy” (Ryan:301) especially in relation to the couches in the room, this made the children, such as Sophie feel more important when she was being spoken to by the NG teacher (subordinate theme of; positives of structural/physical elements). Billington (2012) suggested the NG is designed to encourage positive relationships with staff, which certainly helped Sophie, as being sat with the NG teacher enabled her to feel valued and listened to. It would encourage mutual respect in that there were no power imbalances such as the case in a mainstream classroom where the teacher sits behind a desk. This positive regard for the

comfortable surroundings could also be attributed to Maslow's Hierarchy, in that the children's needs were being met (Griffiths et al, 2014).

Kourmoulaki (2013), found that from the participants that were interviewed, they valued having a smaller class size where there was less competition for the teacher's time especially when support and guidance was needed. As previously stated children identified as BESD are more likely to struggle to achieve at school (Hughes et al, 2014), this suggests that they are more likely to need the support of the teacher. If this drew more attention to their perceived inadequacies, they are perhaps more likely not to ask for the help or behave in a way which results in them leaving the room and thus not having to complete the task. Having a smaller class size, may offer benefits to vulnerable children as this way they are more likely to gain the attention of staff (Reynolds, Mackay & Kearney, 2009). For two of the participants in this study, the smaller class size was valued as a positive experience. This may be due to that children with attachment difficulties may find it difficult and anxiety provoking in that they are unable to control the situation and are socially uncomfortable around others (Bomber, 2007). Having a smaller class size with consistent peers and staff reduces this anxiety as well as enabling children to establish positive relationships.

The predictability of the room was also a positive in that the children experienced the pleasure of knowing where things are located. This again relates back to attachment theory where children prefer to know where things are (Bomber, 2007). This is because for some children with attachment difficulties they find it very difficult to be organised. If they do not feel that they are organised and know where things are, this can cause children to fail before they have even started anything (ibid).

For one pupil, Gemma in this research, an important difference between the NG and her mainstream lessons was that her work was displayed on the walls in the NG which gave her a sense of pride which appeared to have aided to her NG experience positively. For children who have low self-esteem this can often lead to feelings of inadequacies and frustration (Taylor et al, 2010) especially for children identified as BESD who struggle at school. A key principle of the NG is to raise a child's emotional and social development (Billington, 2012), which was achieved for Gemma through her work being displayed on the walls (this was also the case for the other children). This appeared to give Gemma a feeling of value and self-worth in that what she had

achieved was seen to be of a standard which would be put on the wall. Gemma appeared to be proud of this and drew my attention to her work (subordinate theme of; positives of structural/physical elements).

Finally, another key feature of the room was the pet terrapin. Most of the participants talked about the pet in how looking after it had been a positive experience. Although the terrapin was not being used as a specific therapy tool, other animals are used in this way as part of Animal-Assisted Therapy where Parish-Plass (2008) found that animals when present can provide a calming and less threatening atmosphere. The terrapin in the NG was experienced by the children in a variety of ways such as Ryan describing it as “funny” (line: 321-323) due to its habit of following a child’s finger when being placed on the outside of the tank. In addition to this the terrapin appeared to bring the group closer in terms of that they experienced working together to clean it out and feed it, therefore giving the children opportunity to develop relationships with one another and practice key social skills.

Although the children mostly had a positive NG experience of the structural and physical elements of the NG, there were some negatives which have not been reported in other NG literature, due to a possibility of a lack of research containing child voice. Colley (2009) stated that the six principles of nurture could easily be transferred to a secondary context. However, for two of the children the physical and structural elements of the room caused some discomfort, in that it was described as “boring” (Ryan:5) and a “nursery” (Luke:373) in that the elements that made it a NG such as the couch and cushions were immature for Luke (subordinate theme of; negatives of structural/physical elements).

Luke appeared to feel some tension between his thoughts about the structural and physical elements as there were also positive aspects that he experienced. This conflict may be a result of how he wanted to identify with his peers in the wider school system. In an early superordinate theme, it was discussed how Luke had conflicting identities, due to his need of being accepted by his peers. This then led Luke to distance himself away from not only the other children in the NG but the features as well implying he was too mature.

A key concept of the NG is that the physical and structural features of the NG such as toys, books and a soft seating area, scaffolds a child's social, emotional and cognitive development Kourmoulaki (2013). When Gemma spoke about others "putting teddies on their knees" (line: 546-547) this seemed to confirm Luke's perception, although Gemma did not appear to have any issues with this.

Although Ryan continually called the NG "boring" (line:5) it is inferred that Ryan was specifically experiencing a negative relationship not just with the NG, but with the whole school system, as he described that he would knock the whole school down if he could. After the interviews, anecdotal information was collected from the NG teacher about each child. Ryan was the only one who was involved with the EPS and was currently in year eight and would continue to attend the NG the following academic year, unlike most of the other children. This can be interpreted that Ryan felt inadequate which resulted in him having a negative experience not only in the NG but the wider school system.

Purpose of the NG

Kourmoulaki's (2013) analysis indicated that the participants in the study saw the purpose of the NG as a "stepping-stone" (p.64) between the three different systems of home, NG and mainstream classes. Although children were included in this analysis there appeared to be lack of their voice with Kourmoulaki (2013, p;64) giving one extract from a child to confirm this, "...all my mates went to all different registration classes I was going to a new regi and I didn't know anyone and I think that sort of put us nervous". This however, indicates that this pupil didn't see it as a stepping-stone and felt nervous and isolated due to their friends going somewhere different, perhaps unaware of what the actual purpose of the NG was.

Although the literature around NG states clearly the purpose of a what a NG is, "providing a secure, predictable environment to meet the different needs of each pupil; with a strong focus on supporting positive emotional and social growth" (Binnie et al, 2008; p. 202) there appears to be little evidence as to children understanding its purpose.

Griffiths et al (2014) focus group with primary aged children arrived at four themes constructed from the children's views. One, 'self-regulatory behaviour' did not state that the children thought this was the purpose but they were able to articulate the strategies they had adopted to develop their emotional and social growth since attending the NG.

The children in this research also did not appear to understand what the purpose of the NG was and why they had been selected to attend with one pupil stating that they didn't know what the NG was (subordinate theme of; confusion).

The children in the NG reflected on why they had been selected to join the NG and for some it appeared that they thought there was a commonality between them, in that they all needed 'help'. A number of children spoke about how the NG had 'helped' them and they received more 'help'. There is evidence to suggest that when children assimilate into themselves, academic identities are formed by school-related characteristics that are associated with their class. (Hallam, Ireson & Davies, 2004). The children then begin to reflect the school's judgement that was made of them. For the children in the NG they had assimilated that they all needed 'help' in some way, as there was a different understanding between the children as to why they needed 'help' which will be discussed later.

There also appeared to be confusion over the success of the NG, in terms of what the children were working towards. A common theme between the children appeared to be that when they thought they had achieved what they needed to, such as an improvement in academic or progress or their behaviour then they could leave the NG. If the pupils were not aware of the NGs purpose for them, it will be difficult for them to experience a sense of achievement or responsibility for their own behaviour if they were unaware as to what they were working to in the first place. The SEND Code of Practice states that "children and young people and their parents or carers will be fully involved in decisions about their support and what they want to achieve" (DfE, 2014b; p.11). For the children in this NG they appeared not to have experienced this involvement.

The children in the NG interpreted their NG experience as being that they were there due to either needing academic support or due to their disruptive behaviour.

For half of the children, they claimed that they were attending the NG to improve their academic ability (subordinate theme of; academics). Little research has been conducted on whether NGs improve academic attainment. Through some studies, teachers have rated that they have seen an improvement but no figures were reported (Sanders, 2007 & Binnie et al, 2008).

Reynolds et al (2009) conducted a large scale controlled study across 32 schools in Scotland and from the sample found that there was an improvement for NG pupils in their academic progress. However, the study showed that attachment related factors contributed to over 50% of the variance of academic measures. This implies that as a result of the nurturing principles applied, children's academic progress improved. Although this research included no data to confirm the children's perceptions, it is still important to acknowledge for the children in this NG they felt that they had experienced an improvement in their academic progress. For children identified as BESD this helps to improve their self-confidence and self-esteem as well as challenging any beliefs that they can't do something.

The experience of improving academic ability in this research appears to support Reynolds et al (2009) findings in that the attachment related factors were key to this success. Sophie experienced an improvement in her handwriting due to the individual support that she received from the NG teacher, Mrs Smith. Whilst talking about this Sophie used the word 'special' on several occasions to indicate how the individual attention from Mrs Smith made her feel. In addition to this Alex attributed his success to the extra individual support he received. Again, highlighting the importance of the relationships built with NG staff.

In addition to attributing academic improvement to the principles of attachment theory, Cooper et al (2007) stated, that Vygotsky's theory of learning gives a clearer insight. This is due to the children's learning when attending a NG is guided by NG staff who provide direct support for the individual in the form of 'cognitive scaffolding'. Staff act as a model for learning behaviour and the child's understanding can be stretched towards mastery of knowledge, their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). This could also explain as to why some children need continued support beyond the NG.

Although the children did not state that they thought they were in the NG due to needing to improve their emotional skills, many felt that as a result of attending the NG their confidence had improved (subordinate theme of; SEMH).

Improvements in children's social and emotional well-being is more widely reported in the literature, with studies stating an increase on Boxall Profile score after the intervention (O'Connor et al, 2002; Gerrard, 2006; Binnie et al, 2008 & Cooke et al, 2008). In addition to the Boxall Scores of 36 primary aged children, Binnie et al (2008) also reported views of 30 parents. 80% of the parents responded that they perceived an improvement in their child's self-esteem and confidence. No data from the children themselves were obtained.

Cooke et al (2008) in addition to their data used a nested case study of a girl in year seven at secondary school to obtain qualitative data. It was reported that the girl felt she had more self-confidence. Kourmoulaki (2013) also found that the children who were interviewed indicated an increase in self-confidence.

For the other half of the children in the NG for this research they attributed their involvement in the NG due to their disruptive behaviours, often seen in the mainstream classroom (subordinate theme of; SEMH). Although they did not state that they felt that there was a direct improvement it was interpreted that this was their experience as when describing their behaviour, they talked about it in the past in how they "used" (Ryan:71-74) to do things. Other studies also reported positive effects on behaviour. Griffiths et al (2014) reported that children attending a primary NG felt that they had learnt how to manage their behaviour since joining the NG. Although Garner et al (2011) reported an improvement in behaviour in that children had avoided exclusion this perception was from staff.

Other evidence indicating an improvement in behaviour can be seen from Iszatt & Wasilewska (1997) who found that from 308 primary aged children, 87% were able to return to their mainstream school and did not need additional support. This can be inferred that this was due to the children improving their behaviour.

There appears to be a lack of research in terms of whether the effects of a NG are sustained in the long term when the child returns to mainstream provision. It can also be suggested that whilst the child attends the NG and is having support through the

nurturing principles as to whether this is improvement is only situational in the NG. Either during reintegration or returning to mainstream setting where these principles are not withheld could have detrimental effects on the child's progress. If whole schools do not take on the principles of nurture in the mainstream classes and value its worth it can be suggested that the child may regress to their previous behaviour. This may also be instigated through how mainstream teaching staff or peers regard them in terms of the label that has been given. Thomas (2015) indicated that for children identified as SEMH the most important school-based reintegration factor was the school ethos. Further to this, Mowat (2010a) found that once a reputation has been formed then it is very difficult for some children to overcome them.

In this research, there appears to be some evidence to support this. Sophie reported feeling more confident as well as experiencing an improvement in her academic progress. This implied that Sophie's self-esteem had improved. However, when Sophie spoke about her friends outside of nurture in terms of their academic ability she stated that they wouldn't "end up in here" (line:191-193) indicating that Sophie's confidence hadn't completely improved, perhaps in her experience confidence was just seen in the NG where she felt safe and secure. Once in mainstream classes Sophie returned to feeling a lack of confidence. Frederickson & Cline (2008) give an explanation to this in terms of Sophie's reflected appraisal, where her belief in herself is based upon the appraisals of parents, teachers and peers. In order to change this the wider school system needs to support Sophie's growing confidence.

It can be suggested that although the children were unclear about the purpose of the NG to them, there were improvements in their social and emotional development which in turn aided their academic progress.

Inter-Relationships

Relationships with others play an important role in people lives. Although the children's relationship with the NG staff has been previously discussed in relation to

the feeling of safe and secure. Other relationships also impact the children's experiences.

Mowat (2010a) states that the relationship between pupils and staff are crucial if children are to thrive at school. It has already been discussed how the children in the NG value of positive relationships with adults, but it appears that this research this has extended to staff in the mainstream setting, with the children appearing to have had a different experience.

Colwell & O'Connor (2003) used event sampling over a 90 minute period in both four NGs and mainstream classes to compare the use of self-esteem enhancing strategies used by teachers. They found that 86.4% of comments made by NG staff were seen to be self-esteem enhancing compared to 50.7% of mainstream staff. However, it should be noted that this was based on the researcher's observations. The study does indicate the importance of how teachers, especially mainstream staff respond to children particularly those identified as BESD and the need to address their lack of self-esteem.

The children in this research appeared not to have experienced a positive relationship with mainstream staff to the extent of not even knowing their name, only referring to them by the generic term of 'Sir' or 'Madam' as with school policy (subordinate theme of; mainstream school professional relationships). It can be inferred that not only did the children experience a lack of personal relationship with the staff, but that mainstream staff had also not actively sought them out to establish a relationship upon their return from the NG. This may be due to that the children went straight into the NG when they arrived in school and therefore the time wasn't available to establish relationships. Cooke et al (2008) encouraged parental involvement through inviting them to special events in the NG, which would have also been ideal to do with mainstream staff to instigate a positive relationship.

As previously stated, children labelled as BESD can be stigmatised, Thomas (2015) reports that when reintegrating pupils back into mainstream school from attending a pupil referral unit (PRU) schools are reluctant to do so because of their label. This can be extended to the perceptions of the mainstream staff where the children in this research were based, especially due to the tensions between the wider school system and the NG.

For children and young people, friendships are especially important during the school years, with an increasing desire to spend more time with each other (DeGoede, Branje & Meeus, 2009). The children in this research had some conflicting experiences in how they felt about friendships. The majority of children highlighted that they had increased the number of friendships they had made as a consequence of attending the NG, (subordinate theme of 'peer relationships') which is consistent with the small amount of previous literature. Kourmoulaki (2013) reported findings of children in a secondary school NG valuing the friendships that they had made, as did Griffiths et al (2014) in a primary setting. Due to the lack of literature gaining the voices of children in a NG, the relationship with friends has had limited findings. However, it can be suggested that studies which have seen an improvement in Boxall Profile scores after attending the NG will have improvement in personal and social skills, consequently having a positive effect on a child's ability to make and sustain friendships.

Although friendships appeared to be important to the children in the NG, two children experienced this with some difficulty in that they described their friends in nurture and their friends in their 'normal' classes. This indicated that they saw their friendships as two very distinct groups which appeared not to overlap with each other. This again can be explained by Tajfel's Social Identity theory (as cited in McLeod, 2008) in that both the children felt a sense of permeability, due to believing that there was still a chance of social progress, so therefore associated with both the groups. It is likely that the children saw themselves members of both groups due to the groups belonging to different systems (Stets et al, 2000). The children were able to have different identities that were attached to each friendship groups due to the situation that they were in which determined the aspects of themselves that they allowed to dominate (O'Riordan, 2015).

An interesting finding from the children's experiences of friendships was that the two children who saw their friendship groups as separate entities were the girls of the NG group, where the boys of the group spoke more about the experience of adding to their friendship group. DeGoede et al (2009) suggested that girls are thought to be more focussed on intimate friendships where boys generally interact in larger groups. The experiences of the NG appear to support this research.

Howes et al (2003) highlight a concern for children who are withdrawn from mainstream education to attend alternative provision, in that they 'lose out' on making peer relationships due to the amount of time that they are away. In this research, Sophie appears to have had some experience of this in that she talks about friends outside of the NG and how they have made new friends. Sophie's friends from primary school were able to go and make new friends at the start of school, however because Sophie missed out on this due to being in the NG she has to rely on those existing primary school friends to be accepted into that group. Sophie sees them as her new friends, but perhaps if she had the experience first-hand she may have made different choices and friendships.

Although the involvement of family and parents has previously been discussed in relation to their lack of involvement in their child's entrance to the NG, the children in this research also discussed their experiences of their family relationships (subordinate theme of; family relationships).

Family literature around NGs appears to be limited and has focused on parent's perceptions on the effectiveness of the NG for their child (Taylor et al, 2011 & Kirkbride, 2014). Literature which attempted to gain child voice such as Garner et al (2011) & Kourmoulaki (2013) also included parents as participants and children did not mention their relationships with parents. Although Griffiths et al (2014) research did obtain a theme called 'relationships', parents were not discussed.

For one child, Luke, his negative experience of the NG appeared to be from previous family involvement in that his elder brother attended the NG, but was asked to leave. This caused the NG almost to be labelled in a negative way, much the same as he was in regard to his SEN. This made it difficult for him to see the NG in any different way as it challenged his negative perceptions.

Another child in the NG, Ryan appeared to be very reluctant to discuss his family, and whenever this was mentioned he changed the topic of conversation. Smith et al (2009) state that people can have difficulty in expressing how they are feeling or thinking and there may be reasons why they do not want to disclose certain aspects of their story. It was interpreted that for Ryan, family is a difficult topic for him. After the interview

had taken place, and a discussion with the NG teacher it was found that Ryan has had a difficult relationship with his parents since they had separated.

For Sophie, her experience of family relationships was based on academic value that her parents saw in the NG. This supports Binnie et al (2008) where parents reported a positive impact on their child's progress. Sophie appeared to view her experience in the NG as positive due to a perceived increase in academic progress (which was discussed earlier in the chapter), this was reinforced by her parent's views of the NG.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed the children's experiences of the NG in relation to the literature. The superordinate themes from this research were presented and discussed amongst current literature on NG. Themes that were unexpected include the children's experience of lack of power which meant that new literature was introduced to aid the understanding of the children's experience of the NG. Conclusions will be discussed in the next, and final chapter.

Chapter 7 - Conclusions, Limitations and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is draw conclusions from the research in relation to the research questions. The limitations of the study will then be presented before moving on to discuss the implications on wider schools and EP practice, and recommendations will be made for further research. Finally, I will conclude the chapter with a reflexive account of my research experience.

Conclusions from the research

This research endeavoured to gain children's experiences of a secondary school NG to address the lack of child voice in current literature. It was anticipated that through the analysis, themes would be uncovered which would not only add to literature but inform practice for wider schools and EPs.

From the research, it was possible to address the research questions.

1. How do children experience a secondary school NG?

The children spoke about feeling safe and secure in their environment which particularly related to the trusting relationships that they had established with the NG staff, especially Mrs Smith. They also liked the physical aspects to the room where they knew where things were and could see their work displayed on the walls. For some children, they attributed their improvement in their academic skills to their NG experience as well as some personal qualities such as feeling more confident. The children also appeared to identify themselves as a group indicating that friendships had been formed between one another.

There were aspects to their NG experience that were not seen positively. All of the participants spoke about the lack of power that they felt over the decision to enter and remain in the NG and were not clear on why they were there. They also appeared to experience a feeling of being segregated from the rest of the school, which affected their relationships both with peers and mainstream staff.

2. *What features of NG experiences do children identify as helpful to them, and how do these appear similar to or different from their mainstream classroom experiences?*

From the children's experience of the NG it can be suggested that the most helpful aspect to their NG experience was the positive trusting relationship that they had developed with NG staff. This enabled them to feel valued and listened to with the feeling that they could trust adults. This did not appear to have been established in the mainstream classes with children reporting that they did not know their teacher's names and did not feel that they would be able to talk to them.

Part of their mainstream classroom experience appeared to be a feeling of being 'normal', in that when the children were in the mainstream classes they were similar to their peers. However, being in the NG gave them the experience of feeling different to others. This was aided by the school's apparent lack of inclusivity of the NG in their whole school and the possible negative labelling of children.

This research indicates that the children had a positive NG experience where they were able to achieve the core principles of a NG, in terms of developing their emotional, social and mental-wellbeing. However, their experiences were also impacted by aspects that they did not value, such as having had no involvement in the decision to join or remain in the NG, or how they and the NG were perceived to the wider school.

Quality of the Research

At the beginning of this research I had prior assumptions, expectations and hopes as described by Finlay (2014) which can be seen in Appendix 2. I had assumed that the children would enjoy their NG experience, which from this research most appeared to do so. A surprising finding was the lack of parental or child involvement before entering the NG as I had assumed that this would have taken place as an example of good practice. In addition, I had expected that the NG was valued by the whole school, but for this school this perhaps wasn't experienced by the children who attended the NG. A hope from conducting this research was that I was able to capture the voice of the child which I believe using IPA allowed me to do so in that I acquired rich and detailed accounts. Throughout my research, I have attempted to abide by Tracy's (2010) quality criteria which was discussed in Chapter four. Meaningful Coherence was unable to be addressed at the time as this suggests that the researcher reflects upon whether the research has achieved its purpose. I believe that this research does, as the aim was to gain an understanding of children's experiences of a secondary school NG, which has occurred. Throughout the process, I have tried to be transparent, not only stating my thoughts but being clear on the steps that were taken.

Limitations

IPA requires the researcher to play an active role in the process (Pietkiewicz et al, 2012) and, to attempt to understand what an experience is like for a person, then you should try and immerse yourself in a person's world (Smith et al, 2009). This involved my role as a researcher where I took an active role in the analysis and interpretation, which was important in my position as a contextual constructionist (Madill et al, 2000). However, this could suggest that the analysis is based or limited through the researcher's involvement. Shaw (2001) states that to prevent bias the researcher must ensure that that the interpretation is achieved through the participant's words. Smith (2011) stated that for 'good' IPA studies extracts from half the participants should be provided as evidence, which I did in my analysis to ensure that the participants experiences were captured and not mine. Biggersatff et al (2008) outlined that being

transparent also avoids bias. Throughout the research, I identified my position, outlined all steps that I took presenting examples of how I arrived at my conclusions. An important aspect of IPA is an attempt to abstain from our presuppositions and preconceived ideas by bracketing them off (Langdrige, 2007). However, I acknowledged that I cannot completely bracket off my thoughts and feelings.

Willig (2013) stated that IPA does not attempt to explain our understanding of why participants experience things the way that they do, but that it offers rich descriptions of the experience themselves. This then limits the understanding that could be made of the phenomena. In addition, IPA studies tend to have small sample sizes with Smith et al (2009) stating that between three and six is a reasonable sample size, which this research achieved. However, Smith et al (2009) suggest that due to the detailed idiographic analysis associated with IPA, theoretical transferability is more appropriate, where the research can make a significant contribution by giving the reader further opportunities for other research and implications to their own work. The findings of this research were considered in the wider context in terms of how other schools who are thinking of establishing a NG may use these findings to implement their own practice.

IPA is concerned with the detailed examination of the lived experience and requires participants who are able to offer a “rich detailed, first account of their experience” (Smith et al, 2009; p.56). It can be suggested that children identified as having SEN may not be best suited to this due to their needs. It should be noted that IPA was originally used in health psychology (Smith et al, 2009) where many studies aimed to understand the experiences of participants with mental health needs, it could be argued that these studies participants would have found it difficult expressing their experiences. Smith et al (2009) suggest that an interview schedule can help with this. As a result, a detailed schedule was constructed for this research. Time was also spent in the NG with the participants to help them feel more relaxed around me. The interview itself took place in the NG where the children felt safe and refreshments were also given so that the children would feel at ease. Photographs of the NG were also used a visual resource to try to promote rich and detailed descriptions.

It could be argued that as I took the photographs, I placed my preconceptions of what I thought would be important to them. I did consider this and tried to take pictures of the

NG from every angle not focussing in on anything in particular. In addition, the participants were asked to look at the photographs and decide if there was anything they wanted to choose to speak about rather than me selecting them.

As the children were being interviewed individually with myself, as an adult I was aware of the power imbalance that this was likely to have had, especially in regard to how the children thought that I may want them to respond. I tried hard to alleviate this by introducing myself by my first name only, explaining my role and highlighting that I wasn't a teacher. Before the interview began I also tried to engage them in a conversation as to things that they liked so that they would feel more at ease.

Recommendations

Although the analysis of this research was acquired from six participants in one school, consistent with recommendations for IPA, the superordinate themes indicate possible recommendations for future practice. This can be implemented at different levels; in the wider school context and for EP practice.

Wider School Recommendations

- An important finding from this research indicated that there was no involvement from children over the decision process to enter the NG. For future practice, it is suggested that children and their parents are consulted beforehand to discuss their thoughts and opinions about the NG. Not only does this give the child an opportunity to have a say in their lives but gives them an opportunity to be responsible for their own behaviour and any changes that they may wish to make. Involving parents from the start helps not only the relationships between the systems but support for the child is consistent in both home and school.
- As a core principle of nurture is the importance of transition (Colley, 2009) it is suggested that when children make large transitions in their lives such as moving from primary school to the NG or from the NG to mainstream lessons a

reintegration plan has been made. This has been produced not only with staff but with consultation with the child and their parents. This gives a clear understanding to all, as to what will happen and when, as well as planning for any potential difficulties.

- Through consultation with the child, parents and school specific targets should be set and reviewed so that the child particularly is aware of the purpose of their time in the NG and can work towards them. This also gives the NG an opportunity to measure the impact not only through standardised measures such as the Boxall Profile but qualitative data.
- As Colley (2009, p.292) states, NGs to be successful need to be “embedded into the fabric of the whole school, which is reflected in whole-school policy acknowledging its importance and availability to all”. This can take time, especially in a large secondary school but all staff need to value its worth. NGs can help to develop relationships with NG staff and pupils by inviting them to take part in activities or special events.
- Nurturing Schools could also be promoted throughout the school where all classrooms provide predictable and reliable structures, where children feel safe and cared for which aids their trust in adults.
- Staff training for all, on nurturing principles and why children have been placed in a NG which will help to challenge any negative constructs around children identified as SEMH or the NG itself. Training will also help mainstream staff to understand about building positive relationships with pupils. A simple change to support this would be a change in school policy of calling teachers by their names such as Mrs Smith rather than a generic term. Schools need to think about how they can allow both pupil and teacher time to build these relationships which in the long run will have greater impact on academic achievement.

- Clear communication between NG staff and mainstream staff is needed so that mainstream staff are informed of how their pupils are progressing and children can see that an interest is being taken.
- Peer support from friendships outside of the NG should also be encouraged NG children can invite friends to come into nurture for special occasions or social times such as break and lunch times so that there is an opportunity to develop and sustain friendships.

Recommendations for EP Practice

- The EP role could be especially pertinent in gaining the voice of the child. Griffiths et al (2014) stated that EPs are most suited to this role due to it being an integral part of all professional practice. Therefore, before NGs are established there may be possibility for EPs to come involved with the voices of the children.
- The EP role may be considered more with the systems around the child rather than with the child directly. This could be offering support and consultation not only to the NG staff but to mainstream staff especially when the school is planning the reintegration process. This not only gives staff support but gives their concerns an opportunity to be heard and addressed.
- EPs can also help to support parents, inviting parents to attend consultation sessions with school so that joint problem solving can take place where all systems are working together to meet the needs of the child.
- EPs can be involved in training staff either on the theoretical underpinnings of the NG approach or on the whole school approach of nurture. This implies that there is a role for EPs to promote this approach in schools, not only to meet the needs of children identified as SEMH but for the benefit of all.

Recommendations for Future Research

- This research aimed to explore how children experienced a secondary school NG, and further investigations could be conducted to see if these experiences are similar or different to their mainstream classroom experiences.
- Further research could be explored gaining the voices of the children who attend NGs to add to literature on their effectiveness. This will inform practice so that NG principles can be further developed.
- The current study concentrated on a secondary school NG where further research could be conducted in primary schools where there are more NGs established. Again, incorporating acquiring children's experiences.
- This study only looked at the experiences of the children when they were attending the NG and future studies could investigate children's experiences after they have left the NG in terms of the impact they felt it had, if any on their return to mainstream.
- A key finding in this research was how the children in the NG appeared not to have experienced inclusivity in the wider school. Further research could explore staff's understanding of the NG approach in relation to children identified as SEMH and how their support can impact upon a pupil's emotional and social growth as well as academic progress.
- Literature is beginning to explore the effectiveness of implementing the nurturing approach in schools to support children identified as SEMH. Although there have been some positive findings so far (eg Boorn et al, 2010) further research on the implementation and effectiveness on nurturing schools would be beneficial so that schools would be more likely to adopt its principles, especially if there was a strong evidence base.

- Although the results of this study are specific to the NG where the research was carried out, there is a transferability possibility to both other NGs and the wider context of the LA. These results can be developed upon further in relation to new NGs that may be established in schools. For LA the results, could help to inform and develop wider practice to encourage schools about interventions such as NGs to support vulnerable children.

Next Steps

As stated in the information letters given to parents and participants (see Appendix 5 & 6) I plan to return to the school in July 2017 to disseminate my results. This will be completed by speaking to the children and adults separately.

Completing this research has been both personally rewarding and at times very challenging. I found using the structure of IPA helpful as it was helpful to check on whether I was doing it 'correctly', I also found it a useful methodology to gain the voices of children and learn about their experiences directly. Although the analysis was particularly challenging and time consuming I feel that I gained some useful findings that I hope will develop future practice. Although I was concerned that exploring the experiences of children identified as SEMH could be potentially more difficult due to their need, and some colleagues warned me against it, I was pleased that I did so. It was a pleasure to speak to the children and attempt to immerse myself in their experience. I believe in the importance of gaining the views of children and young people, which I will endeavour to do so in my EP practice.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Completing the Literature Review

Funnel Method

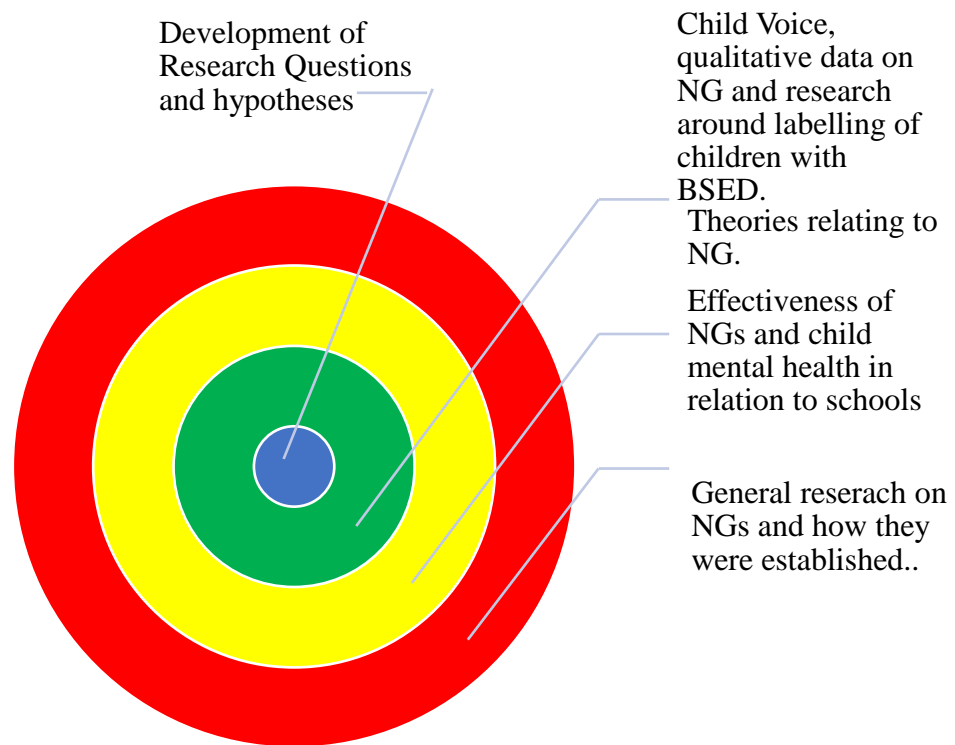
The Funnel Method of structuring a Literature Review is a circular process which was devised by Hofstee (2006), and designed to make sure that all the objectives of a literature review are met automatically.

To begin with the search remains broad and is an overview of the current literature that is available. As you move further down the literature funnel the categories become more defined and specific. Hofstee (2006) proposed that by the time you have reached the bottom of the funnel it brings you closer to the research that will be undertaken as unanswered research questions will be apparent.

The figure below shows how I approached my literature review in reference to the Funnel Method. From above the Funnel structure looks similar to a concentric circle model.

This approach allowed me to start with a general and overview search on NG which as I narrowed it down it led me to find the significance of my research in that there was a lack of research on child voice from pupils who attended a NG and there was also little evidence on the effectiveness on secondary school NGs.

Figure 1: Funnel Method applied to literature review



Completing the Literature Review

As stated above the literature review began with an overview of the current research before being narrowed down.

- Searches were undertaken using the online library at the University of Sheffield and Google Scholar for both books and articles.
- The beginning of the search led to the use of a variety of terms: “nurture”, “nurture groups” & “Boxall” which brought a variety of articles.
- As the search was narrowed down I used terms such as; “attachment” “Bowlby” “secondary nurture groups” “evidence” “parents” and “impact”. This gave me further research articles that were missed during the first search especially in regard to the effectiveness of NGs.
- I then widened the search to try and find more qualitative data as the majority of the research found was of a quantitative nature. This was achieved by using

terms such as “qualitative nurture”. I also used the University White Rose system which contains theses from the University and its partners. I found some other previous theses, one in particular which was about parent’s perspectives.

- I then moved on to look at more specific topics such as “child voice”, “pupil voice” “labelling” “stigmatisation” and “peer relationships”.
- This led me to find that there was a lack of research on NGOs containing the voice of the child and NGOs that were established in a secondary school which led to the development of the research questions.

Appendix 2: Prior assumptions, expectations and hopes (Finlay, 2014)

Assumptions

- All of the pupils would enjoy being in the NG
- Parents were aware of the NG before their child joined
- Child was spoken to before entering the NG
- Curriculum subjects were being taught alongside non-curriculum subjects
- Different age ranges
- Boxall Profiles being used
- Children have a good relationship with NG teacher
- Whole school see the benefit of a NG

Expectations

- Children and parents would want to take part in the research
- Expecting children to find talking about their experience more difficult due to their SEMH needs.
- Although they may find things difficult enjoy talking about their experiences and sharing their story.
- IPA to be the most effective methodology in gaining the experiences of a NG

Hopes

- There would be sufficient number of participants to take part
- Would talk about their experiences
- Give me rich and detailed accounts of their experiences
- For children's voices to be heard by the end.
- The school could implement some changes identified by the children.
- Other professionals to find the research thought provoking.
- To have a positive impact on EP practice
- To write a 'good' piece of IPA research.

Appendix 3: Alternative Methodology

Before choosing IPA as the methodology for this research, I did consider other approaches. I did not contemplate the use of any quantitative methods due to the nature of my research question, in terms of that my aim was to gain a rich understanding of children's experiences. Also, as previously stated there has already been a considerable amount of quantitative research about NGOs. Therefore, only qualitative methods were considered.

Initially I began by looking at a large selection of qualitative approaches and produced a mind map. From this I narrowed my search, where I eventually decided on IPA.

Thematic Analysis (TA) is an approach developed by Braun and Clarke (2006) to identify, analyse and report patterns called themes in data which can be applied to a variety of epistemological and ontological approaches. However, as previously discussed IPA has its theoretical underpinnings firmly within phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography. This suggests that the use of IPA provides a whole framework for research to be based upon.

There is also a misapprehension that IPA is, "simply a form of thematic analysis with little emphasis on interpretation" (Hefferon et al, 2011; p.756) or that it is simply an "interpretative approach" (ibid). If IPA is mostly descriptive and lacking in depth then this is considered to be thematic analysis. In order for good IPA there needs to be depth of interpretation at different levels as well as, visibility of the researcher's own interpretation (Smith et al, 2009). The aim is to try and understand the content and complexity of the meanings rather than just the frequency which involves the researcher involving themselves in an interpretative relationship with the transcript, a contrasting approach to that taken in TA (Smith et al, 2008). Furthermore, IPA's idiographic nature intends for the data to be looked at differently in that each transcript is analysed on a single case basis and then finally the data is brought together for a collective development of overall themes. Smith et al (2009; p.38) suggests that in the analysis it should be, "possible to parse the account both for shared themes, and for the distinctive voices and variations on those themes", whereas in TA the whole of the data is looked at as a whole and is described as representing, "some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set" (Braun et al, 2006; p. 7). Analysis in IPA has

also been described as an iterative and inductive cycle (Smith et al, 2009) in that the researcher can move forwards and backwards through the data. This hermeneutic circle also allows the researcher to look at both the part and the whole.

However, the main difference is that IPA focuses attention towards participant's in making sense of their experience, which is what my research is focussed upon.

Therefore, to be able to answer my research question more effectively I discounted the use of TA.

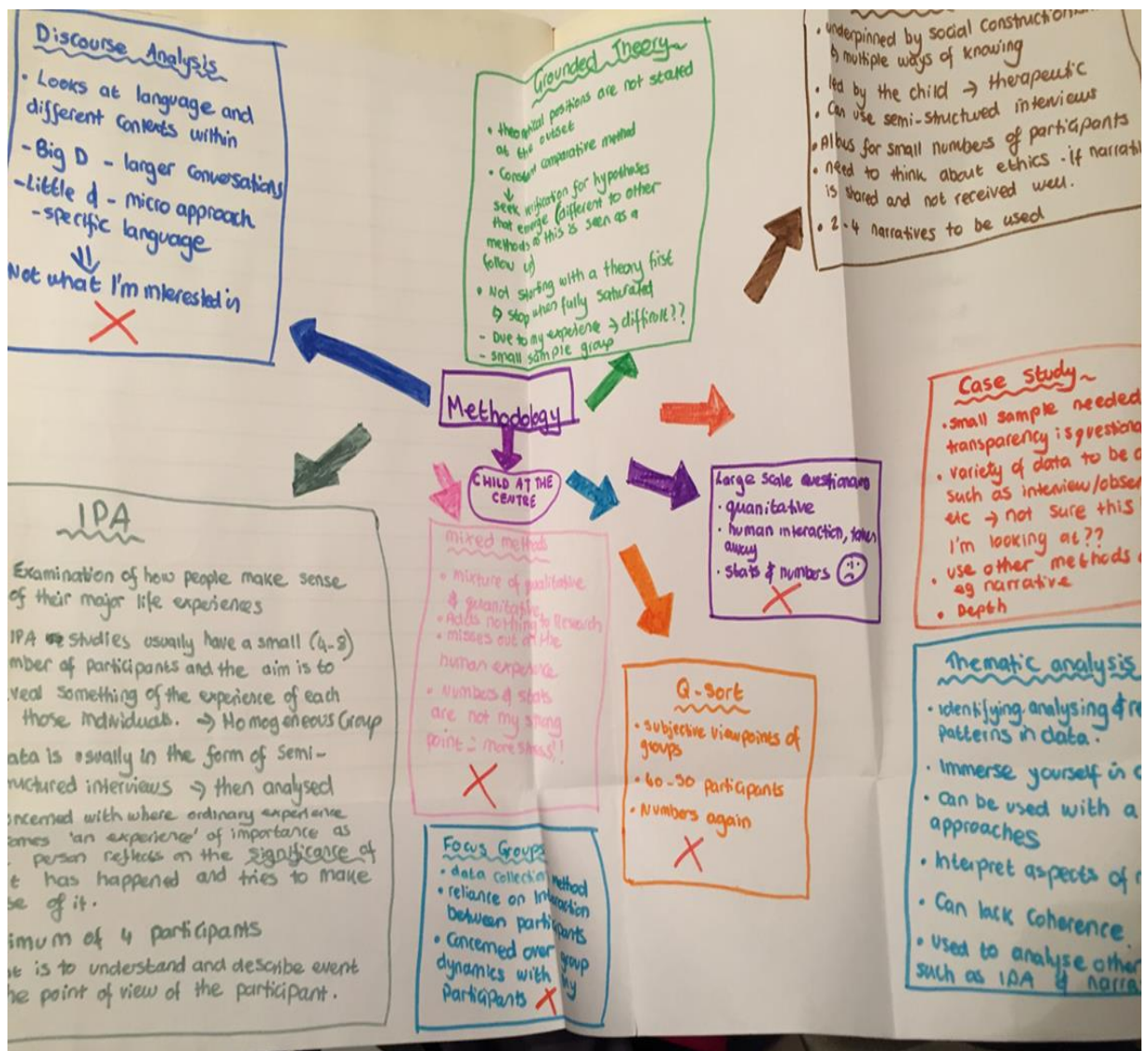
Discourse Analysis (DA) is another approach that could have been used by examining a person's use of language. Although both are linguistic approaches the rationale is different. Unlike IPA Smith et al (2009) suggests that DA has a stronger commitment to a social constructionist ontology as it is interested in the role of language in describing that person's experience, in terms of how it was constructed. In contrast IPA explores how people give meaning to their experiences in their interaction with the environment through the use of language (Biggerstaff et al, 2008). Again, I would argue that using this approach would not have allowed me to fully explore my research question.

Grounded Theory (GT), in its many different versions, is what Smith et al (2009) describe as the main alternative to IPA. Researchers set out to gain a theoretical-level account of a particular phenomenon by the researcher continuing to collect data to a point of saturation (ibid). The accounts of the participants are drawn together to make a theoretical claim. In contrast, IPA is concerned with a smaller sample size and the detailed analysis of an individual's experience. The idiographic approach to IPA was more appealing to me especially as I was conscious that I had a small sample size to begin with.

There are other possible phenomenological approaches to data collection other than IPA such as Descriptive Phenomenology. This involves revealing the 'essence' of the phenomenon under investigation (Brooks, 2015) and capturing this evidence precisely as it presents. However, this can result in purely a description of the participant's experience. Therefore, although it was able to be used to answer my research question I felt that it missed the interpretative element in that I would only be able to comment on the descriptions given to me, unable to add anything further. This would not have met

my epistemological position either (Madill et al, 2000), where the knowledge produced has been influenced by the researcher. I therefore believed that using IPA would allow me to add my own interpretation to the data with the understanding that I would try to 'bracket off' as many of my pre-conceptions as possible although this would never be fully achieved.

Mind Map of other methodologies explored



Appendix 4: Ethics Approval Letter



Laura Griffiths

Registration number: 140109414

School of Education

Programme: DEdCPsy

Dear Laura,

PROJECT TITLE: An exploration of young people's experiences of a secondary school Nurture Group.

APPLICATION: Reference Number 007957

On behalf of the University ethics reviewers who reviewed your project, I am pleased to inform you that on 30/03/2016 the above-named project was **approved** on ethics grounds, on the basis that you will adhere to the following documentation that you submitted for ethics review:

- University research ethics application form 007957 (dated 15/03/2016).
- Participant information sheet 1016144 version 2 (15/03/2016).
- Participant consent form 1016145 version 2 (15/03/2016).

The following optional amendments were suggested:

Please address all specific comments raised by the reviewers

If during the course of the project you need to deviate significantly from the above-approved documentation please inform me since written approval will be required.

Yours sincerely

David Hyatt

Ethics Administrator

School of Education

Appendix 5: Parent/Guardian Consent Form

To be completed by the parent/guardian

I confirm that I have read and understood the information letter about the research study and agree for my son/daughter to participate in an individual interview with Laura Griffiths (Trainee Educational Psychologist from The University of Sheffield) which will be recorded.

I understood that I and my son/daughter have the right to withdraw at any time in the process up until the writing of the research has been completed.

I understand that my son's/daughter's name will be anonymised so they will not be identified.

If in agreement, please return form in the envelope provided by Wednesday 11th May 2016.

Name: _____

Relationship to child: _____

Signed: _____

Telephone Number to be contacted on: _____

Date: / /2016

Contact Details:

Laura Griffiths, (address of service given),

lgriffiths2@sheffield.ac.uk

Contact Details of Research Supervisor:

Dr Victoria Lewis, University of Sheffield, School of Education, 388 Glossop Road, Sheffield, S10 2JA

v.lewis@sheffield.ac.uk

Parent Consent Letter

Dear Mr & Mrs _____

My name is Laura Griffiths and I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist with Anonymous County Council. I am currently at The University of Sheffield studying for my Doctorate of Educational and Child Psychology. As part of my research I am wanting to explore children and young people's experiences of attending a nurture group in a secondary school, like the one your son/daughter attends.

To carry out this research I will be going into school, and hope to ask your son/daughter about their time in the nurture group. There is no right or wrong answers to these questions, as I am only interested in their thoughts and opinions. The interview with your child will take place in the nurture room during school time and will last no more than an hour and I will only be interviewing them once. This will take place in either June or July 2016. There will be just myself and your son/daughter present. Our conversation will be recorded on a dictaphone, but will be confidential, with only myself, my research supervisor and potential examiner who will be permitted access to the recording. When I write my research your child's name will be changed so they remain anonymous and can not be identified, then our conversation will be deleted once I have finished the course (summer 2017). I am interested in your child's understanding of their experiences of being in the nurture group.

Mrs Smith, the nurture group teacher is aware of the research and along with school staff will be aware that your son/daughter has participated in the research but they will not know the content of your child's individual interview.

During the interview, I will explain to your child that they can terminate the interview or stop at any time for a break, and they don't have to answer any question that they don't want to.

At the end of my research I will be returning to the school (summer 2017) to thank your son/daughter for participating and sharing my findings with them.

If you are happy for your son/daughter to take part in this research, please sign the attached consent form and place it in the stamped address envelope provided.

Depending on the number of responses I receive, your son/daughter may not be chosen

to take part in the interview, but if you give consent I will telephone you to let you know if they have been selected or not.

If you change your mind and decide that you no longer wish for your son/daughter to take part, then you are free to withdraw your child from the research at any point in the process up until the writing has been completed. If you give your permission for your child to take part, I will then ask your son/daughter for agreement too.

Shortly after receiving this letter, I would like to contact you by telephone to give you an opportunity to ask any questions that you may have.

Thank you

Yours sincerely

Laura Griffiths

Trainee Educational Psychologist

Contact Details:

Laura Griffiths, (address of service given)

lgriffiths2@sheffield.ac.uk

Contact Details of Research Supervisor:

Dr Victoria Lewis, University of Sheffield, School of Education, 388 Glossop Road,
Sheffield, S10 2JA

v.lewis@sheffield.ac.uk

Appendix 6: Participant Consent Form

To be completed by the participant

I agree to take part in the research about young people's experiences in a nurture group and take part in an individual interview with Laura Griffiths (Trainee Educational Psychologist from The University of Sheffield).

I have read the information letter and I understand what will happen in the study. I know that I don't have to answer all of the questions and I can stop the interview at any time and withdraw from the research. I am aware that the interview will be recorded.

I also understand that my name will be changed so that no one will be able to identify me.

Name: _____

Signed: _____

Age: _____

Date: / /2016

Contact Details:

Laura Griffiths, (service address given)

lgriffiths2@sheffield.ac.uk

Contact Details of Research Supervisor:

Dr Victoria Lewis, University of Sheffield, School of Education, 388 Glossop Road, Sheffield, S10 2JA

v.lewis@sheffield.ac.uk

Participant Letter



Hi!

My name is Laura Griffiths and I am at university training to be an Educational Psychologist, which means I work with children and young people in school to help with the way they learn, think and feel.

Soon, I am going to be doing a research project around young people like you, who attend a nurture group just like the one you attend at school.

I was wondering if you would like to spend some time talking to me as I am really interested to hear about what you think about the nurture group. I would like to ask you some questions about this, but if you can't or don't want to answer a question, that's fine, I shall just move on to the next one. There is no right or wrong answer, I would just like to know your thoughts. It will just be you and me in the nurture room so nobody else will hear what you say and will take place during lesson time. The interview will last no more than an hour and will just take place once in June or July 2016.

I will be recording our conversation with a tape recorder which will help me with my work at university. I will keep it safe, and when I write my project I shall change your name so that no one will know that it is you. To complete my writing, I will be looking at what you have told me, to gain an understanding of your experiences of being in the nurture group. Once I have finished my course I shall delete our conversation from the tape recorder and I will then return to school next year (Summer 2017) to share with you what I found out.

If you think that you would like to help me with my project, please could you write and sign your name on the form.

Thank you!

I look forward to meeting you soon.

Laura

Appendix 7: Local Authority and School Information

Local Authority (LA)

The LA is located in the North of England and is a large mainly rural area, however there are some areas which are considered to be more urban. The population is mainly White British, but the ethnic population is growing especially from Eastern European countries. There are some deprived areas but mostly the LA is seen to be an affluent area.

The School

The school where the research took place is a large mixed secondary school with 1200 pupil attending. In 2011, the school gained Academy status, which is commonplace for schools in this LA. During the last Ofsted inspection, the school received a requires improvement grading. The NG has been in existence for over 2 years, which Cooper & Whitebread (2007) found that NGs who have been in existence for two years or longer or more effective.

Appendix 8: Information on the NG

General Information

The NG is located in a central part of school along a corridor which can be easily accessed. At the time of the current study there were thirteen pupils who were accessing the intervention. Nine of the children were in year seven, one child was in year eight and two were in year nine. The children in year nine only attended for a few sessions a week. Neither agreed to participate in this research. The year eight child, was part of the research and more information can be found in Appendix nine. The year seven pupils had all started at the beginning of the academic year full time in the NG, however at the point of this research the majority were accessing some mainstream lessons. The variation between time spent in nurture and time in mainstream was dependent on individual children's needs.

The NG would be classed as a 'variant model' (Cooper et al, 2005) where the principle of nurture were adhered but it is different in terms of the structure and organisation. The only aspect of the nurture provision was access to a kitchen so the children were unable to participate in eating together, however water was readily available. The NG used Boxall Profiles to monitor the effectiveness of the group, however this data was not sought due to the aim of the research question. The NG was staffed by one main teacher, Mrs Smith and various teaching assistants who were familiar to the children. On one occasion, other adults came to work with the children.

The NG timetable was a mixture of academic subjects and non-curriculum subjects which were carried out throughout the week.

Curriculum Subjects

English



Topic related to include geography and history

Maths

Art

Music

Drama

PE

Technology

Science

ICT

Non-Curriculum Subjects

Monday Morning – Circle Time

Wednesday Afternoon – Social Skills Games with a Theme

Thursday Morning – Social Skills

Friday Afternoon – Social Games

Timetable is flexible due to the needs of the children

Appendix 9: Pen Portraits

Sophie – year 7

Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs (SEMH). Friendship issues, needs lots of reassurance. Below age expectations for literacy and numeracy.

Aim of the NG was to develop her sense of self and self-confidence by improving her self-esteem. Although she comes across as being very bubbly, is very anxious.

Will not be attending the NG when she moves into year 8.

Joshua – year 7

SEMH needs as well as low academic ability. Attendance has been an issue. Very self-conscious. Has a negative mind set. Chaotic family background. Below age expectations for literacy and numeracy.

Aim of the NG is to develop his self-confidence.

Will be attending the NG next year for a short period.

Luke – year 7

Very chaotic background, mostly occurring in his early years. Previously had a bad accident which affected his schooling and family. Limited contact with parents. Aspiring to be like older brother who had difficulties at school.

Originally was very shy and withdrawn. He is capable academically but does not apply himself. Very vulnerable as likes to fit in and please others but doesn't always make the right choices.

Aim of the NG is to support him with his social skills, and raise his self-confidence/self-esteem.

Will be attending for a short period next academic year.

Ryan – year 8

Risk of permanent exclusion. Currently goes home early one day a week to avoid any further issues as NG not available to him. Has spent time in the Pupil Referral Unit but this had little effect. Struggles with his behaviour and can have periods where he is very unsettled. Below age expectations for literacy and numeracy.

Complicated family background. Moved between parents who are separated. Behaviour has steadily escalated (set fire to things and broke property).

Takes a long time to build relationships but is beginning to trust NG teacher and wanting to please her. Likes to test the boundaries. NG teacher surprised that he agreed to be interviewed as generally does not like speaking to people. Is known to the educational psychology service.

Aim of the NG is to continue to support him where they hope to fully reintegrate back into mainstream and avoid exclusion.

Will be attending the NG next year.

Gemma – year 7

Very shy, self-conscious and vulnerable when she came into the NG. Had no confidence in herself. Slowly this has improved. Needs time to process things. Below age expectations for literacy and numeracy.

Wants to please and does not want to get things wrong. Academically she has also improved.

Aim of the NG was to improve her confidence and her resilience in terms of getting things wrong and being able to cope with it.

Will not be attending the NG next year.

Alex – year 7

Likes to please and craves attention, will do anything; positive or negative to get it. Can become aggressive and has hit out at peers. Poor social skills and others do not want to make friends with him. Likes to get the better of others. He is the first one to tell on his peers if they have done something wrong. Always wants to be first. Below age expectations for literacy and numeracy.

Aim of the NG is to improve his social skills as well as his independent learning skills.

Will not be in the NG next year.

Appendix 10: Reflection on Interviews

Abstracts taken from Research Diary

Sophie: Looked very nervous when she initially sat down but relaxed after we chatted about her day so far relaxed. She talked freely and didn't need me to repeat any of the questions. Talked a lot about the NG. Very adamant in that she no longer needs to be in the NG.

As a researcher, I did use the interview schedule and the prompts but the questions were not asked in order. Also, asked about things that she talked about. I did feel that I was very aware of the voice recorder and it was difficult to relax, however, Sophie was easy to talk to and gave lots of detail in recalling her experience.

At the end of the interview I asked if there was anything else that she could have spoken about but she said that she couldn't have spoken for any longer than she did.

Sophie's interview tended to centre around feelings of confidence, friendships and the NG room itself.

Joshua: Eager to talk to me, remembered me from when I came to the NG the previous week. He gave lots of good detail when speaking to me. Again, the interview schedule was used but additional questions were asked depending on the things he brought up.

The photographs were helpful and added to the interview as it gave Joshua further discussion points.

I felt more comfortable during the interview and didn't focus on the recorder but to what saying Joshua was saying and responding appropriately.

Joshua's interview tended to centre around; confidence, friendships, support and being an individual.

Luke: Was happy to talk to me and felt that he wanted to tell someone about his 'story' in that he had negative experiences about the NG and had not found it helpful. He needed a lot more prompts and further questioning to draw out his experience.

Luke's interview was around power, friendships and being bored.

Ryan: Although Ryan remembered me from when I came into the NG the previous weeks the interview was more difficult than the other ones that I had completed. Although the questions were open ended questions Ryan was very good at turning

them into a closed answer. When questions were rephrased and asked later he was attune to this and would say that I had already asked him about that.

Used the word boring a lot and needed lots of prompts to go further. He spoke about his previous exclusions and when I tried to explore his thoughts and feelings around this he tended to close off, as though he didn't want to speak about that subject. Although I tried to return to it on several occasions he changed the subject or said that I had already asked him about it.

During the interview, I became very frustrated as he wasn't answering my questions as I was initially hoping. I tried to bracket off these feelings and continue with the interview with the skills that I have. However, on reflection when I thought about it further I did think that he had given me his thoughts and feelings about his experience they were just different to what I was expecting.

His interview seemed to be around his friendships and power.

Gemma: She was very nervous about coming to talk to me initially, I therefore spent quite a lot of time before the interview talking to her about her day and other things to make her feel more at ease. Gemma did talk a lot about her experience but she needed a lot of non-verbal reassurance, (such as nodding of the head or smiling) and prompting to continue talking.

I felt more comfortable as a researcher as due to having the practice with the other participants I was listening intently to what she was saying and asking further exploratory questions which enabled me to get deeper and a richer account.

Gemma's main points were around confidence, friendships, support and learning. I also got the impression that she would not have spoken to me when she first came into the NG due to what she described as her lack of confidence.

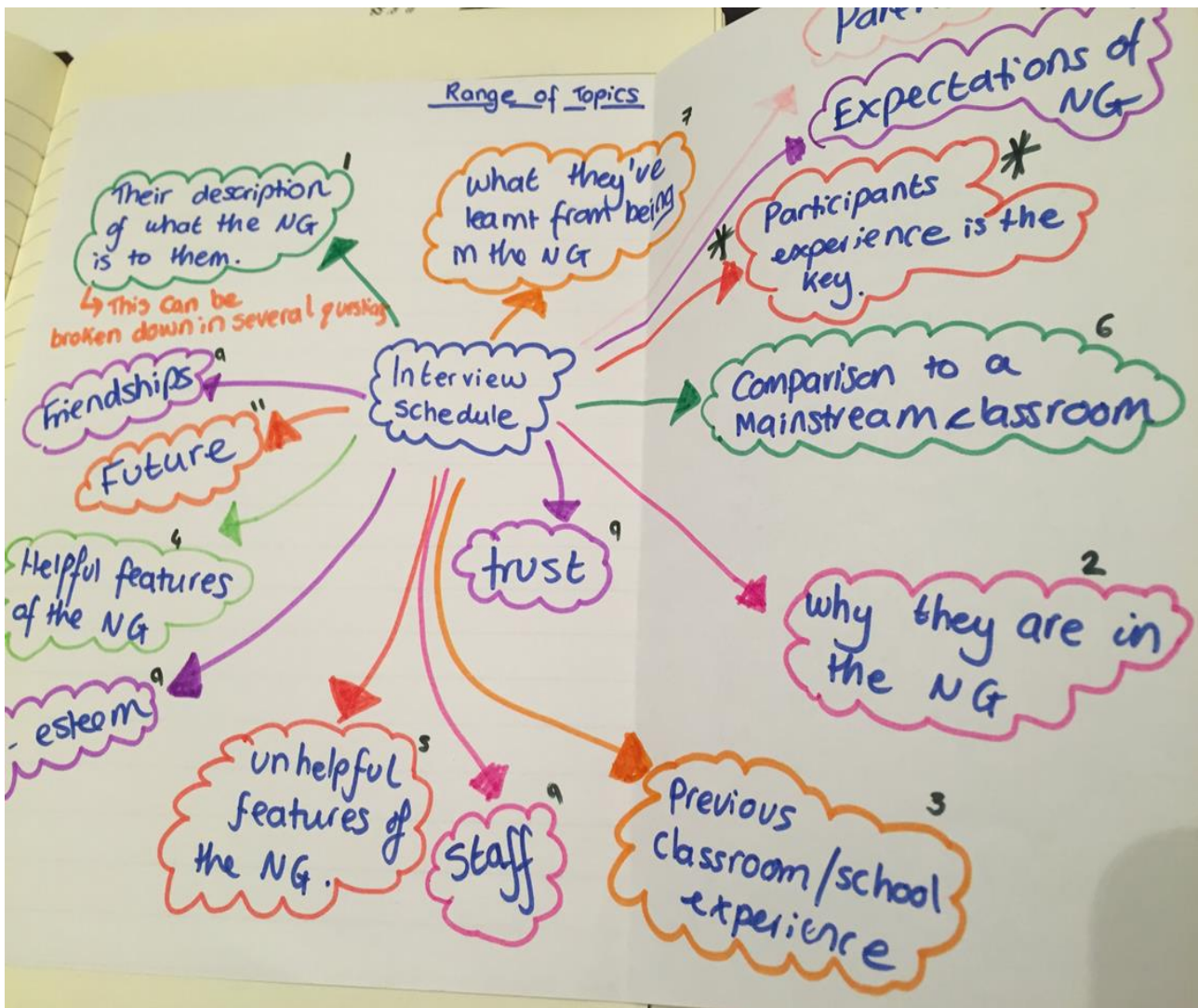
Luke: He also seemed very nervous at the start to speak to me but as we had met before when I followed the pupils in the NG, I could put him at ease quite quickly.

Spoke about his experience in relation to the questions that I asked him. Did reply with 'don't know' quite a lot which needed further prompts or questions.

Talked around confidence, support and friendships.

During the interviews, I was very aware of the power that I had in terms of being an authority figure. I decided to try and appear in a friend role rather than someone in authority.

Appendix 11: Mind Map to create interview schedule



Appendix 12: Interview Schedule

- 1. Can you tell me about the NG that you are currently in?** (*narrative question*)
Prompts: What happens? Typical Day? Groups/work/activities that you participate in. How much time do you spend in the NG?
- 2. Can you tell me about how school was like for you before you came into the NG?** (*narrative question*)
Prompts: Behaviour/friendships/attendance/relationship with teachers/home. Did you like school? How did you feel? Examples – what happened?
- 3. Can you tell me about how you came to be in the NG and how you felt about it?** (*narrative question*)
Prompts: Feelings – happy, sad, unsure etc. What expectations did you have of the NG? How long ago was this? What happened?
- 4. What are the main differences between the time you spend in the NG and the time you spend in mainstream classrooms?** (*Contrast question*)
Prompts: What are the good/bad things about the NG? What are the good/bad things about mainstream classrooms? Staff/room/friends/work/support.
- 5. Can you tell me about, if you have found anything helpful or you have liked in attending the NG?** (*narrative question*)
Prompts: Can you tell me about the staff, friendships, activities. Can you give examples? Tell me how you felt?
- 6. How have things changed for you since joining the NG?** (*evaluative question*)
Prompts: friendships/learning/behaviour/feelings. Can you give examples at school? Can you give any examples at home?
- 7. What do you think your parents and friends think about you attending the NG?** (*circular question*)
Prompts: Do they think it's good or bad? Do they ask questions? Do they want to come? Has it affected your friendships? Has this changed your opinion on the NG?
- 8. What would be for you, an ideal classroom?** (*comparative*)
Prompts: What features would you add or change? Anything that the NG does that the classroom could do? Anything that the classroom does that the NG could do? Examples of an ideal day.

9. Has attending the NG changed the way that you think or feel about yourself? (evaluative question)

Prompts: How do you feel now? Has this changed from before you came to the NG? Does anything make it better or worse? How do you feel about this change?

10. How do you think your time at school would have been if you hadn't come to the NG? (comparative question)

Prompts: Would it have been better or worse? Parents/teachers/friends. Future plans – has this changed? What do you imagine you would be doing if you hadn't attended the NG? Would you change anything?

Is there anything else that you would like to tell me about, that you think is important?

Appendix 13: Photographs of NG

Picture 1



Picture 2



Picture 3



Picture 4



Picture 5



Themes

Participant 3 – Luke

Comments

- Clarity
- Décor
- Colourful
- Inclusive
- NG is immature
- Contrasting opinions
- Contrasting systems
- Décor
- Internal image of room
- Progress is not attending the NG
- Flexibility

- 1 Laura: So can you tell me a little something about the nurture group
- 2 that you're currently in?
- 3 Luke: it's really colourful for **some reason.**
- 4 Laura: It's really colourful? Do you like that?
- 5 Luke: In a **sort of way**
- 6 Laura: Okay, what do you like or not like about it?
- 7 Luke: Just, it's like **a classroom that shouldn't be in a high school.**
- 8 Laura: Right, that shouldn't be in a high school?
- 9 Luke: Yeah it shouldn't
- 10 Laura: Why shouldn't it?
- 11 Luke: cos, if you go in **another class it looks nothing like this room**
- 12 Laura: okay, so what, what do the other classrooms look like in
- 13 comparison?
- 14 Luke: Not **fully colourful**, but arty around the years like a **nursery**
- 15 **based thing.**
- 16 Laura: Okay, do you like it or not, can you tell me more about that?
- 17 Luke: **Not that much no.**
- 18 Laura: not that much, so you're saying that you prefer the other
- 19 classrooms?
- 20 Luke: Yeah
- 21 Laura: Okay, so how long do you spend in nurture?
- 22 Luke: When I **first came into school every single lesson but then I**
- 23 **progressed to go to other lessons**
- 24 Laura: okay, so how much are you in now then?
- 25 Luke: err, two to one lessons in the week, **like two to three lessons in**
- 26 **the week.**
- 27 Laura: okay and err how long have you been in nurture for?
- 28 Luke: since September
- 29 Laura: since September, okay, but you started full time but now you
- 30 are only doing some lessons in here.
- 31 Luke: Yes that's right

- Commented [LG1]:** Interesting that out of everything about/in the NG chooses to mention the décor of the room – suggestion that this is important to him.
Clarity – unsure of the reason that the room is like that.
Colourful – doesn't like that it is brightly coloured
- Commented [LG2]:** Not completely - unsure
- Commented [LG3]:** See's the NG as a classroom – inclusive part of school?
- Commented [LG4]:** Suggestion that the classroom shouldn't be like that
Thinking that a classroom like the NG shouldn't be in a secondary school
Suggestion that the NG is immature for him
- Commented [LG5]:** Still agreeing it's a classroom - inclusive
- Commented [LG6]:** Look of the room is important to him
Nothing – strong word – no comparison between mainstream and NG
- Commented [LG7]:** Seems to have an issue with the décor of the NG room – doesn't like that it is so colourful
- Commented [LG8]:** See's the NG as being child-like
Suggestion that he is trying to say that he is grown up and doesn't feel that he should be there - image
- Commented [LG9]:** Doesn't like the NG decor
- Commented [LG10]:** Progress
Seen as progress when you don't have to be in the NG anymore
Use of the word 'every single lesson' – use of the words implies that it's something that he didn't like that it was rather tiresome
- Commented [LG11]:** Flexibility

Group identity
Academic work
Easier in NG
Separate to rest of school
Purpose of NG
Academic work
Relevance of task
Level of academic work inappropriate
Reluctance admitting to participating in social skills group
Lack of personal relationship with NG staff
No choice
Image
Group identity
Given choice
Wanting to escape
Group collective
Purpose of NG – none academic

32 Laura: what type of things do you do in nurture then?

33 Luke: We sometimes we just like rarely watch a movie or we do

34 writing or coin multiplications stuff like that.

35 Laura: So you kind of do work that you would do in mainstream

36 lessons but in here?

37 Luke: not normal lessons, as it's a bit easier in here.

38 Laura: a bit easier?

39 Luke: yes,

40 Laura: Is that helpful for you?

41 Luke: It helps a bit in other lessons but not a lot

42 Laura: okay, is there anything that nurture could do to help with that?

43 Luke: err, give other students work that's err based on their level

44 Laura: right, so you don't think that they're doing that for you?

45 Luke: No

46 Laura: No, okay. So is there any other sorts of things that you

47 participate in, as I think when I came in erm there was a social skills

48 group going on

49 Luke: err no

50 Laura: So you've never done one of those?

51 Luke: no, err on Monday, this is stopping though I think it's already

52 stopped but we did some, someone came in and we did erm fourth

53 and fifth period doesn't matter what lesson we had for fifth period and

54 we had to erm it's kind of like friendship and social skills and stuff

55 like that.

56 Laura: Okay, so can you tell me more about that

57 Luke: err, it's like, we had this box where we had to put in what we

58 were thinking and submit like that

59 Laura: okay what did you do for your box?

60 Luke: err try and get out of nurture faster like fast

61 Laura: right, so you're wanting to get out of nurture?

62 Luke: yes

63 Laura: okay, could you tell me more about the friendship skills that

64 you said

65 Luke: we learnt like how to have a proper conversation

Commented [LG12]: We – collective – group identity

Commented [LG13]: Mixture of academic and other lessons

Commented [LG14]: Use of the word normal
Suggestion that there is a difference between mainstream and NG.
NG is seen differently to mainstream classes

Commented [LG15]: Finds the work easier
Is this why he thinks that the NG is childlike?

Commented [LG16]: Gives some support but not a lot
However – could it be that he doesn't want to admit that the NG is helpful due to that he see's it as being childlike

Commented [LG17]: Use of the word 'other' – suggestion that he's not part of this and it is other pupils – not included him

Commented [LG18]: Academic – purpose
Thinks that work is not appropriate – too easy??
Childlike

Commented [LG19]: Not receiving work that is to his level – thinks it's too easy

Commented [LG20]: Is this because he doesn't want to admit to doing these things – makes him different??

Commented [LG21]: Telling me that he doesn't do it anymore – wanting to sound different to the other – more grown up?

Commented [LG22]: Doesn't know who it was – not formed a relationship with

Commented [LG23]: No choice
Lack of power

Commented [LG24]: Has participated in these lessons – contradicts his previous statement that he hasn't joined in with this – Image – doesn't want to appear as though he is different and needs this support

Commented [LG25]: We – collective – group identity

Commented [LG26]: Had choice over what he could do

Commented [LG27]: Doesn't want to be in the NG
Lack of choice/Power
Conformity – does what he thinks the NG wants him to do and then he can leave
Use of the word fast and faster – wants to leave as quick as possible – escape
Feeling of being trapped

Commented [LG28]: Group collective – we

Commented [LG29]: Suggestion that he couldn't do this before
Proper – meaning?

Ineffective

66 Laura: were any of those skills helpful or useful to you?

67 Luke: I don't really like take in them at any level and use them that

68 much

69 Laura: okay, so you didn't find it useful to go and use in other lessons

70 or anywhere that might have been helpful?

71 Luke: No

72 Laura: okay so you came straight in here in year 7 in September?

73 Luke: yeah

74 Laura: what was like school like for you before you came into the

75 nurture group so like maybe at primary school?

76 Luke: well, at primary school it was like a normal primary school

77 although I had to go in this group with a teacher with some people

78 were in nurture, it's kind of like nurture but in like a bigger place than

79 this and it does have couches and chairs like this and we did work in

80 there

81 Laura: Okay and that was at primary school that you were in there?

82 Luke: yeah

83 Laura: and what about your behaviour, has that had any effect on

84 being here?

85 Luke: kindaa

86 Laura: What do you mean by kindaa?

87 Luke: I've been acting like the same for a while but a bit different

88 from primary

89 Laura: okay, can you tell me more?

90 Luke: pretty much both good and bad

91 Laura: okay, did you like school before?

92 Luke: Primary?

93 Laura: yeah

94 Luke: yeah

95 Laura: what about now, do you like school?

96 Luke: not that much, no

97 Laura: so what's changed then from being at primary school and here?

98 Luke: the, in my primary school erm, they kept doing like detentions

99 but they weren't called detentions, but like at lunch and that but they

100 stopped that, like we got in trouble and all they'd do is just get told off

101 but now in here you get a C3 and a C4

Tasks Worthless to him

Not wanting to be different

Normality

Previous NG experience

Physical features of NG

Image

Change in behaviour from primary

Dislike of secondary school

Doesn't like detentions

Commented [LG30]: Hasn't found them useful at all
 Taken them in – hasn't need to or doesn't want to?
 Perhaps he feels that they're not relevant to him or doesn't want to?
 Due to lack of power/choice over being in the NG – his way of rebelling against it in that he is not going to learn anything

Commented [LG31]: Adamant that it wasn't helpful to him – perhaps doesn't want to admit to this?

Commented [LG32]: Use of the word normal – suggestion that where he is now he doesn't perceive as being normal

Commented [LG33]: No choice/lack of power

Commented [LG34]: Similar children to him?

Commented [LG35]: Not sure who they were

Commented [LG36]: Was in a similar group at primary school
 Trying to show the difference between the two

Commented [LG37]: Not wanting to call his primary school group a NG just a group but does acknowledge the similarities but only by the features
 Feelings of embarrassment?

Commented [LG38]: New image since starting secondary school?
 Has learnt something from primary school which resulted in him changing hi behaviour?
 Acting – suggestion that he is not typically like this?

Commented [LG39]: Simple continuum

Commented [LG40]: Not liking secondary school
 Hasn't transitioned well to secondary school

Commented [LG41]: Reason for not liking secondary school currently seems to be centred around the school's policy for punishment in that he doesn't like receiving detentions

Success of NG questionable

Aware of behaviour

Chooses behaviour

Lack of choice

Choice of behaviour allows for power

Importance of friends

Feeling comfortable

Friendships give feeling of being comfortable

Lack of self-esteem

Importance of academics

Lack of choice/power

102 Laura: What are C3s and C4s?

103 Luke: err C3 is a detention after school, ten minutes and C4 is half an

104 hour but they're changing that to one hour and fifteen minutes.

105 Laura: okay, and you don't like that?

106 Luke: No

107 Laura: and is that something that you've had a lot of experience of?

108 Luke: C3's yes, but C4s I've only had two.

109 Laura: okay so why do you think you get C3s?

110 Luke: just messing about.

111 Laura: Is that something you do in nurture or in your other lessons

112 Luke: both, but I changed lessons like from a different like there's like

113 a, they're split in two; AB and DC. I was in DC but got moved to AB,

114 so I know no one, like no one except Becky and Scott.

115 Laura: so friends that are in nurture group were the only ones you

116 knew in lesson?

117 Luke: yep, they were the only ones other than a couple of people that

118 I've known only like two.

119 Laura: Right, has that made the lesson better or worse?

120 Luke: err better cos I can feel comfortable in it

121 Laura: well that sounds good if you're feeling a bit more comfortable,

122 is that like cos your friends from here are in there or because you're in

123 a different class?

124 Luke: I'm with my friends

125 Laura: okay, so can you tell me how you came to come into nurture

126 group?

127 Luke: err, in my primary school I was not the smartest at all I had, my

128 I was a year 6 with Gemma and we were put in a year 5 class with

129 year 5 work so my levels were real bad

130 Laura: okay

131 Luke: and there was a nurture thing that we had to go to, but it's not

132 called nurture

133 Laura: it's called something different?

134 Luke: yeah

135 Laura: and you came to school here?

Commented [LG42]: Has received detentions which he doesn't like
Suggestion over the success of the NG – if it's aim is to work on behaviour then maybe shouldn't be receiving detentions?
 Luke pushing the boundaries

Commented [LG43]: Know's what he is doing wrong – suggestion that he does know what the issue is but chooses to do it anyway – e has choice and power over this unlike other aspects of his time at school

Commented [LG44]: Behaves the same in both systems – no difference

Commented [LG45]: Who's decision?

Commented [LG46]: Appears to be important to him

Commented [LG47]: Does know some people – but these friends are from the NG suggestion that he's had to settle for that as previously said he knew no one but the after thought was there in that he did now 2 people

Commented [LG48]: Comfortable – use of the word suggesting that he didn't feel like that before
 Positive aspect of the change

Commented [LG49]: Only friends from NG – not other friends as said that he didn't know anybody

Commented [LG50]: Low self-esteem

Commented [LG51]: Other pupil now in NG

Commented [LG52]: Didn't help with his self-esteem – reinforcement in his belief that he wasn't smart enough.

Commented [LG53]: Importance of academics

Commented [LG54]: Lack of power/choice
 We- group collective – suggestion that he had Gemma had similar difficulties

Commented [LG55]: Different name

Lack of choice	136	Luke: yeah and I had to be in here.	Commented [LG56]: No choice in the decision – lack of power
	137	Laura: did you know that you were having to be in nurture before	
	138	Luke: yeah	
	139	Laura: September?	
	140	Luke: Yeah	
Parental involvement	141	Laura: so you did know and how did you know about that?	
	142	Luke: in an e mail I think	
Transition Secondary/Primary Communication	143	Laura: an e mail to you or parents or	
	144	Luke: parents	Commented [LG57]: Unlike some of the other pupils knew he was going to be coming into the NG – given warning Parental approval
Previous NG experience	145	Laura: so did you come and look round school in the nurture group before or	
	146		
	147	Luke: err, a certain bit of year 6 in my primary school came here	Commented [LG58]: Had previous experience of other pupils coming into the group. <u>Suggestion that the NG and primary school work together to identify students who will be joining in the NG</u>
	148	including me and we had a tour round, but once err me and my Nanna	
	149	came here and we had a chat with Miss Smith.	
150	Laura: right and how did that make you feel?		
151	Luke: I don't know, just not bad at all	Commented [LG59]: Parental involvement Part of the transition process – knew that he was coming in	
Importance of friendships	152	Laura: so you were alright about coming into nurture	Commented [LG60]: Doesn't really know <u>Trying to suggest that he wasn't concerned about it - image</u> <u>Could be due to that he had little choice?</u>
	153	Luke: yeah,	
	154	Laura: did you have any worries about being in here?	
	155	Luke: that I wouldn't know anyone but actually a lot of my primary	Commented [LG61]: Friendships are important to him <u>Similar needs/difficulties to his friends? – reason why he has though friends?</u>
	156	school and friends came	
157	Laura: so was that helpful?		
Lack of power/choice	158	Luke: yeah	
	159	Laura: good, so how did you feel about not going into your typical	
Lack of clarity	160	classrooms and being here.	
	161	Luke: I wanted to go to lessons more than I wanted to being in here.	Commented [LG62]: <u>Lack of power choice</u> <u>Never given the option to try mainstream first before going into the NG</u> <u>Really wanted to try going to lessons</u>
Feelings of unsuitability of NG	162	Laura: was there a reason given or	Commented [LG63]: Wasn't given a reason as to why he was being in the NG and not in lessons <u>He doesn't actually know that it would be better in mainstream lessons</u> <u>Use of the word 'proper' suggestion that the NG is not seen as an extension of the school</u> <u>In here – isolated from the rest of the school – not inclusive</u>
	163	Luke: no just that I think it's better in proper lessons rather than being	
Separate to school Isolated	164	in here.	
	165	Laura: why, can you tell me more about that?	
Class Size	166	Luke: cos in here it's not like a proper classroom cos like eleven	Commented [LG64]: <u>Use of the word 'proper' suggestion that its not seen the same as other classrooms in mainstream – identity of the NG</u>
	167	students and not like thirty.	
	168	Laura: so you prefer being in a bigger class?	Commented [LG65]: Class size is the reason that he doesn't consider it to be a 'proper' classroom

Importance of friendships
Importance of space
Importance of academics
Ease of NG
Childish – ‘nursery’
Dislike of features of NG
Importance of self-image
Childish
Not proper – expectations of school
Isolated system
Negative thoughts about features of NG
Lack of purpose of NG
Group Identity/Belonging

169 Luke: yeah
170 Laura: okay, can you tell me more why you’d like to be in a bigger
171 class?
172 Luke: more space and more students to make friends with.
173 Laura: okay, so those are some of the differences that you were talking
174 about between your mainstream classes and here, in that there’s more
175 students in there than in here
176 Luke: more students and the teacher actually works on the subject than
177 every single subject.
178 Laura: right, so you’ve got subject specific teachers rather than a
179 general teacher.
180 Luke: yeah
181 Laura: any other differences?
182 Luke: it doesn’t really look like a nursery cos yeah it does look like a
183 nursery a lot.
184 Laura: so you think it looks like a nursery in here?
185 Luke: yeah
186 Laura: which aspects of it?
187 Luke: erm, you wouldn’t have couches with pillows and that there in
188 a high school like do you know that little car thing it’s a box, and you
189 wouldn’t have a bunch of ‘where’s Wally?’ really colourful and
190 drawings all over the wall, other than art where there is drawings all
191 over the wall.
192 Laura: so you mentioned the couches, so is that something that you’re
193 not particularly bothered about?
194 Luke: no, but in a proper classroom you wouldn’t have like couches
195 and that.
196 Laura: right okay, so do you like the couches in nurture or?
197 Luke: we don’t really use them that much
198 Laura: what about, you mentioned subject specific staff, is there
199 anything else different about staff that is different in nurture or
200 mainstream?
201 Luke: err, there’s no.
202 Laura: no, okay. So can you tell me if you’ve found anything helpful
203 or that you have liked about attending nurture group?
204 Luke: we have before like we sometimes we play lego, or just draw
205 which get’s boring but at least it’s something to do unless so we don’t

Commented [LG66]: Likes having a lot of room – suggestion that the NG room is too small

Commented [LG67]: Use of the word students, different to the description of the other NG pupils
Friendships are important to him
Thinks that being in mainstream classes will help with friendships – suggestion that he hasn’t made enough friends

Commented [LG68]: Specific subject teachers – perceives that this will be better than just one teacher like in primary school
Importance of academics
Reason why he thinks that it is easier in the NG?

Commented [LG69]: Thinks that the appearance of the NG is childish and immature
Image is important to him – growing up – didn’t want to be appear different?

Commented [LG70]: Comparison to a nursery

Commented [LG71]: Doesn’t like the features of the NG is this due to that he doesn’t want to appear different to others – image

Commented [LG72]: Appearance of being in high school – grown up – doesn’t want to appear to like or be joining in with things that he perceives as childish.

Commented [LG73]: Perceives these things as being childish

Commented [LG74]: Doesn’t like seeing his work on the wall – lack of self-esteem or being embarrassed?

Commented [LG75]: Use of the word ‘proper’ suggestion that the NG isn’t seen as a proper classroom – different systems/isolated

Commented [LG76]: Appears to be the features of the NG that he doesn’t like

Commented [LG77]: purpose

Commented [LG78]: Use of the word ‘we’ suggestion of group

Commented [LG79]: Doesn’t see playing with Lego or drawing as being childish

Commented [LG80]: Not engaging

Lack of choice/power	206	have to do work and erm Thursday's a teacher comes in and we have
	207	to do learn about social skills like PSHE.
Lack of participation	208	Laura: Has that been helpful?
Success of NG questionable	209	Luke: I don't really listen that much cos when I first started talking
	210	our year got kicked out, so I didn't talk.
Behaviour is a choice	211	Laura: so you used to get kicked out
Uses behaviour as personal power	212	Luke: of the room yeah, cos I was messing about cos it gets really
Control	213	boring.
Childish tasks	214	Laura: so you didn't find any of the social skills group helpful
Unhelpful social skills	215	Luke: no, not that much
	216	Laura: what about any other activities that you do in here, has that
	217	helped?
	218	Luke: err a tiny bit
	219	Laura: okay can you tell me more about that?
	220	Luke: no
	221	Laura: friendships?
NG friends	222	Luke: err I've come better friends with people who just come in here
Isolation	223	Laura: what better friends in terms of?
	224	Luke: like making friends
	225	Laura: okay, so has anything changed for you since joining the nurture
	226	group?
	227	Luke: err
	228	Laura: like your behaviour or friendships?
	229	Luke: not really, no not that much.
	230	Laura: do you think there would have been any difference with
	231	yourself if you hadn't come into the nurture group?
	232	Luke: probably
	233	Laura: probably? Can you tell me a bit more about that?
Suppression of behaviour	234	Luke: probably I'd be a lot more noisier let's say that, and more
	235	hyperactive cos in here I just get bored easily.
NG is boring	236	Laura: so you think you get bored more in nurture more than in
	237	mainstream.
	238	Luke: mmhm

Commented [LG81]: Repetition of the word 'have to' lack of choice/power

Commented [LG82]: Doesn't participate

Commented [LG83]: When he did participate had to leave the classroom – suggestion that he doesn't join in due to this NG uses school policy in terms of punishment

Commented [LG84]: He perceives it to be boring or perhaps childish which is why he would not want to engage with it
His way of controlling the situation due to the lack of control in other areas.

Commented [LG85]: Social skills not helpful

Commented [LG86]: Use of the word just – suggestion that they are not in mainstream classes – isolation

Commented [LG87]: Would be noisier and hyperactive in lessons
NG has suppressed him

Commented [LG88]: Finds the NG boring – due to the work being easier or that he feels that it is childish?

Separate systems	239	Laura: okay, so what is it that they do in mainstream that doesn't bore you as much?
	240	
Isolation	241	Luke: we actually do proper lessons like, in art I think it's proper fun
	242	that you can like do portraits and that. In tech you learning about how
Value of conventional lessons	243	to make gadgets and that but in here you just do like written work or
	244	just paint or summit.
Image portrayal	245	Laura: So have you ever said to anyone about your feelings about
	246	nurture?
Family History of NG	247	Luke: errr no, except my brother as he was in here before as well.
	248	Laura: right so you brother was in here and you've spoken to him?
	249	Luke: he absolutely hated it and got kicked out of the room
Negative family history	250	Laura: right okay but other than him you've never mentioned your
	251	feelings to staff in the nurture group room?
	252	Luke: no
	253	Laura: no, why, why do you think you haven't done that?
Lack of clarity	254	Luke: don't know
	255	Laura: you don't know? Will you be here next year?
	256	Luke: I don't think so, no
	257	Laura: you don't think so, okay. What about, you live with your
	258	Nanna don't you?
	259	Luke: Yeah
	260	Laura: What does she think about you being in the nurture group
Confusion over purpose	261	Luke: She doesn't really, she like, don't, she knows that I'm in it but
	262	she acts like she doesn't.
	263	Laura: right,
Lack of parental understanding	264	Luke: so I'm in the nurture and she doesn't she thinks like I'm doing
	265	like a proper school day and that's really it.
Isolation NG Improper	266	Laura: okay, so does she ask you any questions or anything about it?
	267	Luke: No
	268	Laura: No, what about in terms of your friendships as you mentioned
	269	that you've got some friends that you've got in here
	270	Luke: yeah
	271	Laura: and you've got friends that are in sort of other classrooms
	272	Luke: yeah

Commented [LG89]: Separate systems – doesn't see the NG as being 'proper'
Importance of academic subjects
In the NG unable to use specialist curriculum equipment

Commented [LG90]: Enjoys doing subjects out of the NG

Commented [LG91]: Use of the words 'in here' – isolated from rest of the school

Commented [LG92]: Mentioned that art when he does portraits is 'proper' art but painting in the NG is not seen as 'proper' and it's boring – suggestion that it isn't the content of the lessons but the room he doesn't like being in – image

Commented [LG93]: Family history of attendance of a NG – perhaps reason as to why he was identified before joining the school

Commented [LG94]: Strong emotions – family history Reason as to why he's negative about his NG experience in that he is following his brother and likely to have heard negative things if he hated it.

Commented [LG95]: Unsure about the future - uncertainty

Commented [LG96]: Suggestion that although his Nanna knows he is in the NG that she doesn't know why – purpose and parental involvement - confusion

Commented [LG97]: Implication that he doesn't think that being in the NG is doing a proper school day – separate and isolated from the rest of the school

	273	Laura: did that effect making friends when you particularly first came in September?	
	274		
Situational Friendships	275	Luke: no cos mm my friends from my primary school like one my best	Commented [LG98]: Hadn't made new friends – still reliant on friends from primary school
Missed out on early friendship formation	276	friends was in the lessons that I was in but I got moved from that but	
	277	when I was in there I made a bunch of friends with his friends and I	Commented [LG99]: Time spent in mainstream lessons
No control	278	don't know why I got kicked out summit to do with maths.	Commented [LG100]: Situational – only friends with others due to his best friend from primary school. Time in the NG affected his ability to make new friends for himself when he started the school
	279	Laura: something to do with maths?	
Uncertainty	280	Luke: yeah, when it was like; I don't know cos we was gonna be put	Commented [LG101]: Lack of clarity – no control over the situation
	281	in a maths group and for some reason we had to move lesson like	
	282	entire like sections of the school for some reason.	Commented [LG102]: Repetition of 'for some reason' – no clarity or understanding of the situation <u>Could be due to that he didn't want to tell me but appears that he genuinely didn't know why.</u> <u>Lack of power/understanding</u>
	283	Laura: okay, so it seems like that you've talked a lot about moving	
	284	lessons	
	285	Luke: yeah	
	286	Laura: why do you think that is?	
Failure	287	Luke: err it's just because of the, I had to go to this maths group but	
	288	for some reason I had to move but I didn't really want to move classes	Commented [LG103]: Failure – of moving classes and not being able to succeed in the class No understanding of why the move was needed Lack of power over the decision Wasn't asked his opinion over moving classes
Lack of power	289	Laura: right, cos you; why was that?	
Security	290	Luke: I was happy where I was cos I knew literally everyone in that	
	291	class but in the other class I know no one	Commented [LG104]: Feeling happy – secure with environment/people
Happiness with friends	292	Laura: okay, right	Commented [LG105]: Being happy is reliant on him knowing people and feeling safe and secure – attachment to others
	293	Luke: except, probably four people	
	294	Laura: and have you made friends with the others since?	
Insecurity	295	Luke: no I don't really talk at all I just keep quiet and get on with my	
	296	work.	Commented [LG106]: Due not being happy and secure with his environment – become introverted, not talking to other people – see's this as a negative However, school could have moved him due to him being noisy and hyperactive and see's this now as a success due to that he is conforming to school rules and completing his work. <u>Tension over the true success of the NG – greater good??</u>
NG perception of success	297	Laura: which is something that you didn't do previously you said?	
	298	Luke: No, I was less bored, more active	
	299	Laura: okay. So would you say that move in classrooms has been a	
	300	good thing for you?	Commented [LG107]: Bored in lesson because his friends are not there for him to mess about with?
Impact of friends on behaviour	301	Luke: No	
	302	Laura: No, because you've not had your friends or something else?	
	303	Luke: mmm no I just didn't know anyone in the class that I'm in now,	
	304	except four people.	Commented [LG108]: No friends so perhaps doesn't have an image to withhold – doesn't feel secure enough to behave in the same way without people he knows? <u>School likely to argue that the move was successful as not getting into as much trouble – Luke doesn't see it like this however</u>
Insecurity due to lack of friends	305	Laura: so friendships are quite a big thing for you from what you're	
	306	saying.	
	307	Luke: Mmmhmm	

	308	Laura: Yeah? Okay? (pause). So if you were talking about your ideal classroom what would your ideal classroom actually look like?
	309	
Separate/Isolated Internal features of a classroom ideal	310	Luke: like a normal classroom like not all colourful and like really
	311	bright like a couple of colours like so it don't like look ugly just have
	312	desks, tables and chairs in it one of those on the wall that's real.
	313	Laura: what's one of those on the wall?
	314	Luke: interactive whiteboard
	315	Laura: right okay, so literally a whiteboard, desks and a few pieces on
	316	the walls would be your ideal. What about your ideal day, what would
	317	that look like?
Self-image	318	Luke: normal day at school, I'd just go to my lessons, not really talk at
	319	all then at all I really do is mmm, at break I just go to my other lessons
Ordinary valued	320	so I won't be late then at lunch I just play with my mates and mess
	321	about.
Self-esteem	322	Laura: Okay, so you don't talk a lot you said
	323	Luke: no not in lessons no
	324	Laura: okay, is that like a recent thing or just you've always been like
	325	that?
	326	Luke: recent thing
	327	Laura: why do you think that is?
Feelings of insecurity affect behaviour	328	Luke: cos I've been moved, cos I don't know anyone at all
	329	Laura: but when you were in your other class you mentioned that you
	330	used to talk a lot.
	331	Luke: yeah
	332	Laura: so why do you think they might have moved you?
Lack of power	333	Luke: cos mmm, me Scott and Becky have been moved to there cos
	334	we had to go to this maths group, I don't know why we had to be
Uncertainty	335	moved
	336	Laura: Right, okay. So, has attending nurture group changed the way
Whose opinion of success?	337	that you feel about yourself, has there been any sort of
	338	Luke: No
	339	Laura: any improvements, that you think?
	340	Luke: Not like mmm I don't know if there's been any improvements
	341	cos from my perspective I really don't feel any different from how I
	342	was in primary
	343	Laura: okay, and how do you feel about that? Do you think nurture
	344	should have helped you with something a bit more?

Commented [LG109]: Difference to NG – not typical – separate to mainstream
Internal decoration is the main importance not what is actually taught in the room.

Commented [LG110]: Wants it to look nice but more like a typical classroom – not wanting to appear different

Commented [LG111]: No mention of NG – suggestion that this not an ideal part of his day
Wants to be seen as normal – attend mainstream lessons as everyone else
Doesn't want to be late – wanting to conform?
Why doesn't he want to talk to others? – lack of self-esteem?

Commented [LG112]: Since moving classes

Commented [LG113]: Reason is not wanting to improve behaviour or academic but not feeling secure enough to speak to people that he doesn't know – perhaps this is a result of him not attending mainstream lessons straight away?

Commented [LG114]: Unsure as to why he was moved – uncertainty
Unable to see that perhaps it was his behaviour in terms of talking to the others which was the contributing factor?

Commented [LG115]: Doesn't feel that he needed to attend NG as he was fine with who he was – doesn't feel any different – good self belief/confidence

345 Luke: mmm, yeah

346 Laura: If there was something that you could go back and sort of say
347 at the beginning of year seven that you wanted help with, any ideas
348 what that would be?

349 Luke: no, I wouldn't have any idea

350 Laura: Is that cos you don't know or cos you

351 Luke: I don't know

352 Laura: just don't want to change anything?

353 Luke: don't know

354 Laura: you just don't know, okay. So if you hadn't of come in here in
355 September okay mmm, how do you think school would have been like
356 for you?

357 Luke: so not been in here?

358 Laura: Yep

359 Luke: mmm, probably more jumpy, more hyperactive and like less
360 bored and probably a better school life.

361 Laura: so you think you'd have had a better school life you would
362 have been was it, less bored but you would have been more jumpy and
363 hyperactive?

364 Luke: yeah, and I actually like would be in proper lessons and not in
365 here

366 Laura: okay, so when you mean jumpy and hyperactive what do you
367 mean by that?

368 Luke: I get like in lessons I have someone to actually talk to and mess
369 about with and in here no

370 Laura: right, so in lessons you have people that you know and you said
371 mess about with but in here you don't have

372 Luke: yeah and talk to when I'm doing my work

373 Laura: do you think that's one of the reasons you don't like nurture as
374 much?

375 Luke: yeah kind of

376 Laura: okay, so you're obviously going to be going into year eight
377 next year, and there will be some new year seven's coming in here,
378 would you have like, how would you explain nurture to them if you
379 were like to have a new year seven?

380 Luke: it's like er a nursery thing that you do year four work or year
381 five

Differing
opinion of
success

Improper
Isolated

Self-image
Behaviour
reliant on
friendships

Low academic
expectations

Childlike

Commented [LG116]: Getting to the point of not wanting to answering more questions

Commented [LG117]: Acknowledges what he would have been like if not attending the NG – does not see that this is a positive that he doesn't act like this in terms that he does not get into trouble

Commented [LG118]: Attending the NG has not been a positive experience for Luke

Commented [LG119]: The NG is not seen as being a 'proper' classroom isolated and not inclusive part of school. Students see it as separate rather than being just part of school – image that this portrays to others – peer relationships

Commented [LG120]: Suggestion that he doesn't have any one to talk to currently. If he was in mainstream lessons with his friends admits that he would have messed around – thinks that is better than getting on with work – self image – relationship with peers

Commented [LG121]: Doesn't like nurture as he hasn't got people to mess around

Commented [LG122]: Back to referencing the NG as being childish and immature – self-image

Commented [LG123]: Suggestion that the work is easy and that in the NG you are not academically pushed Reason could be due to concentrating on other areas such as PSED

382 Laura: okay and would you give them any advice?
 383 Luke: No
 384 Laura: not any? Okay, you've noticed I've got some photographs
 385 around and there that I did. Is there anything that particular that you,
 386 we could talk about on there so like what that one is showing?
 387 Luke: oh yeah, I did that on Monday **we had to put like anything like**
 388 **joining in stuff like that stick on them two.**
 389 Laura: what are them two?
 390 Luke: Love hearts
 391 Laura: oh right and what do they have on them?
 392 Luke: err a bunch of like squares with triangles which look like a star
 393 Laura: okay, so you have to put those on to show what?
 394 Luke: err, words that mean something.
 395 Laura: okay
 396 Luke: like social skills and stuff like that
 397 Laura: social skills, but that's something that you did that you said you
 398 didn't find helpful?
 399 Luke: **laughs**
 400 Laura: okay, what about in that picture is that anything on there?
 401 Luke: It's just err, we've **never used it** but you're supposed to go in
 402 like this little tent err where you calm down but no one ever uses it
 403 Laura: you've never need to use it for anything?
 404 Luke: **no one uses it, we are not allowed.**
 405 Laura: okay, what about this triangle?
 406 Luke: err, **I don't bother with that at all but** err, say's what you need
 407 on the triangle like food err water, shelter, sleep to feel safe love, care
 408 comfort and respect at the very top there is nothing. It's like going up
 409 in like bad then decent, good, very good and I don't know what the top
 410 one is.
 411 Laura: okay, but you don't use it, you don't find it helpful
 412 Luke: No, don't use it at all
 413 Laura: what about that picture, anything on there?
 414 Luke: errr, I don't know what it's like, cos we've already done them
 415 Laura: okay, that's fine. Any more?

Self-image

Purpose

Self-image

Commented [LG124]: Does join in with tasks even though previously stated that he doesn't like them.
Reason – doesn't want to appear to be childlike – image important to him?

Commented [LG125]: Agreement

Commented [LG126]: Purpose if not used

Commented [LG127]: Purpose if not allowed to use it
 Choice/power

Commented [LG128]: Knows what it is but states that he doesn't find it helpful
 Use of the words 'all that' suggesting that he doesn't like to do the social, emotional tasks – doesn't see their worth
 Image?

Group Identity	416	Luke: No
	417	Laura: No, what about that, your compliments chart, do you use that?
	418	Luke: err, on Thursday we have to like err with Mrs Smith we have to
	419	pick one that someone's done in the group like social skills we have to
	420	like put like something about them
	421	Laura: so have you given someone else a compliment?
Façade	422	Luke: yeah
	423	Laura: what did you give?
Personal power/control	424	Luke: errr, good listener, but right now I had good listener on cos I
	425	probably just been quiet all the time so they think that I've probably
Behaviour controlled by him	426	been listening.
	427	Laura: but you haven't been?
	428	Luke: no
	429	Laura: so what compliment did someone give you then?
Self-image	430	Luke: err good listener
	431	Laura: and do you like that compliment chart?
	432	Luke: don't really bother with it
	433	Laura: is there anything else Luke that you think that you'd think
	434	you'd like to tell me about nurture that you think would be helpful?
	435	Luke: no, not really
436	Laura: no, okay well thank you very much for talking to me	

Commented [LG129]: predictability/routine

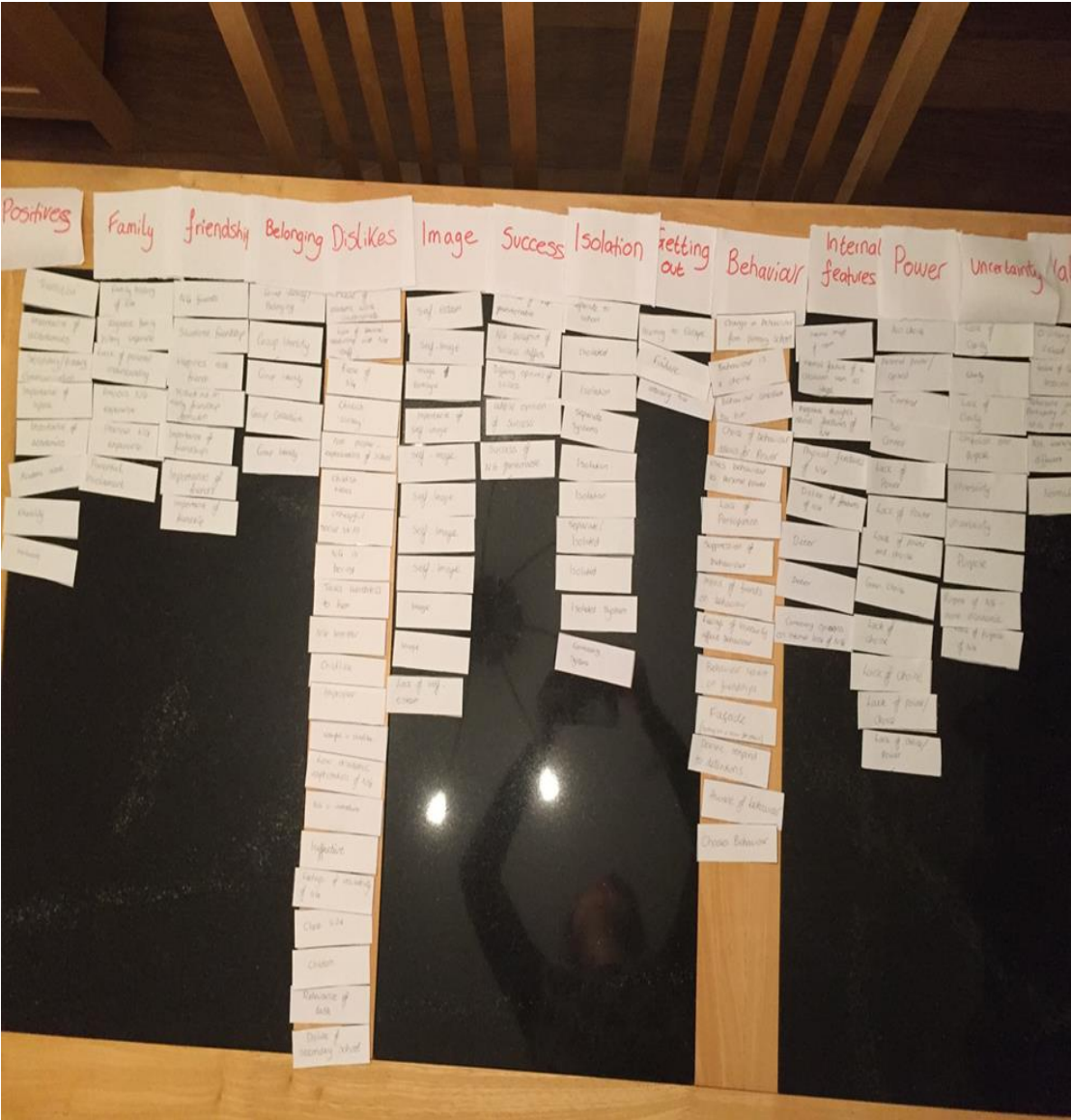
Commented [LG130]: Repetition of the word 'we' – group identity
Does feel part of the group for some aspects

Commented [LG131]: Luke perceiving that others think that because he's quiet then he's listening – however he's admitting that this isn't the case
Wanting to appear something he's not
Knows expectations?

Commented [LG132]: Again, stating that he doesn't bother with the non-academic tasks but does appear to join in when asked such as giving out compliments to others

Appendix 15: Searching for Connections Across Themes for Luke

Step 4 – Searching for connections across emergent themes



Appendix 16: Emergent Themes to Subordinate Themes - Luke

Participant 3 – Luke

Emergent Themes	Subordinate Themes	Key Words/Phrases
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Importance of space - Importance of academics - Transition - Academic Work - Flexibility - Inclusive - Secondary/primary communication - Importance of academics 	Positives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “we do writing or coin multiplications, stuff like that” (lines: 33-34) - “we learnt like how to have a proper conversation” (line: 65) - “yeah in an e mail I think” (lines:138-140) - “but once err me and my Nanna came here and we had a chat with Miss Smith” (lines: 146-147) - “a certain bit of year 6 in my primary school came here including me and we had a tour round” (lines:145-146)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Family history of NG - Negative family history experience - Parental Involvement - Lack of parental understanding - Previous NG experience - Previous NG experience 	Family & History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “at primary school, it was like a normal primary school although I had to go in this group with a teacher with some people were in nurture, it’s kind of like nurture but in like a bigger place than this” (lines:75-77) - “me and my Nanna came here” (line:146-147) - “except my brother as he as in here before as well” (line: 243) - “He absolutely hated it and got kicked out of the room” (line: 245) - “she doesn’t really, she like, don’t she knows that I’m in it but she acts like she doesn’t” (lines:257-258)

		- “so I’m in the nurture and she doesn’t she thinks like I’m doing like a proper school day and that’s really it” (lines: 257-258)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Importance of friendships - Missed out on early friendship formation - Happiness with friends - NG friends - Importance of friendships - Importance of friends - Situational friendships 	Friendships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “so I know no-one, like no one except Becky and Scott” (line:112) - “better cos I can feel comfortable in it ... I’m with my friends” (lines: 118-122) - “I wouldn’t know anyone but actually a lot of my primary school and friends came” (lines:153-154) - “more students to make friends with” (line:170) - “I’ve come better friends with people who just come in here” (line: 218) - “my friends from my primary school like one of my best friends was in the lessons that I was in but I got moved from that but when I was in there I made a bunch of friends with his friends” (lines: 271-273) - “I was happy where I was cos I knew literally everyone in that class” (line: 286) - “I just didn’t know anyone in the class” (line:299)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Group identity/belonging - Group Identity - Group Identity - Group Collective - Group Identity 	Belonging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “we sometimes, we just like rarely watch a movie or we do writing” (line:33) - “we had this box, where we had to put in what we were thinking” (lines:57-58) - “we have before like we sometimes we play lego, or just draw” (line:201)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Class Size - Feelings of unsuitability of NG - Improper - NG is immature - Relevance of task - Low academic expectations of NG - Ineffective - NG is boring - Level of academic work inappropriate - Dislike of secondary school - Childlike - Childish - Childish "nursery" - Tasks worthless to him - NG improper - Unhelpful social skills - Not proper-expectations of school - Lack of personal relationship with NG staff - Ease of NG - Childish tasks 	<p>Dislikes Of NG</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "it's like a classroom that shouldn't be in a high school" (line:7) - "I don't really like take in them at any level and use them that much" (line:67) “you wouldn't have couches with pillows and that there in a high school, like do you know that little car thing it's a box and you wouldn't have a bunch of 'Where's Wally?', really colourful drawings all over the wall” (lines:185-188) “in here I just get bored easily” (line:231) “it's like er a nursery thing that you do year four work or year five (line:373) - “give other students work that's err based on their level” (line:43) - “not that much, no” (line:94) - “just that I think it's better in proper lessons rather than being in here” (lines: 161-162) - “someone came in and we did erm fourth and fifth period” (lines:52-53)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self-image - Image portrayal - Importance of self-image - Self-image - Self-image - Self-esteem - Lack of self-esteem - Self-image 	<p>Image</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “I've been acting like the same for a while but a bit different from primary” (lines: 85-86) - “in art I think it's proper fun that you can like do portraits and that. In tech you learning about how to make gadgets and that but in here you just do like written work or just paint or summit” (lines:237-240) - “I'd just go to my lessons, not really talk at all then at all I really do is mmm, at break I just go to my other lessons so I

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self-image - Image - Image 		<p>won't be late then at lunch I just play with my mates and mess about" (lines:314-316) "I don't bother with that at all" (line 398)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NG perception of success differs - Success of NG questionable - Differing opinions of success - Whose opinion of success - Success of NG questionable 	Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "C3's yes, but C4s I've only had two" (line:106) - "when I first started talking our year got kicked out, so I didn't talk" (lines: 206-207) - "I don't really talk at all I just keep quiet and get on with my work" (lines: 291-292) - "from my perspective I really don't feel any different from how I was in primary" (lines: 337-338) - "probably more jumpy, more hyperactive and like less bored" (line: 353)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Isolated - Separate to school - Isolation - Isolated - Separate systems - Isolation - Separate/Isolated - Isolation - Isolated System - Contrasting systems 	Isolation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "if you go in another class it looks nothing like this room" (line:11) - "I think it's better in proper lessons rather than being in here" (lines:161-162) - "but in a proper classroom" (line: 192) - "I've come better friends with people who just come in here" (line:218) - "we actually do proper lessons" (line:237) - "she thinks like I'm doing like a proper school day" (lines: 260-261) - "like a normal classroom" (line:306) - "proper lessons and not in here" (line: 358)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Failure - Wanting to escape - Progress is not attending the NG 	Getting Out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "try and get out of nurture faster like fast" (line: 60) - "I had to go to this maths group but for some reason I had to move" (lines:283-284)

		- “when I first came into school every single lesson but then I progressed to go to other lessons” (line: 22-23)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Behaviour reliant on friendships - Impact of friendships on behaviour - Change in behaviour from primary school - Feelings of insecurity affect behaviour - Doesn't respond to detentions - Façade - putting on a show - Aware of behaviour - Suppression of behaviour - Lack of participation 	Behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “just messing about” (line:108) - “I was messing about cos it gets really boring” (line:209) - “I’d be a lot more noisier let’s say that, and more hyperactive cos in here I just bored easily” (lines: 230-231) - cos I’ve been moved, cos I don’t know anyone at all” (line: 323) - “in lessons I have someone to actually talk to and mess about with and in here no one” (lines: 361-362)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Physical features of NG - Internal feature of a classroom seen as ideal - Contrasting opinions on internal look of NG - Internal image of room - Décor - Negative thoughts about features of NG - Dislike of features of NG - Décor 	Dislike of Internal Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “it’s really colourful” (line:3) - “not fully colourful, but arty around the years” (line: 14) - “it does have couches and chairs like this and we did work in here” (line: 77) - “you wouldn’t have couches and pillows and that there in a high school” (lines: 185-186) - “like a normal classroom like not all colourful and like really bright like a couple of colours like so it don’t like look ugly just have desks, tables and chairs in it one of those on the wall that’s real” (lines: 306-308)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of power - No control - Lack of choice - Lack of power - No choice 	Power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “but I changed lessons, like from a different like there’s like a they’re split in two” (lines:110-111) - “and there was a nurture thing that we had to go to” (line: 129) - “I had to be in here” (line:134)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of power and choice - Personal power/control - Lack of choice - Lack of power/choice - Lack of power/choice - Given choice - Control - Behaviour controlled by him - Chooses behaviour - Behaviour is a choice 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “I wanted to go to lessons more than I wanted to being in here” (lines: 159) - “I don’t know why I got kicked out” (line: 274) - “I had to go to this maths group but for some reason I had to move but I didn’t really want to move classes” (lines: 283-284) - “we had to go to this maths class, I don’t know why we had to be moved” (lines: 328-329) - - “I probably just been quiet all the time so they think that I’ve probably been listening” (lines 416-418)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Uncertainty - Purpose of NG - none academic - Purpose - Lack of clarity - Lack of clarity - Clarity - Lack of purpose of NG - Confusion over purpose - Uncertainty 	<p>Uncertainty</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “it helps a bit in other lessons but not a lot” (line: 41) - “we learnt like how to have a proper conversation” (line:65) - “we don’t really use them that much” (line: 195) - “I don’t think so, no” (line: 252) - “she doesn’t really, she like, don’t, she knows that I’m in it but she acts like she doesn’t” (lines: 257-258) - “we had to move lesson like entire like sections of the school for some reason” (lines: 286-287) - “I don’t know why” (line: 329) - “we’ve never used it” (line: 393)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - normal - Value of conventional lessons - Reluctance admitting to participating in social skills group - Ordinary valued 	<p>Normality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “it was like a normal primary school although I had to go in this group with a teacher” (lines: 75-76) - “normal day at school, I’d just go to my lessons, not really talk at all then all I really do is mmm, at break I just go to my other lessons so I won’t be late” (lines: 314-316)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not wanting to be different 		<p>-“we actually do proper lessons like, in art I think it’s proper fun that you can do portraits and that. In tech you learning about how to make gadgets” (lines: 237-239)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Insecurity - Insecurity due to lack of friends - Security - Feeling comfortable - Friendships give feelings of being comfortable/secure 	<p>Safety</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “better cos I can feel comfortable in it” (line:118) - “I’m with my friends” (line: 122) - “I was happy where I was cos I knew literally everyone in that class” (line: 286) - “I don’t really talk at all I just keep quiet and get on with my work” (lines:291-292) - “I just didn’t know anyone in the class” (line:299) - “cos I don’t know anyone at all” (line: 323)

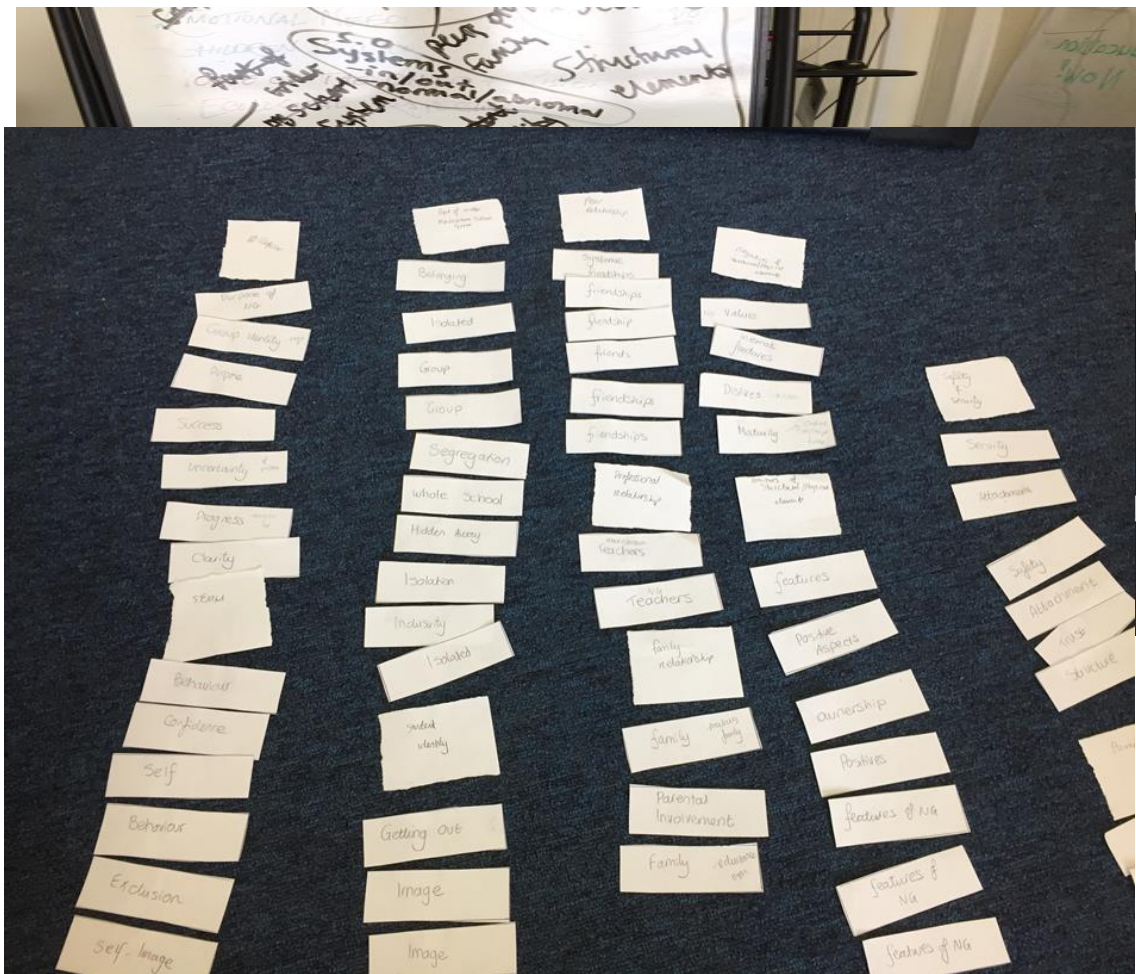
Appendix 17: Participants Overall Emergent Themes

Sophie	Joshua	Luke	Ryan	Gemma	Alex
Parental Involvement	Purpose	Positives	Family	Power	<i>Injustice</i>
Group	Segregation	Family & History	Trust	Attachment	Power
Being Part of Whole School	Self	Friendships	Teachers	Progress	Hidden Away
Turmoil	Group	Belonging	Friends	Isolated	Feeling Secure
Relationships with Mainstream School Staff	Attachment	Dislikes of NG	Clarity	Systemic Friendships	Features of NG
Relationships with NG staff	Structure	Image	Image	Image	Academics
Importance of Academics	Ownership	Success	Power	Group Identity	Image
Features of NG	Friendships	Isolation	Isolation	Purpose	Behaviour
Self-Image	Features	Getting Out	<i>Dislike of School</i>	Maturity	Friendships
Friendships	Power	Behaviour	<i>Reluctance</i>	Importance of Academics	Mainstream
Power		Dislike of Internal Features	Value of NG	Confidence	Confidence
		Power	Exclusion	Features	
		Uncertainty	Behaviour		
		Normality	Positive Aspects		
		Safety			

Themes in italics were discounted and not included in the development of the super-ordinate themes.

A total of 73 emergent themes were interpreted from the analysis of the transcripts. However, as three were discounted, 70 emergent themes were used to develop the superordinate themes.

Appendix 18: Step 6 – Looking for patterns across cases



Appendix 19: Development of Superordinate Themes

Superordinate Theme: Control			
<i>Subordinate Themes</i>	<i>Dimensions of feeling safe and secure</i>	<i>Power</i>	
Emergent Themes	Safety Attachment Feeling Secure Structure Attachment Trust Relationship with NG Staff	Power Power Power Power Power Power	
Superordinate Theme: Systems			
<i>Subordinate Themes</i>	<i>Experience of wider mainstream school</i>	<i>Pupil Identity</i>	
Emergent Themes	Isolation Isolation Hidden Away Being part of whole school Segregation Group Belonging Isolated	Image Getting Out Turmoil Normality Image Image Image	
Superordinate Theme: Structural and Physical Elements			
<i>Subordinate Themes</i>	<i>Positives of structural/physical elements</i>	<i>Negatives of structural/physical elements</i>	
Emergent Themes	Features of NG Features of NG	Maturity Dislikes	

	Features Positives Ownership Positive Aspects Features	Dislike of NG Value of NG	
Superordinate Theme: Purpose of NG			
<i>Subordinate Theme</i>	<i>Academics</i>	<i>SEMH</i>	<i>Confusion</i>
Emergent Themes	Importance of academics Academics Importance of Academics	Confidence Self-image Exclusion Behaviour Self Confidence Behaviour Behaviour	Clarity Progress Uncertainty Success Purpose Group Identity Purpose
Superordinate Theme: Inter Relationships			
<i>Subordinate Themes</i>	<i>Mainstream School Professional Relationships</i>	<i>Peer Relationships</i>	<i>Family Relationships</i>
Emergent Themes	Relationships with school staff Teachers Mainstream	Systemic Friendships Friendships Friendships Friendships Friends	Family Parental Involvement Family & History

A total of 70 emergent themes were used to develop the subordinate themes and then on to the superordinate themes.