How do school staff understand misogyny, and how are they responding to it?

Jane Bunker-Bramley

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The University of Sheffield, School of Education

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Abstract

Misogyny is often defined as contempt or hatred of women, but this has been critiqued for positioning misogyny as something that is too individualistic (Manne, 2017). Instead, misogyny has subsequently been conceptualised as something that is used as a tool to enforce the dominance of a patriarchal society (Manne, 2017). This can be enacted in physical or affective ways (Wrisley, 2021). In more contemporary times, in the wake of the #MeToo movement of 2017, online communities that display highly misogynistic attitudes have been created, operating under the umbrella of the so-called “manosphere” (e.g. Dickel & Evolvi, 2022). Many of these communities seek to provide a sense of belonging for disillusioned men who perceive themselves as victims of a “feminised society” (Bellerga & Zurbriggen; Botto & Gottzen, 2024). In an educational context, misogynistic cultures have been found to be normalised across schools (e.g. Gilander Gådin & Stein, 2019), where females experience a high level of hostility daily (e.g. Zhao et al., 2024). Schools are provided with guidance on approaching this topic, but research indicates that this is currently ineffective in responding to misogynistic incidents (Ging et al., 2024; Lloyd & Walker, 2023).

This research explores how school staff understand misogyny, its impact on children and young people, and how their current policies influence their approach to the issue. Eight participants participated overall, where six contributed to a focus group, and four had semi-structured interviews. Two participants who had semi-structured interviews also participated in the focus group. Using a critical realist and feminist positioning, a reflexive TA approach (Braun & Clarke, 2022) was used to analyse the data in relation to the research aims. The first question sought to explore how staff understood misogyny and its impact on children and young people (CYP), where four themes were created: (i) *misogyny is not a tangible issue*, (ii) *female experience in school,* which has two sub-themes: *the shame of being a female*, and *would this happen if I was a man?,* (iii*) it’s not your fault you think like this*, and (iv) *boys are scared they will be forgotten.* The second research question explored how policies influenced staff approaches to responding to misogyny and also had four themes which were: (i) *schools function on evidence and policies only*, (ii) *the disempowerment of staff*, (iii) experiencing tensions which has two sub-themes; *staff expectations vs. their values*, and s*chool vs. society*, and (iv) *positive relationships*

across the eco-system make a difference. The strengths and limitations of the research were considered, as well as the implications for schools and the EP profession, before concluding with future research possibilities.

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During the completion of this thesis, my name changed from Jane Bramley to Jane Bunker-Bramley. Both names are referred to throughout. This statement confirms that they are the same person.

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1. Why this Research?

My initial motivations to conduct research focused on misogyny were very personal. In 2016, I started to become aware of online communities that shared strategies and suggestions on how to seduce women. In addition to sharing these strategies, the users (who were men) would also provide detailed accounts of their dating experiences and refer to women using acronyms such as “HB7”, which I would later learn that “HB” stood for “Hot Babe”, and the number indicated how attractive on a scale of 0-10 the man believed she was. I learned about techniques such as “negging”, a technique a man uses to undermine a woman’s confidence, for example, telling a woman you like her brunette hair, but has she ever considered dying it blonde? These were not communities I was actively seeking out online; I was being told about their existence by people I was interacting with in my personal life. Over the next couple of years, I became more interested in these communities and their detrimental impact on women.

My interest on a professional level was piqued in 2021. A populist feminist-orientated social media account that I followed recommended a book called *Men Who Hate Women* by feminist author Laura Bates (2020). Laura Bates started a movement called *The Everyday Sexism Project* in 2012, where she invited women to share their experiences of sexism, from minor incidents to more significant and serious ones. She published a book related to the movement in 2014 and has continued publishing books highlighting the scale of misogyny in society. Shortly after I read *Men Who Hate Women* in 2021, the disappearance of Sarah Everard was reported. Sarah was found approximately one week later, having been raped and subsequently murdered. The primary suspect was a serving police officer who was arrested and ultimately found guilty on the count of rape and murder. He was sentenced to life imprisonment (Ng et al., 2024). Women shared a collective sense of grief in the wake of this incident, which is exemplified in the words of Dr Jennifer Rainbow:

> I am angry and tired of being angry. I am scared and tired of being scared. I am grieving for another lost woman, and tired of grieving for lost women. In the wake of the Sarah Everard case, women around the country have been

> expressing their collective grief, anger, pain and fear. She was just walking home. She followed all the ‘rules’ (it wasn’t late, she was appropriately dressed, etc. etc.) (Rainbow, 2021, para. 1)

At this period, I was working as an Assistant Educational Psychologist and waiting to find out whether I had secured a place on the doctoral training programme. Working in this role prompted me to start thinking about how misogyny was impacting young people. How did men develop such problematic views relating to women? Did they begin to formulate these when they were young? What can we do as adults who work with children to try and raise awareness of systemic misogyny? How can we ensure that boys have a healthy and respectful attitude towards women?

Over the course of the first year of the doctorate, I additionally became aware of the work of Soma Sara, who established *Everyone’s Invited*. Similar to Laura Bates’ *Everyday Sexism Project*, *Everyone’s Invited* provided a space for young people to share their stories of sexual harassment or abuse anonymously. Soma Sara wanted to highlight the prevalence of “rape culture”, which she defines as “attitudes, behaviours and beliefs in society [that] have the effect of normalising and trivialising sexual violence” (Everyone’s Invited, 2023). The website has had over 51,000 submissions and has released a list of schools where incidents have been reported to demonstrate how widespread the issue is. Soma Sara’s work prompted Ofsted to carry out a “rapid review” of sexual abuse in schools and colleges, which was published in 2021. The review highlighted that it is so prevalent in schools, many children do not see the point of reporting it. The report also highlighted that sexual abuse and harassment disproportionately impact girls (Ofsted, 2021).

I was continually returning to the possibility of completing my thesis around the area of misogyny. I was interested in understanding how teachers understood misogyny, the impact they thought it was having on young people, and how schools were responding to it. I also wondered what the educational psychologist's (EP) role was in relation to this. How could EPs support schools in their response to this? My understanding of the role of the EP was to promote equality and social justice practices. I also believe the EP role is associated with supporting children's well-being and good health. I was concerned about the detrimental impacts of misogyny on both males and females.

At the point of starting my initial foray into a literature review on the topic in August 2022, the mainstream media began reporting about a public figure called Andrew Tate. In 2016, Tate was a contestant on the reality show ‘Big Brother’ in the UK but was removed from the competition after a video started circulating that appeared to depict him attacking a woman (Radford, 2024). Tate openly states that he is a “misogynist” (Radford, 2024) and has shared problematic views, such as saying that women should “bear responsibility” for being sexually assaulted, they shouldn’t drive and that he prefers to have relationships with women under the age of 20 so he can “make an imprint” (Das, 2022). At the time of writing, Tate and his brother are currently awaiting trial for rape, human trafficking and criminal activity in Romania (BBC, 2024). Tate primarily utilised social media platforms to share his views but was subsequently banned from YouTube, TikTok, Facebook and Instagram due to concerns over the impact his content would have on young people (Wilson, 2022). At the start of the new school year in September 2022, the mainstream media was reporting on the influence that Andrew Tate may be having on young people, highlighting that schools need to “tackle” his influence and do more to combat misogyny (e.g., Dimsdale, 2022). The media interest started to make the topic culturally relevant and important, cementing my decision to complete my research within this area.

1.2. Positionality

This research is strongly driven by a personal investment in this topic and the consideration of how I would describe my own exposure to and observations of misogyny. I acknowledge that I am a woman, I identify as a feminist, and this will bring a personal experience to this research, affording me an epistemic advantage (Dror, 2023). It is important that I reflect on these positions and how they might influence my research through the process of reflexivity. Finlay (2002) states that reflexivity needs to be ongoing throughout the research process to demonstrate how the researcher's positioning has influenced the study. Consequently, I kept a reflexive journal throughout my research (excerpts provided in Appendix A) and have also included reflexive boxes throughout the thesis. This will provide opportunities to see how my positionality may have influenced this study.

1.3. Language used within the Thesis

I considered providing terminology to begin the thesis, but as I will highlight in Chapter Two, providing definitions for terms such as misogyny may be challenging. I will instead engage with these debates within the relevant sections and provide my reflections within the aforementioned reflexive boxes.

I do, however, wish to highlight a conscious language choice. Over the course of my research, I noticed that the language used to speak about actively doing something about misogyny is referred to as “tackling misogyny”. This language is evident in governmental legislation (e.g., Department for Education [DfE], 2019), in the media (e.g., Evans, 2023; Gillespie, 2023) and from the way that training is currently offered to school staff about the matter (e.g., Education Conferences UK, 2024). Whilst I recognise that the word is being used in the context of being able to address and overcome the issue, I feel that the word “tackling” has aggressive connotations. As aggression can be typically associated with the concept of hegemonic masculinity, which is a concept of masculinity that positions males as the dominant sex (Leone & Parrott, 2018), I do not feel personally comfortable utilising the word. Instead, I have substituted the word “tackling” for “responding to”, as this invites more of a dialogue about what could happen in response to this very engrained issue.

1.4. Outline of Thesis

The structure of the research will be presented as follows:

Chapter Two will present a literature review of the topic. I will start by engaging with the contemporary debates around defining misogyny before exploring how online communities are promoting misogynistic beliefs, which is often referred to as networked misogyny (Banet-Weiser & Miltner, 2016). I will present literature associated with some specific communities before turning my focus to research on misogyny in educational establishments, which will start with universities before looking at schools. I will highlight existing literature concerning the misogynistic hostility that is occurring in schools before examining how schools are currently responding to the issue.

Chapter Three will detail my chosen methodology. Within this chapter, I will present my philosophical positioning and justify my research choices. This chapter will also explain my research procedures.

Chapter Four will present my analysis. I will present the themes I developed in response to my research questions. This chapter will situate the analysis into existing literature, as per a more traditional “discussion” section.

Chapter Five will conclude the thesis. I will present some further considerations related to the analysis that suggests how action may be taken. I will consider the strengths and limitations of the research, the implications for EP practice and how this work may be developed through future studies. I will then provide a conclusion to the research and my final reflections.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1. Chapter Introduction

This chapter presents my literature review. I start by discussing the current debates around a definition of misogyny before examining the literature on online misogyny. I will focus my attention on how misogyny is impacting educational settings. I will conclude the literature review with my research rationale and questions.

Whilst I felt it would be important to initially review the literature in relation to providing a definition of misogyny, I then worked 'backwards', meaning that the literature I searched for helped me consider what else would be important and relevant within the chapter. I searched for terms such as "misogyny education" and "misogyny educational psychology" to see what research already existed on the topic of the impact of misogyny in schools. The most recent literature focused on how misogynistic social media figures were having a significant impact on the behaviours and attitudes of children in schools. This indicated that it may have been important to examine the literature concerning the online realm, as the two seemed to be inextricably linked. This then led to me conducting searches into online communities linked to misogyny, using terms such as "online misogyny", "the manosphere" and "incels". This resulted in my literature review having a funnel structure, going from a broader to a more specific focus which ultimately helped me to formulate my research questions.

2.2. Defining Misogyny

The Oxford English Dictionary defines misogyny as "hatred or dislike, or prejudice against women." (Oxford English Dictionary, 2023). The term is derived from the Greek word "*mīsoguníā*", which means a hatred of women (Srivastava et al., 2017). Misogyny is considered to be profoundly engrained into society, spanning from ancient civilisations to modern society and evident in bodies of work such as philosophy, religion, art, literature and politics (Holland, 2012). Misogyny is often conceptualised in several ways, from overt behaviours based on a hatred of women to a more insidious sense of discrimination and prejudice on a systemic level (Code, 2000).

In recent years, Australian philosopher Kate Manne's work has become a widely acknowledged and respected academic insight into how one may define misogyny. Her book, *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny* (2017), explores how misogyny is conceptualised by contemporary society and highlights that the current understanding may be insufficient as a definition. Manne (2017) claims to be inspired by Haslanger (2012) in terms of creating an ameliorative definition of misogyny. Manne (2017) refers to dictionary definitions of a simple “hatred of women” as being a “naïve conception” of the term and states that it seeks to situate misogyny as something that primarily belongs to individual misogynists. Manne (2017) believes that this view makes misogyny epistemologically inaccessible, particularly to women. Manne (2017) instead argues that misogyny needs to be understood as the “law enforcement” of a patriarchal society that seeks to uphold the positioning of men as superior to women. Manne (2017) goes on further to assert that women will typically be the “target” of misogyny as they represent an “actual, perceived or representative challenge” to the norms within a patriarchal society. When misogyny is considered through the lens of Manne (2017), it becomes conceptualised as something that occurs on a much more systemic level. A further clarification that Manne (2017) is eager to make is the differentiation between sexism and misogyny. As previously stated, Manne (2017) refers to misogyny as a type of “law enforcement” of a patriarchal society, enforcing patriarchal norms as necessary to uphold the status quo. Sexism, on the other hand, is something that is used to justify a patriarchal society, relying on empirical work as a means of rationalisation for behaviour. Kukla (2020) illuminates this with an example, stating that the belief that a woman should take her husband’s last name upon getting married is a misogynistic act, whereas claiming that women are more likely to gravitate towards a caring role due to biological influences would be rooted within sexism.

A notable critique of Manne’s (2017) work is made by Wrisley (2021), who states that Manne's (2017) analysis largely removes the affective elements of misogyny and reduces it to rhetoric only. Wrisley (2021) claims that Manne’s (2017) belief that it is a “naïve conception” to understand misogyny as a “hatred of women” is potentially her way of evading the psychological theories behind misogyny because this is particularly complex. Wrisley (2021) believes that if you were to look at misogyny from a phenomenological point of view, it would be too difficult to remove the

affective elements that contribute to it. Wrisley (2021) additionally highlights that if we were to only focus on what she describes as the “surface” elements of misogyny, such as its effects, this has the danger of simply concealing rather than revealing the nature of misogyny. Wrisley (2021) believes that a definition of misogyny needs to incorporate affective elements, particularly as many misogynists would claim to love and desire women, which is an area that will be explored in further detail at a later point within the chapter.

2.2.1. Violence Against Women as a Manifestation of Misogyny

Another facet that Wrisley (2021) highlights in relation to attempting to define misogyny is how it is often conflated with violence against women. She acknowledges that violence against women is typically a manifestation of misogyny, which is in line with other literature researching the links between misogyny and violence (e.g., Blake et al., 2021; Diaz & Valji, 2019; Rottweiler et al., 2023). Wrisley (2021) argues that violent acts against women might be motivated by misogyny, but they should be understood as violence that occurs in a society that upholds and endorses misogynistic attitudes and behaviours. To Wrisley (2021), this means that the focus becomes too centred on the women as victims of misogyny rather than trying to critically examine the patriarchal society that allows these violent acts to become associated with misogyny.

2.2.2. Misogyny and Intersectionality

Loewen Walker (2024) positions Manne’s (2017) definition of misogyny as allowing for a more intersectional consideration of the issue. Referring to other concepts such as racism, white supremacy, homophobia and transphobia as misogyny’s “supporting cast”, Loewen Walker (2024) asserts that an understanding of misogyny as both a “hatred of women” and as a way of enforcing a patriarchal society means that it is easier to see how misogyny “relies on centuries of recognised and invisible violence enacted against those who do not conform to racialised, sexualised *and* gendered rules.” (Loewen Walker, 2024, p.70). Further research has specifically explored how misogyny intersects with race, such as the work of Moya Bailey, who situates herself as being fundamental in the creation of the term *misogynoir*, which describes the racist misogyny that is experienced by Black women (Bailey & Trudy, 2018). There is

also a body of literature that explores trans-misogyny, a term that focuses explicitly on the misogyny that transgender women experience (Serano, 2016). Transgender women have been found to experience misogyny as a result of not adhering to cis-normative gender expectations and found that this can be enacted by both men and women (Colliver, 2021). In a similar vein to Loewen Walker (2024), Zhao (2021) also draws upon the work of Manne (2017) to highlight how transgender women face misogyny as a result of their failing to be “authentic women under a misogynistic system.” (Zhao, 2021, p.12).

2.2.3. Misogyny in a Post-Feminist Society

Misogyny can also be associated with the reaction to the feminist movements within Western societies. In Kristin J. Anderson’s book, *Modern Misogyny: Anti-Feminism in a Post-Feminist Era* (2014), misogyny is explored from this perspective. Anderson (2014) seeks to critically examine the misogynistic assertion that feminism is obsolete as women have achieved equality due to second-wave feminism, whose origins can be found in the early 1970s (Thornham, 2004). Second-wave feminism was concerned with promoting equality for women in all aspects of their lives, including in the workplace and their domestic relationships (Zietz, 2008). In what Anderson (2014) describes as an era of post-feminism, there is a belief that as women have now supposedly achieved equality, it is now men who are the oppressed gender. Anderson (2014) also links this school of thought to neoliberalism as post-feminism positions women as consumers with individual choices over their material possessions and lifestyles. Anderson (2014) highlights that post-feminism generalises the experiences of white, heterosexual and middle-class women to all women, meaning that the complex interactions of misogyny with characteristics such as race, class or sexual orientation are unaccounted for within this framework.

Loewen Walker (2024) highlights an incident that supports the notion that misogyny is linked to males feeling as though women have achieved equality. An incident is described that occurred in Montreal in 1989 when Marc Lépine murdered fourteen women in a school. In his suicide letter, Lépine stated that he hated feminists “because they were seizing for themselves [the advantages held by] men.” (Loewen Walker 2024, p.68). Lépine’s words suggest that misogyny could also be associated with the notion that women are expected to act in a particular way that aligns with the

male view of what it is to be a woman. This also links with Manne (2017), stating that women are often only perceived through the lens of their relationship with a man and what they can do for others. Kukla (2020) believes that this is evidence of how women are dehumanised in a misogynistic society and goes on further to give examples of this, such as women being reduced to appearance, not being listened to and being viewed with a degree of scepticism in terms of opinions and rationality.

Here, I have explored the contemporary debates in defining misogyny. Manne's (2017) work has been highly influential in terms of encapsulating the pervasive and systemic nature of misogyny, but this has not been without critique (e.g. Kukla, 2020; Wrisley, 2021). As Wrisley (2021) highlights, there is a "lack of clarity" when it comes to misogyny, which can result in the issue being conflated with other things. From the literature, I can conclude that a definition of misogyny needs to be considered from a systemic point of view and be inclusive in terms of how it impacts everybody. In the next section of this chapter, I will explore the prevalence of misogyny in modern society, with a particular focus on the role of technology as a means of promoting misogynistic content.

Reflexive Box

I want to highlight my positionality at this point in terms of how I understand misogyny. I have personally found it difficult to truly verbalise a meaning of misogyny, which I think is particularly pertinent against the work of Wrisley (2021), who speaks of the affective elements of misogyny, and how this can make it challenging to truly define. This resonates with me as I think about my own observations and experiences of misogyny, where it sometimes can be reduced to a "feeling", which can be hard to articulate. With this in mind, I want to outline how I define misogyny within this research. I find that I predominantly align with the definition from Manne (2017), who denotes that it is a systemic issue and permeates many aspects of our lives. This means that I define misogyny to be the societal structures, attitudes, beliefs, and/or behaviours that seek to position women as inferior to men. I also want to acknowledge the more affective elements in line with Wrisley (2021), which validates that misogyny can also be experienced as a "feeling".

2.3 Online Misogyny

There is a body of literature that specifically examines how the internet has significantly contributed to perpetuating misogyny in the last decade. Whilst the internet can offer possibilities for broader engagement and activism, it has also become an aggressive space for those women who utilise it in this way (Barker & Jurasz, 2019; Mantilla, 2013). Social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram have enabled misogynistic attitudes and behaviours to become much more visible (Vickery & Everbach, 2018). Research into the prevalence of online misogyny started to gain traction after the events of 'Gamergate' in 2014 (Ging & Siapera, 2018), which refers to a campaign of harassment that female journalists and game developers received online (Ferguson & Glasgow, 2021; Jane, 2016; Nieborg & Foxman, 2018). Mantilla (2013) created the term "gendertrolling" to describe the specific harassment and abuse of women in online spaces, citing that it has "much in common with other offline targeting of women" (Mantilla, 2013, p.568). The overarching aim of these behaviours is to ensure that men uphold a superior status to women, which supports Manne's (2017) definition of misogyny. The internet plays a pivotal role in shaping children's interests and interactions (Benvenuti et al., 2023), so examining how misogyny operates within online spaces is crucial for research within this area.

2.3.1. Networked Misogyny and the "Manosphere"

Online communities on the internet that display particularly hostile attitudes towards women are referred to as "networked misogyny" (Banet-Weiser & Miltner, 2016). This is a term used to describe clusters of groups that are often collectively referred to as the "manosphere" who share predominantly anti-feminist views (Bates, 2020; Dickel & Evolvi, 2022; Farrell et al., 2019; Ging, 2019; Ribeiro et al., 2021). In line with Anderson's (2014) work on misogyny, the unifying belief of the manosphere is that men are the oppressed gender, as feminism has achieved its goal of equality. This is particularly pertinent as the manosphere's activities were impacted and increased by the "#MeToo" movement (Dickel & Evolvi, 2022). This movement was most prevalent on social media in 2017 following multiple allegations of sexual harassment and abuse against the producer Harvey Weinstein. Whilst the movement was initially

conceived by the activist Tarana Burke in 2006, it was the actress Alyssa Milano who encouraged those who had experienced sexual harassment and abuse to write “Me too” as a “status” on their social media account to demonstrate the scale of the issue (Siuta et al., 2023). This movement had a significant impact globally in terms of the public discourse concerning gendered violence, legislation and workplace policy (Gilmore, 2023). There was also a substantial backlash from anti-feminist groups (Maricourt & Burrell, 2021), which includes the manosphere.

One of the manosphere’s unifying concepts is the “Red Pill” philosophy (Bates, 2020; Dickel & Evolvi, 2022; Ging, 2019; Zuckerberg, 2018). The “Red Pill” is a trope from the 1999 film *The Matrix*, where the protagonist is offered a red or blue pill. If the character takes the blue pill, they will continue to live their life in its current state, whereas the red pill will allow the character to see the actual version of reality. To those in the manosphere, this philosophy seeks to “awaken” men to the truth – that they are oppressed as a result of supposed feminist brainwashing (Ging, 2019; Wright et al., 2020). These communities often communicate via online forums such as Reddit or 4chan (Marwick & Caplan, 2018; Van Valkenburgh, 2021; Vu et al., 2021). I will now explore some of the communities that collectively contribute to the manosphere.

Men’s Rights Activists (MRA) focus on the concept that men are discriminated against and women hold particular advantages in a social context (O’Donnell, 2020). This form of activism largely originated from second-wave feminism in the 1970s, where men acknowledged that inequalities between the sexes needed to be addressed, but equally stressed that a stereotypical “male sex role” was harmful to men. (Messner, 1998). The initial conception of this movement aimed to entice men to feminism as a means of overcoming the “cost of masculinity” (Messner, 1998). From a more contemporary perspective, MRA has now shifted to become a backlash against women and feminism rather than having any true political purpose (Allan, 2016).

Men Going Their Own Way (MGTOW) is another community within the manosphere which is described as an “exclusively male, antifeminist group” that supports “the abandonment of women” (Lin, 2017). Members of this community promote an individualistic way of life that subscribes to self-empowerment (Wright et al., 2020).

Jones et al. (2020) state that whilst the MGTOW community does not explicitly harass women, they express a high level of resentment, which could be construed as passive-aggressive misogyny. These beliefs further reinforce the norms of a patriarchal society as they aim to deter women from engaging in activism (Jones et al., 2020). Lin (2017) states that MGTOW has a belief that feminism will bring about "societal demise", further perpetuating the rhetoric that a patriarchal society needs to be protected from women who seek to dismantle it (Manne, 2017).

The Pick Up Artist (PUA) community shares methods and tactics to seduce women (Bates, 2020; Rudiger & Dayter, 2020). Those involved in this community promote the concept that the techniques are universal and will guarantee success using approaches such as "peacocking", where an unusual accessory or item of clothing is worn to attract the interest of a woman, or looking for "indicators of interest" from women, such as playing with their hair (Bratich & Banet-Weiser, 2019). So-called "gurus" have emerged from this community, such as Neil Strauss, who wrote a book in 2005 entitled *The Game,* which shared strategies on how to approach women (Dayter & Rudiger, 2016). Bratich and Banet-Weiser (2019) highlight how this community seeks to teach men how to become more confident and attractive to women, as they believe that feminism has enabled women to exercise more choice in their lives, including in terms of selecting a partner. Bratich and Banet-Weiser (2019) suggest that this implies that for men to be confident, women must be made to feel less confident. The PUA community aligns with Wrisley's (2021) view regarding the affective element of misogyny, as it could be assumed that a PUA does not outwardly "hate" women; instead, they demonstrate desire or lust for them. There is also a link to Kukla's (2020) position that misogyny involves the dehumanization of women as the PUA communities' approaches are supposedly universal, suggesting that women are incapable of individual agency in these scenarios.

The Incel communities have raised particular concerns about violent acts and have become quite a prominent feature of mainstream media (Vink et al., 2023). The word "incel" is a portmanteau of "involuntary celibate", a concept that was created in 1997 by a female undergraduate from Canada through a website called *Alana's Involuntary Celibacy Project*, which acted as a space for people to share their frustrations over dating (Cotte, 2020; Hoffman et al., 2020). This community has since evolved into something that was not in line with what Alana had initially

intended (Stijelja & Mishara, 2022) and is now dominated by heterosexual, cis-gendered males (Cottee, 2020). Those who identify with the incel community have an overtly misogynistic belief that men are entitled to have a sexual partner, and the feminist movement has subverted this (O'Donnell & Shor, 2022). As a result of this, incels believe that they have been excluded from society (Costello et al., 2024) and hold violent and extreme views regarding how society, but in particular women, should be punished for this (O'Donnell & Shor, 2022). As with other communities in the so-called manosphere, the incel community use the internet as a way of sharing these views (Ging, 2019). However, several high-profile violent incidents that have taken place offline have been found to be linked to the participation in these communities. One prominent example is the case of 22-year-old Elliot Rodger in 2014, who killed six people (including himself) and wounded 14 more in Isla Vista, California (Halpin, 2022; Hoffman et al., 2020; Witt, 2020). Rodger was found to be an active member of a forum called *PUAhate.com*, which cast scorn upon the PUA community, as well as a Reddit group called *ForeverAlone*, where Rodger used the term incel to describe himself (Woolf, 2014). In addition, Rodger wrote and emailed family members a 141-page manifesto entitled *My Twisted World: The Story of Elliot Rodger.* It seemed to provide a "rationale" as to why he committed mass murder, with hatred towards women as a key theme:

> My orchestration of the Day of Retribution is my attempt to do everything, in my power, to destroy everything I cannot have. All of those beautiful girls I've desired so much in my life, but can never have because they despise and loathe me, I will destroy. All of those popular people who live hedonistic lives of pleasure, I will destroy, because they never accepted me as one of them. I will kill them all and make them suffer, just as they have made me suffer. It is only fair (Rodger, 2014, p. 145-146)

Many within the incel community validated Rodger's actions. They created the phrase "Going ER" (Elliot Rodger) to refer to their desire to commit murder or violence (Halpin, 2022). When 25-year-old Alek Minassian from Toronto, Canada, intentionally drove a van into pedestrians and killed ten people in 2018 (Baele et al., 2019; Hoffman et al., 2020), he created a post on social media shortly before the incident that stated, "All hail the Supreme Gentleman Elliot Rodger!" (Hoffman et al., 2020). Within the UK, a shooting in Plymouth in 2021 that left five dead was also

linked to the incel community, but there was a lack of clarity on whether the shooter self-identified as an incel (Bengtsson Mueller, 2024; Lounela & Murphy, 2024).

Many of these incidents generated both media and academic interest in how misogyny was operating in both online and offline spaces, with a body of literature investigating the underpinnings of the beliefs of the so-called manosphere. Many of the beliefs held by those who frequent the online communities of the manosphere are related to the concept of claiming back “masculinity” (e.g. Hopton & Langer, 2022; Vallerga & Zurbriggen, 2022) which is in line with the work of Manne (2017) stating that misogyny is used as a tool to enforce the patriarchy, and Anderson (2014) stating that misogyny can be associated with a reaction to feminism. These beliefs also link with the concept of hegemonic masculinity (Han & Yin, 2021; Vallerga & Zurbriggen, 2022), which is a term that describes the hierarchal dominance of men (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Donaldson, 1993). The narratives that are portrayed through the manosphere are designed to elicit a sense of fear in men who may not be embodying stereotypical hegemonic masculine qualities (Botto & Gottzen, 2024), which often results in the use of the phrase “toxic masculinity”. This phrase is frequently used as a way of referring to the harmful impact of some of the beliefs and behaviours associated with a stereotypical view of masculinity, such as competitiveness, rigid gender beliefs, heteronormativity and neoliberalism, but there is no universally acknowledged definition (Sculos, 2017). The term has been critiqued as it can result in the systemic factors upholding misogyny being overlooked (Harrington, 2021). Salter (2019) additionally states that as masculinity is multi-faceted and shaped by context, using the word “toxic” leads to the implication that there is something inherently “negative” about masculinity rather than recognising that the sociopolitical context can lead to men feeling inadequate. This can then lead to them embodying traits associated with so-called toxic masculinity as a part of a compensatory action (Salter, 2019).

As previously discussed through the notion of the “Red Pill Philosophy”, men are portrayed as victims of a “feminised society” in the manosphere, and so it is instead promoted as a space for men to feel a sense of belonging and validation (Botto & Gottzen, 2024; Lilly, 2016; Vallerga & Zurbriggen, 2022). Men who tend to engage with the manosphere are more likely to experience insecurity and loneliness (Botto & Gottzen, 2024; Cottee, 2020; Lilly, 2016), which Bujalka et al. (2022) suggest is

exploited within the community as part of a capitalist endeavour, given that the community offers apparent “protection”, in the way of books or courses (such as PUA Neil Strauss’ books about how to attract women). Other research has also situated the manosphere into socioeconomic ideologies, such as neoliberalism (Van Valkenburgh, 2021) and political ideologies, such as the far-right (Copland, 2023).

The body of literature concerning the manosphere suggests that to counteract the discourse from the communities who inhabit it, the vulnerabilities of men need to be addressed within a supportive environment (Copland, 2023; Lilly, 2016) as well as using a multidisciplinary approach from disciplines such as psychology, sociology, anthropology and gender studies (Costello et al., 2024; Stijelia & Mishara, 2023). This is particularly pertinent given that the violent acts committed by those who had associations with the incel communities were all under the age of 25, implying that young men may be at higher risk of being exposed to some of these harmful narratives. The next section of this chapter will examine the impact of misogyny in both online and offline means on young people within an educational context.

2.4 Misogyny in Education

Research suggests that misogyny is impacting on many different educational establishments in a variety of ways. Various studies have investigated the prevalence of what is referred to as “lad culture” within universities, which has included how it is understood by staff (Jackson & Sundaram, 2021) and the effects on male and female students (Diaz-Fernandez & Evans, 2020; Phipps & Young, 2015). “Lad culture” within this research was used as a term to describe a homogenous group mentality that is elicited in activities like sports and drinking alcohol (Phipps et al., 2018) and characterised by misogynistic behaviours such as the objectification of women (Jeffries, 2020). Just like the manosphere, lad culture in universities has also been linked to neoliberal discourses, enabling an environment that allows such cultures to thrive (Phipps & Young, 2015).

Diaz-Fernandez and Evans' (2020) research introduces the concept of a “sticky atmosphere” to understand how lad culture operates in late-night environments. The “sticky atmosphere” links Ahmed’s (2004) work on “sticky effects” and Anderson’s (2009) concept of “affective atmospheres”. “Sticky effects” is a concept that explains

how emotions can become “stuck” to people, objects, or ideas. They are often constructed via social and cultural means (Ahmed, 2004). “Affective atmospheres” describe how the phenomena of an “atmosphere” can shape experiences, behaviours and social interactions (Anderson, 2009). Diaz-Fernandez and Evans (2020) combined the two models as a framework to demonstrate how lad culture creates a highly misogynistic environment that is both destructive and ubiquitous. The environment primarily pertains to the neoliberal structures of universities and late-night establishments, which can shape the feelings and actions of those who inhabit the environments (Diaz-Fernandez & Evans, 2020). University staff indicate that they are aware of lad culture and the problematic associations, but also share that it is not something they have seen directly (Jackson & Sundaram, 2021). This contributes to a normalisation of misogyny across universities (Atkinson & Standing, 2019; Jackson & Sundaram, 2015), with associated behaviours often being dismissed as “boys being boys” attitudes (Jackson & Sundaram, 2021).

There is also a body of literature that highlights the impact of misogyny within schools. While some literature focuses on primary schools, much of the research is dominated by findings within secondary schools. Many of the findings echo those within literature focused on higher education, stating that misogynistic cultures are also normalised across schools (Gilander Gådin & Stein, 2019; Horeck et al., 2023; Lloyd & Walker, 2023; Over et al., 2024; Variyan & Wilkinson, 2022). There can be multiple contributions to why this is, some of which I will explore further.

One aspect of research that links to misogyny is how heteronormativity is embedded into educational contexts (Curran et al., 2009; Donovan et al., 2023). Heteronormativity refers to systems that promote heterosexuality as superior to other sexualities (Robinson, 2016) and closely intersects with misogynistic ideals (Loewen Walker, 2024). Schools enforce certain gender norms through assumptions of essentialist differences between males and females, particularly within uniform rules, expected behaviours of each gender, and subjects such as physical education (PE) (Donovan et al., 2023). This can start in primary school (e.g. Curren at al., 2009) and can often be evident in the behaviours of children, such as within research by Renold (2003), who found that having a girlfriend had become somewhat of a “culture” amongst older primary school boys as it appeared to assert their masculinity and heterosexual identity. Teachers often unintentionally perpetuate gender norms

through their interactions with children (Gray & Leith, 2004) and through the curriculum and teaching practices (Kollmayer et al., 2018), which suggests that the practice is so ingrained that it has become an unconscious process.

Teaching itself is also often referred to as a “feminised” profession, given the high number of females who are more likely to work in schools (Hartnett & Lee, 2003). This is currently reflected in statistics that show that in 2022-23, 77% of teachers and 93% of teaching assistants in England were female (GOV.UK, 2024). The reasons behind this are also often associated with a stereotypical view of femininity, citing that women are more likely to enter nurturing and caring roles (Skelton, 2023), which men may feel does not align with their gender (Drudy, 2013; Haase, 2008). This can often lead to claims that more male teachers are needed to act as ‘role models’ for boys (e.g., McGrath & Sinclair, 2013). This claim, however, has been critiqued for simplifying gender dynamics (Skelton, 2023). This discourse can ultimately result in conflicting experiences for male teachers, who feel under pressure to promote traditional masculine qualities whilst balancing a more nurturing and caring approach towards children (White & Hobson, 2017). This conflict can then further embed and normalise attitudes which may link to misogyny, such as heteronormativity and hegemonic masculinity (Francis & Skelton, 2001).

2.4.1. Evidence of Misogyny in Schools from Children

In the current climate, misogyny is presenting as an issue in schools. This has been widely reported in the mainstream media over the last few years (e.g. Bond, 2023; Sales, 2023; Sky News, 2022; The Guardian, 2024). It has become a concern for teaching unions such as the National Education Union, who have created a toolkit for schools to prevent sexism and sexual harassment (National Education Union [NEU], 2024) and the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT) (National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers [NASUWT], 2024). As stated within the introduction, the creation of *Everyone’s Invited* highlighted the extent of sexual harassment and abuse within educational settings, which prompted Ofsted to respond urgently (Ofsted, 2021). The issue has also been recognised by major political parties, who have identified that schools need to be supported to “counterbalance” misogynistic influences on children (Courea & Weale, 2024), as well as raising the issue for debate in Parliament

(House of Commons, 2023). Despite this being such a concern for various educational bodies, there has been no published research within the Educational Psychology profession on the matter.

Literature has additionally highlighted the extent of the problem, stating that female staff and students are regularly experiencing high levels of hostility from male students. More recent literature links this to the online communities of the manosphere (e.g., Over et al., 2024; Stahl et al., 2023; Wescott et al., 2024), with the influence of Andrew Tate, who was discussed within the introduction, also being cited as having a significant influence on the attitudes of male students (Haslop et al., 2024; Wescott et al., 2024; Zhao et al., 2024). Research by Wilson (2021) highlights how female students also exhibit internalised misogyny, which relates to how female attitudes and actions reinforce misogynistic beliefs as a result of living in a system where women are devalued (Szymanski et al., 2009). This can then impact the relationships between women (Einhorn, 2021) and a reluctance to identify with feminist beliefs (Wilson, 2021). Female staff members have been found to experience high levels of sexual harassment from male students (Robinson, 2000; Variyan & Wilkinson, 2022), which can often be minimised, making school environments unsafe for female teachers (Variyan & Wilkinson, 2022). A further factor contributing to these incidents being minimised is what Robinson (2000) describes as a “gendered nature of authority” in schools, where male students may feel a need to assert dominance over female teachers in a subversion of a typical teacher-pupil dynamic. Strategies suggested to attempt to respond to misogyny within the research focus on promoting cultures of respect (Variyan & Wilkinson, 2022; Wescott et al., 2024), encouraging the exploration of how masculinity can be conceptualised in varying ways (Stahl et al., 2023), and explicitly highlighting the systemic nature of misogyny (Ging et al., 2024).

Whilst this literature demonstrates that schools are identifying misogyny as a problem, there appears to be a tendency for this research to focus mainly on describing what is happening (e.g., Over et al., 2024; Variyan & Wilkinson, 2022; Wescott et al., 2024) with comments on how policies need to be adapted in school to address these issues. Whilst it is important to establish what is happening in schools, much of the research has not yet examined what policy change may need to look like. It is also pertinent to highlight that much of this research has also been

conducted from a sociological or educational perspective, meaning that a psychological perspective of misogyny in schools is not yet fully accounted for within the existing body of research. Research from this perspective could contribute to the existing literature by examining some of the underlying motivations for misogynistic attitudes or behaviours within schools.

2.4.2. How are Schools Responding to Misogyny

Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education is often utilised as the vehicle for which schools will typically respond to socio-cultural issues such as misogyny, where guidance is provided by the PSHE association (https://pshe-association.org.uk). The Department for Education (DfE) provides funding to the PSHE Association for this purpose (DfE, 2021). The PSHE Association has produced specific guidance to support schools in "addressing misogyny, toxic masculinity and social media influence", which can be done through PSHE education (PSHE Association, n.d).

PSHE became a non-statutory subject in the national curriculum in 1999 with plans created to make it a statutory subject in 2009 (Willis & Wilstenholme, 2016). Following the formation of the coalition government in 2010, the plans to make PSHE a statutory subject were abandoned in favour of schools choosing their own approaches to how the subject should be taught (Willis & Wilstenholme, 2016). This frequently led to inconsistency in the quality and quantity of the delivery of PSHE (Davies & Matley, 2020; Formby, 2011) and concerns that the Government's decision to withdraw specific Continuing Professional Development (CDP) in relation to PSHE sought to "devalue" it's status (Brown et al., 2011).

In 2008, the Department for Children, Schools and Families (which would be later renamed in 2010 as the Department for Education) also introduced the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) curriculum which was designed to "promote social and emotional skills throughout the school curriculum, including […] personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE)." (DCSF, 2008, p.1). There was a focus on 5 elements of social and emotional learning which included self-awareness, managing feelings, motivation, empathy and social skills (Hallam, 2009). This was found to be closely linked with PSHE education where there were often noted

“blurred” boundaries between the two (Formby, 2011). In a similar vein to PSHE when the coalition government came into power in 2010, SEAL also became deprioritised in favour of a more academic agenda in schools (Lendrum et al., 2013). Another similarity noted in the literature between the SEAL curriculum and PSHE was the variability in teaching time and quality which led to inconsistent outcomes (Hallam, 2009; Lendrum et al., 2013). Wood (2022) critiqued the curriculum for its emphasis on conformity to certain behaviours, suggesting that children may not be encouraged to use critical thinking or express individuality. This research suggests that approaches utilised by schools to respond to socio-cultural issues (such as PSHE) need to be robust and adequately supported through governmental policies, which would include effective training for teachers. Teachers would also need time to deliver this, as it would appear that the academic demands of a school meant that the teaching of PSHE became somewhat sidelined.

In September 2020, statutory guidance was introduced for the teaching of Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education within schools (DfE, 2019). This guidance specifically stated that schools needed to provide Relationships Education in the primary school phase, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) in the secondary school phase, and Health Education across all phases. At the time of writing, a consultation period on updated guidance had recently closed. This draft has been critiqued for introducing age limits on teaching children about topics such as domestic abuse (Beyond Equality, 2024). The statutory guidance currently in circulation suggests that explicitly making students aware of the issue of misogyny needs to be covered within the teaching of PSHE, as evidenced in paragraph 31 of the “Equality” section:

> Schools should be alive to issues such as everyday sexism, misogyny, homophobia and gender stereotypes and take positive action to build a culture where these are not tolerated, and any occurrences are identified and tackled. Staff have an important role to play in modelling positive behaviours. School pastoral and behaviour policies should support all pupils (DfE, 2019, p.14)

The following point in the guidance states how schools should respond to the risks of sexual violence and harassment between children in schools, promoting healthy relationships with an emphasis that “young men (…) are not made to feel that this behaviour is an inevitable part of being male” in regards to sexual violence and

harassment. Additional guidance is provided in the document “Keeping Children Safe in Education”, introduced in 2015 and regularly updated since its inception (DfE, 2023). Child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment are explicitly highlighted within part five of the guidance. The following is stated within paragraph 447:

> Schools and colleges should be aware of the importance of:
>
> - making clear that there is a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment, that it is never acceptable, and it will not be tolerated. It should never be passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh”, “a part of growing up” or “boys being boys”. Failure to do so can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviour, an unsafe environment and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse, leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it
>
> - recognising, acknowledging, and understanding the scale of harassment and abuse and that even if there are no reports it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported
>
> - challenging physical behaviour (potentially criminal in nature) such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, pulling down trousers, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them (DfE, 2023, p.104).

Paragraph 449 additionally states:

> Whilst any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment should be taken seriously, staff should be aware it is more likely that girls will be the victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment and more likely it will be perpetrated by boys. Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are also three times more likely to be abused than their peers (DfE, 2023, p. 104-105)

Despite this statutory guidance existing, the literature suggests that responding to misogyny in school is a somewhat difficult venture. When the topic is addressed with students, male students have displayed behaviours that could be interpreted as defensive, such as making jokes or deflecting the discussions (Ging et al., 2024). This could link to Anderson’s (2009) concept of an “affective atmosphere”, as the affective elements that lead male students to display defensive behaviours could then shape the ensuing interactions around the matter. It has also been highlighted that attempts to engage male students in discussions about the harmful effects of

misogyny may neglect to consider the sociocultural elements that often make online misogynistic communities attractive to males (Stahl et al., 2023) or could reinforce the appeal of so-called influencers such as Andrew Tate (Haslop et al., 2024). Staff members have also reported that they lack the training to be able to speak to children about misogyny (Over et al., 2024). In research around harmful sexual behaviours in schools, schools often create policies that can effectively incorporate the statutory guidance (Lloyd & Walker, 2023), but these can often be ineffective in addressing the sociocultural factors that allow such behaviours to continue (Lloyd & Walker, 2023; Lloyd & Bradbury, 2023). The literature argues that schools need to be fostering environments that promote gender equality (Elliot, 2018; Stahl et al., 2023; Wescott et al., 2024; Wilson, 2021) and respect (Variyan & Wilkinson, 2022) as a means of effectively responding to misogyny. Some of these approaches may lack some psychologically informed thinking, such as examining the reasons that male students may utilise defence mechanisms and being curious about this. Utilising language such as a “zero-tolerance” approach in statutory guidance also implies that reactive strategies ought to be implemented, rather than considering what may be driving these behaviours. This may lead to a child adjusting their behaviours, but may not necessarily address the underlying beliefs of a child, which may be highly problematic.

2.5 Research Rationale

This literature review has examined the current literature concerning the contemporary debates around defining misogyny and has explored how online communities work to create what Banet-Weiser and Miltner (2016) describe as networked misogyny. These online communities significantly affect children and young people who are starting to be influenced by social media figures such as Andrew Tate. Existing literature demonstrates that misogyny has been evident within schools for some time, but there is now a growing body of research that refers to the online communities of the so-called manosphere and how schools are making sense of this. Schools are well-placed to respond to this (Di Mario, 2023) but are often unable to prevent harmful behaviours from occurring, despite having statutory policies designed to address the issues (Lloyd & Walker, 2023).

Whilst there is a growing body of research, this has largely focused on what is happening in schools only, with only very limited research specifically examining how school staff interpret misogyny and how it is impacting on children and young people. Much of the existing research suggests that policies are crucial in being able to address misogyny, but there is also limited research on how the policies that are in place to support staff influence their approaches. This research will add to a growing body of literature about the impact of misogyny in schools, and it will also contribute to a significant gap concerning a psychological perspective and what this means for the EP in terms of how they can support a school. Existing literature has also primarily focused on secondary schools, meaning that primary schools have potentially been overlooked. I would argue that including primary schools within such research is important, in line with research by Over et al. (2024), who found that 68% of the primary school teachers who participated in their research felt that they would benefit from specific training on misogyny. A further justification for including primary schools in research is how the statistics show that 1 in 3 5-7-year-olds use social media unsupervised (Ofcom, 2024). Considering how misogyny is often presented to children via online means, this could mean that very young children may be being exposed to it.

This research aims to address the following questions:

1. How do school staff understand/interpret what misogyny/misogynistic behaviour is and its impact on children and young people?

2. How do existing policies and procedures influence how staff approach the topic of misogyny with children and young people?

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1 Chapter Introduction

This chapter details the methodology used in this research. I begin by outlining my philosophical positioning. I then provide details about qualitative research and justify my chosen analytical approach, reflexive thematic analysis (TA) (Braun & Clarke, 2022). I then explain how I considered issues of quality assurance associated with qualitative research before describing some of the ethical considerations I needed to contemplate within my research.

I then provide details of my research design. This will include the participant inclusion criteria, recruitment processes, sample size and participant information before I outline my research procedure. For the research design, the strengths and limitations of each section will be discussed where appropriate. The chapter will end with the TA approach I used to analyse the data.

3.2. Philosophical Positioning

This research is largely underpinned by the philosophical assumptions of critical realism, which is a framework that can be predominantly applicable to social research (Fletcher, 2017). Critical realism draws upon both positivist and constructionist approaches, resulting in an all-encompassing explanation of ontology and epistemology (Lawani, 2021). Critical realism assumes that reality operates on three levels: the empirical, the actual and the real (Bhaskar, 2008; Fletcher, 2017; Fryer, 2022; Lawani, 2021). A critical realist positioning would seek to understand how existing structures and mechanisms at the real level can have a causal impact on events experienced or observed at the empirical level (Danermark, 2019; Fletcher, 2017; Lawani, 2021). This suited my overall research aims as it enabled the underlying structures and mechanisms that contribute to the perpetuation of misogyny to be acknowledged from a realist perspective, whilst simultaneously recognising that the participants' experiences and views will be influenced by their context and perspectives. I was not only interested in my participants' understanding of misogyny and what they would interpret as misogynistic attitudes and behaviours in schools, but also in how existing structures and mechanisms would contribute to

this understanding. This linked to my first research question which sought to explore how participants understood and interpreted misogyny/misogynistic behaviours. A critical realist perspective is also committed to “changing the world for the better” (Wilson & Greenhill, 2004), which also aligned with my positioning as I wanted to consider how schools could be supported in their responses to misogyny.

3.2.1. Critical Realism and Feminist Epistemologies

This research is also heavily influenced by feminist epistemologies, which acknowledge the role that gender plays when it comes to the acquisition of knowledge (Anderson, 1995). The overarching goal of research with a feminist aim is to examine how gender influences and impacts what we know and can come to know whilst aiming to expose the processes and mechanisms behind it (Longino & Lennon, 1997). As women are most likely to be impacted by misogyny (Manne, 2017), adopting a feminist standpoint positioning ensured that this would be acknowledged within the research. It also enabled my own positioning as a feminist researcher to be fully ratified, given that I am a female with lived experience within a predominantly patriarchal society.

The compatibility of feminism and critical realism has been questioned as feminist-orientated research seeks to privilege subjective experiences, which may clash with the potentially “objective” nature of critical realism (Barker, 2003; Gunnarsson et al., 2016; Parr, 2015; Poutanen, 2007). Alternatively, critical realism allows for a more in-depth consideration of the social structures and mechanisms that produce gender inequality, meaning it has true emancipatory potential (Archer, 1998; New, 2003; Sweet, 2018). In this research, I assert that a critical realist framework complements my feminist positionality. This meant that I could validate the subjective experiences of all participants, whilst also recognising that the existing societal structures are likely to shape these experiences.

Reflexive Box

Defining my philosophical positioning was a difficult endeavour. I was inspired by an account with Braun and Clarke's (2022) book on thematic analysis about coming to critical realism (p. 172-173). This account explained how they found they aligned more with a critical realist positioning over a social constructionist one, after hearing their participants accounts. This resonated with me as I initially considered whether I would adopt a social constructionist positioning in the research to hear how participants constructed the concept of misogyny. This did not feel satisfying though, given that misogynistic beliefs are resulting in women being significantly harmed. I was concerned that a social constructionist position would nullify these experiences. My critical realist positioning meant that I can acknowledge that misogyny is "real", in the sense that we can observe and experience it, but our individual perspectives will shape our awareness and understanding of it.

3.3. Qualitative Research

This research assumes a "qualitative sensibility" (Braun & Clarke, 2022) and is situated within a qualitative research paradigm. This paradigm was suitable for my research because qualitative research is concerned with understanding meaning and experiences (Hammersley, 2013; Willig, 2013) and aligns with feminist research approaches (O'Shaughnessy & Krogman, 2012). Literature about qualitative research refers to "Big Q" and "little q" in terms of the type of qualitative research that can be conducted (e.g., Braun & Clarke, 2013; 2022; Willig, 2013). Big Q and little q were terms coined by Kidder and Fine (1987), where Big Q qualitative research encapsulates an entirely qualitative approach (Braun & Clarke, 2013; 2022; Willig, 2013). This research aligns with a Big Q approach (Braun & Clarke, 2022), as the aim was to understand what misogyny means to school staff and explore their experiences within a school environment. The Big Q approach is also congruent with my philosophical positioning, as I wanted to understand how experience and meaning are shaped by underlying social structures and mechanisms.

3.3.1. Thematic Analysis

I decided that using thematic analysis (TA) would be a good fit for my research as it is used to organise and recognise patterns in both content and meaning within qualitative data (Willig, 2013). This was pertinent in order to address my research questions which had both exploratory and explanatory aims. TA has been used as a form of data analysis for over a century, with the term being used to refer to various things, including, but not limited to, analysis within social sciences (Terry et al., 2017). Sharing some similarities with content analysis, where categories are established before counting the number of times they are used within a piece of data, TA aims to look further than counting “content” and strives to find both explicit and implicit meaning within the data (Joffe & Yardley, 2004). This has often led to content analysis and TA being used interchangeably (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Multiple researchers have attempted to create a procedure for conducting a TA (e.g. Aronson, 1994; Joffe & Yardley, 2003; O’Ferret & Grau, 2000), leading Braun and Clarke (2006) to declare that although many researchers were widely using TA, it was “poorly demarcated” (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Braun and Clarke (2006) then developed a robust and systematic approach to TA, which has become one of the most popular approaches to utilising TA, cementing its status as a reputable analysis method (Terry et al., 2017). Braun and Clarke have continued to develop their work in relation to TA, which has most recently led them to hone their approach to be more reflexive (Braun & Clarke, 2019; 2020; 2022), thus creating an approach entitled reflexive thematic analysis (TA), which is the approach that I have primarily drawn upon to analyse the data.

Reflexive TA is an analytical approach that aligns with a critical realist positioning (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Fryer, 2022; Wiltshire & Ronkainen, 2021). This means that the data will not provide a direct view of reality and will instead be heavily impacted by the participant’s experiences. The data will then be analysed from my perspectives and will, as a result, produce an analysis that cannot be separated from them (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Braun and Clarke (2006; 2019; 2022) emphasise that this fact means that themes cannot “emerge” out of data as this implies that a singular reality is waiting to be uncovered. What occurs instead is an analysis that recognises how reality and social structures both shape and confine the ways that participants make meaning of the world around them (Braun & Clarke, 2022). The

analysis will also provide insight into the causal elements of certain events, in line with a critical realist approach (Fryer, 2022). I approached reflexive TA from a critical perspective as I wanted to interrogate the patterns of meaning across my data set (Braun & Clarke, 2022). I also utilised an inductive approach, which is a “bottom-up” method, meaning that the data acted as the starting point for analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Fryer, 2022; Willig, 2013). As Braun and Clarke (2022) note, conducting a purely inductive approach is impossible as the researcher can never truly separate themselves from the data. Braun and Clarke (2022) also note that a reflexive TA analysis can never be complete given its subjective nature, and one should not aim for a “finished” analysis. A researcher would instead reach a point where they feel it is “good enough” (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

3.3.2. Ensuring Quality in Qualitative Research

Assessing the quality of qualitative research can present a number of difficulties. Qualitative research can be subjective, given that the researcher's positionality contributes significantly to the analysis process (Chowdhury, 2015; Willig, 2013). Several facets have been identified to judge the quality of qualitative research (e.g., Henwood & Pidgeon, 1992; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). These facets often relate to credibility, reflexivity, generalisability and a rigorous research process (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Henwood & Pidgeon, 1992; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In addition to these guidelines, reflexive TA has its own considerations regarding assuring quality (Braun & Clarke, 2022; 2023; 2024). This is because it is difficult to apply a standardised list to all types of qualitative research, as it may not be appropriate to do so (Hammersley, 2007; Braun & Clarke, 2022).

An aspect often cited in terms of assuring quality research is the concept of generalisability, meaning that the research can be applied to different contexts (Willig, 2013). This is often considered difficult within qualitative research, given that small samples are often used, which could make it challenging to apply the findings to a broader context (Payne & Williams, 2005). Braun and Clarke (2022) instead speak of the idea of transferability as a more helpful concept and aligning with more qualitative values that view the subjective element of data analysis as a strength of

the design. This would involve making the contextual nature of the research explicit so that those reading it could judge how far they could apply the analysis to their contexts. Within this research, I have ensured that sufficient detail has been provided about the research context. This will support the transferability of the research.

Reflexivity occurs when the researcher acknowledges their positionality within the research and how this has contributed to it (Peddle, 2022; Willig, 2013). This is an important factor within qualitative research as the researcher's perspective ultimately shapes the outcome of the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2023). Drawing upon reflexive strategies throughout the research process can effectively demonstrate a rigorous approach (Darawsheh, 2014). I have outlined my positionality within this research and included reflexive boxes to make my engagement with the research explicit. I also kept a reflexive diary, where excerpts can be found in Appendix A.

Ensuring consistency is another element of quality qualitative research (Noble & Smith, 2015). This emphasises the importance of making the decisions that were made throughout the research as transparent as possible (Noble & Smith, 2015) by keeping “audit trails” (Chowdhury, 2015; Braun & Clarke, 2022). In addition to outlining my positionality, I have demonstrated how I utilised a systematic method for the analysis. Evidence of this is provided in the form of coding and thematic maps, which show the progression of my thinking throughout the analysis process (Appendices L, M, N and O).

3.4. Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was given by The University of Sheffield Ethics Committee in June 2023 (Appendix B). All participants were provided with an information sheet (Appendix C) that outlined the research aims and gave clear guidance on how their data would be used, stored and deleted at the end of the research period.

Given the nature of the research topic, I needed to consider the well-being of the participants and myself throughout the research process. In the information sheet (Appendix C), I clearly stated that participants needed to consider whether participating in the research would have an adverse effect on their well-being, given the nature of the topic being studied. To protect my well-being, I utilised supervision to discuss matters that concerned or affected me.

An ethical consideration I had was about the focus group and the right to withdraw. Participants were reminded at the start of the focus group that they were free to leave at any point, but withdrawing their contribution would not be possible as this would make it challenging to analyse subsequent data (Sim & Waterfield, 2019). Participants were informed of this before consenting to take part and instead offered the opportunity to request that their data was not quoted in the research report.

To protect the anonymity of the participants, they were all assigned pseudonyms and will be referred to by their pseudonyms in the reporting of the analysis. To further preserve anonymity, sections of the transcripts were redacted. I was concerned that even with a pseudonym, elements of the interviews would compromise their anonymity.

3.5. Research Design

This section will outline the research design. It includes information about the participants, including how they were recruited, the inclusion criteria, and how I considered an appropriate sample size. I then explain how I facilitated the focus group and semi-structured interviews.

3.5.1. Participants

My participants were recruited through purposive sampling strategies as I wanted to ensure that I had representation from people with different characteristics (Robinson, 2013). Participants indicated that they were interested in participating in the research once it had been shared with them by their headteacher.

The inclusion criteria, recruitment process, and details about the participants will be outlined further in this section.

3.5.1.1. Inclusion Criteria

In terms of stage and type of provision, I focused solely on mainstream schools to recruit participants. I do not want to imply that these issues are not experienced within a specialist provision, but the way that misogyny may be responded to in these provisions may require a more specialised approach, given the needs of the attendees. Research has predominantly taken place in secondary schools, but I

decided it was additionally important to include primary schools as there appears to be a gap in terms of their inclusion in research.

When considering inclusion criteria for my participants, I aimed to keep this as inclusive as possible. I wanted both male and female participants given that it is likely that the two sexes will have different observations and experiences of misogyny, in line with a critical realist perspective. I did not specify an age range as having a broad mixture of ages was likely to provide some insights into how this issue may have developed and changed over time, which aligned with a critical realist positioning as this sought to examine potential causal factors over time. The final choice I made in selecting participants was that I wanted a range of roles, including teaching assistants, mainscale teachers, teachers with some additional responsibilities, and senior leadership team (SLT). One of my research questions focused on the policies and procedures that are referred to when responding to misogynistic incidents in school. I thought that participants' responses to questions about this might be influenced by their role in a school. This could mean that if a participant was a member of the SLT, they may have been involved in policy creation, whereas a teaching assistant may not have. Overall, I wanted the data I gathered from the participants to provide a broad insight into what was happening in the schools they worked in and this approach would be the best way to uncover this.

3.5.1.2. Recruitment

I initially approached secondary and primary schools within the local authority where I was on placement as a Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP). I considered approaching the schools for which I was the named link EP, but I discarded this idea as I did not want the boundaries of this role and my research interests to be blurred.

I emailed the participant information sheet (Appendix C) and a link to the consent form (Appendix D1 and D2) to several headteachers. As I did not get the response that I hoped for, I turned to colleagues and my network to assist with recruitment in the broader North East area. I initially liaised with members of the SLT in the schools where the participants worked in order to recruit my participants.

Reflexive Box

Given that there had been an influx of media coverage in the latter part of 2022 when I was in the early stages of my research journey, I initially thought that I would not experience any difficulties in recruiting participants. I presumed that this would a be a topic that a lot of schools would be aware of and concerned about. When it came to recruitment nearly a year later, I felt surprised that I did not get the response I expected. I wondered whether this was because it was not being highlighted as much within the media at the point of recruitment, meaning that schools may not have viewed it with as much "urgency" anymore. I also found it interesting that I had the most difficulty in recruiting staff from primary schools. I do acknowledge that participating in research does involve providing time that staff may not have, but I also wondered whether this was because primary schools may not necessarily view misogyny as an issue for primary-aged children.

3.5.1.3. Sample Size

In determining sample size, Braun and Clarke (2022) suggest that information power (Malterud et al., 2015) can support the determination of a viable sample size. There are five elements that contribute to the information power of the sample, which includes (a) study aim, (b) sample specificity, (c) use of established theory, (d) quality of dialogue and (e) analysis strategy (Malterud et al., 2015, p.2).

When considering these elements, several suggested that a larger sample size may have been appropriate. I considered the overarching aim of the research to be reasonably broad, given that I was thinking about how school staff understood and responded to the issue of misogyny. This meant that if a participant worked in a mainstream school, they were eligible to participate. The sample specificity relates to the knowledge and experiences of eligible participants, which are likely to vary regarding misogyny. Quality of dialogue relates to the quality of the interviews, which includes the resulting subject matter, the interview process itself, and the rapport and trust between the interviewee and the interviewer. Participants were self-selecting, which implied they might be interested in discussing the issue of misogyny, but it was also important to consider that the interview may sometimes become uncomfortable. Having a larger sample size could mean that if some interviews encountered

difficulties and did not yield a lot of data, there would still be sufficient data to analyse.

Elements that supported a smaller sample size included the consideration of established theory. The research is supported by a number of theoretical perspectives (such as feminism and critical realism), which support the overall information power of the sample. This means that the research findings are likely to be able to add to existing knowledge. As the participants were going to be interviewed and the resulting data was being analysed via reflexive TA, the subsequent depth of analysis suggested that fewer participants would be needed.

Malterud et al. (2015) emphasise that the information power model should be utilised as a guide only, and other factors, such as data quality or sample adequacy, are often more important than the overall sample size. It is also implied that knowing whether the sample size was adequate may be challenging until the entire research is complete. For the above reasons, I decided that having a sample size of 8-12 participants across different job roles and stages would bring diversity to the experiences and knowledge I wished to capture within the data.

3.5.1.4. Participant Information

A total of eight participants were recruited from one secondary school and two primary schools in the North East of England. Five were teaching staff, and three were auxiliary staff. Many of the teaching staff held additional responsibilities within the school, but to preserve anonymity, the details of these additional responsibilities will not be provided. In terms of the gender distribution of participants, three were male, and five were female. The time that participants had worked in educational settings ranged from two years to over fifteen years.

3.5.2. Procedure

There were initially two planned phases to the data collection. For the first phase, I wanted to conduct focus groups with a group of primary and secondary staff who worked within the same schools. My rationale for this was that I thought it would be easier to arrange if all participants worked together, but I also thought that participants may feel more comfortable speaking in a group of people who were

familiar to them. I wanted to recruit four to six participants for these groups. In the second phase, I wanted to have individual interviews with two to three members of the focus groups. The actual data collection procedures are summarised below:

Date	Activity
June 2023	Emails sent to secondary schools and primary schools with an invitation to participate.
July 2023	Focus group with six staff members from a secondary school.
July 2023 (one week after focus group)	Interviews with two staff members who participated in the focus group
September 2023	Further emails sent to primary schools with an invitation to participate
November 2023	Interviews with two staff members from primary schools.

Table 1: *Dates of data collection*

I found it difficult to recruit staff from primary schools. Although I initially wanted to have a group of staff from the same primary school, I did not get enough responses from one school. I was open to having a focus group with staff from different primary schools, but I did not receive enough responses overall to create a group. As I was concerned about the time constraints of the research, I decided that I would interview the participants who had responded.

3.5.2.1. Focus Groups

I wanted to explore how misogyny was understood by a group of school staff, and I decided that a focus group was an appropriate method to do this. My role within the focus group would be to facilitate the discussion, meaning that I would not ask direct questions to the group, but would provide prompts if necessary. This would distinguish between a focus group and a group interview, as the focus group would yield data that would be an interaction between the group members based on the topic I am researching (Morgan, 1996) rather than responses to direct questions. I provided stimulus materials as a means of generating a focused discussion among the participants. The materials selected were a selection of headlines from mainstream media and statistics from the NEU and UK Feminista report (2017) about sexism within schools (Appendix F). In line with a critical realist positioning, the

stimulus aimed to evoke discussion around the structural and causal elements of misogyny in schools in addition to participants sharing their own experiences.

Focus group limitations are often linked to the “comfort” of participants and whether they can speak freely in the group context (Smithson, 2008). I wanted the focus group to be made up of participants who worked in the same school, as it increased the likelihood of them being more comfortable with each other. Offering individual interviews, however, provided them with the opportunity to share their experiences more privately if they did not feel comfortable doing so in the focus group.

The focus group was held in the school where the participants worked. I wrote a script to read to the participants, which introduced myself, explained my research aims and shared some ground rules (Appendix E). I asked if anybody had any questions and then shared the stimulus with them before asking them to share their thoughts on it. I created a set of prompts to utilise if I felt that the discussion had lost focus (Appendix E), but the stimulus proved to be effective in generating a rich discussion that did not require further prompts. The focus group lasted 75 minutes and was recorded using Audacity on my laptop. Two of the participants were unable to stay for the full duration due to other commitments. One left after 30 minutes, and the other after 45.

Throughout the focus group, I made some brief notes and tracked the contributions of each participant. This was to ensure that all participants were given the opportunity to speak and that no participants were dominating the discussion. I initially wondered about the impact of the differing roles participants held in the school, and whether this would mean that some people may have felt uncomfortable sharing their views whilst a more senior staff member was present. Throughout the course of the focus group, I did not feel as though this presented an issue for the participants.

In order to decide which participants to ask for an individual interview, I listened to the recording of the focus group with a view of thinking about what each participant had said and whether I wanted to explore more of their thoughts. With this in mind, I chose the two participants based on their gender, role in their school and experience working in education. I thought that this would provide additional insight into some of the structures and mechanisms resulting in misogyny being displayed in their school.

As previously stated, to preserve the anonymity of the participants, I will not refer to their role within the school.

3.5.2.2. Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews allow for an in-depth exploration of a complex topic, using questions that reflect the individuality of a participant, as well as ones that are guided by existing theories (Galletta, 2013). I decided that this was appropriate in order to gain some richer insight into the participants' perspectives. Within a semi-structured interview, it is easy to establish reciprocity between the interviewer and interviewee, meaning further questions can be asked based on participant responses (Kallio et al., 2016). I wanted to be able to be responsive to the participants in the interviews based on their answers, which would additionally account for their individual experiences.

Four people were interviewed. Two were primary staff and had indicated they would like to take part, and the other two had previously participated in the focus group. The two chosen from the focus group were selected because I was interested in asking them more structured questions based on their contribution to the focus group. This was in addition to their respective roles in school, their gender and also the amount of time working in education. I thought that this would provide a diverse perspective in light of my philosophical positioning and overall research aims.

Participants were offered an in-person or online interview. The participants who had contributed to the focus group requested an in-person interview. The participants who had not participated in a focus group had an online interview via Google Meet. This was largely due to the geographical locations of the participants. Technology failure can be a potential barrier when opting for virtual meetings, and there is also a concern that the nuances of an in-person meeting may be lost in a virtual scenario (Oliffe et al., 2021). Since the COVID-19 pandemic, many traditional work practices had to change due to the imposing of restrictions on movement (Karl et al., 2022), meaning that having online meetings is now very common. This meant that the participants would be familiar with such processes.

I utilised an interview schedule (Appendix G), which provided an overview of what I wanted to know and also provided prompts. In keeping with a critical realist perspective, I asked participants to reflect on how their experiences fit into broader sociocultural contexts and enquired about their opinions on what could be influencing misogynistic attitudes, beliefs and behaviours in young people (Brönnimann, 2022). As I approached the interviews in a semi-structured style, this also meant that I could ask further questions depending on what the participant said. The interviews lasted approximately 45-60 minutes and were recorded using Audacity on my laptop for in-person interviews or via the Google Meet record function for online interviews.

All participants were emailed a debrief sheet (Appendix H) at the end of the data collection period in November 2023.

3.6. Analysis Approach

I predominantly utilised Braun and Clarke's (2022) reflexive TA to analyse the dataset but also drew upon critical realist approaches to TA (e.g., Fryer, 2022; Wiltshire & Ronkainen, 2021). This ensured that my analysis remained congruent with my critical realist positioning. Braun and Clarke (2006; 2022) outline this as a six-step process. I will describe what I did at each step to demonstrate the rigour of the analysis process.

3.6.1. Phase One: Familiarising Yourself with the Dataset

Braun and Clarke (2006; 2022) describe this step as the process of becoming familiar with the dataset. I initially listened back to the recordings approximately 1-2 days after the focus group and interviews had taken place. After this, I transcribed the recordings. Two interviews took place online via Google Meet, which had an automated transcript feature. Although I did utilise this, I checked that it was accurate, as there can be inconsistencies in accent recognition when using an automated function. The transcriptions were made verbatim, as TA approaches do not require the level of detail in a transcript compared to other methods, such as discourse or narrative analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I wanted to ensure that meaning was captured as far as possible within the transcriptions, for example, including pauses through an ellipsis or putting certain words in bold to denote that it

was emphasised. Transcripts can be found in Appendix I. Once the transcriptions were complete, I re-read each one several times with and without the accompanying audio recording. I want to highlight that there was an approximately three-month period between the recordings and subsequent transcriptions of the secondary participants and the primary participants. To mitigate this, I ensured that once I had my complete data set, I listened again to each recording whilst reading the transcript.

I then critically engaged with the data, in accordance with Braun and Clarke (2022) and Fryer (2022). This involves asking yourself a number of questions about the data, which includes considering how the participant is making sense of the world around them and what kinds of reactions the researcher might have upon engaging with the data (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 44). I listened again to each piece of data and made some notes concerning what I felt may have underpinned the participants' views, as well as what I noticed about my responses. Examples of some notes that demonstrate a more critical engagement with the data can be found in Appendix J. Braun and Clarke (2022) suggest utilising many different methods to support the familiarisation process. With this in mind, I listened once more to each piece of data and created some "doodles", which contained both text and drawings (see Appendix K for an example of a doodle).

The final activity I completed in this first step was making notes concerning the entire dataset. This included some of the main ideas I had noticed and some of the ways that I had felt "challenged" to retain the reflexive approach to the analysis.

3.6.2. Phase Two: Doing Coding

Braun and Clarke (2006; 2022) emphasise that coding needs to be a systematic process that aims to capture the diversity of meaning across the dataset. I used a descriptive approach to coding, meaning that I coded longer sections of the text if required. This approach meant that I was "data-led" and aligned with my inductive approach, which enabled me to be open to challenges to my preconceptions (Fryer, 2022). I typically coded sections of the text that I felt were interesting in relation to my research questions. Some sections of the text resulted in multiple codes. I also coded at both semantic and latent levels, where semantic reflects more explicit meaning, and latent reflects implicit meanings. Braun and Clarke (2022) state that

this can be on a continuum, and coding can often initially start at a more semantic level before becoming more latent.

I did two rounds of coding the entire dataset and used NVivo to organise my coding, which is software often used in qualitative data. It can be utilised for organisation and analysis of data, but I used it for organisational purposes only. In the first round, I found that many of my codes often contained only one piece of data, which suggested that I was too fine-grained in my approach, according to Braun and Clarke (2022). Similarly, I noticed some of my codes were too broad and contained too much data. This prompted me to refine my coding by looking more closely at ones I deemed too broad to see whether or not I could hone them. After refining the first round, I did another full round of coding. I then reviewed the codes to ensure that they had descriptive validity (Fryer, 2022; Wiltshire & Ronkainen, 2022), which is a term used to make sure that the codes describe the data. Examples of my codes can be found in Appendix L.

3.6.3. Phrase Three: Generating Initial Themes

Braun and Clarke (2022) state that when embarking upon this step, the researcher could initially "cluster" codes to create what they refer to as "candidate themes". I approached this by clustering them together to get a sense of shared concepts or ideas. In line with my critical realist positioning, I also considered causal factors as I completed this, in line with Fryer's (2022) approach to TA. I remained focused on the codes only at this point in order to do this. Some of the clusters initially had many codes, suggesting that the cluster would represent too many different ideas within it. This encouraged me to think about how I might "break down" each cluster, which led to the initial creation of candidate themes and sub-themes.

I organised each candidate theme (and subsequent sub-themes) to the corresponding research question. I also created a thematic map to capture the relationships between the themes and help me think about the overall analysis. This thematic map can be found in Appendix M.

3.6.4. Phase Four: Developing and Reviewing Themes

This step requires the researcher to continually review and develop the candidate themes that have already been identified in the previous step. Braun and Clarke (2022) state that the researcher should return to the raw data and ensure that all codes within a candidate theme are relevant and appropriate to inform this process.

During this stage, I revisited the raw data associated with each code to ensure that the code was still viable and relevant. This resulted in me having to refine and tweak some codes further, as I found that some data extracts no longer fit the code as a result of the progress I had made within the overall analysis.

I also found that I had many different themes that I was concerned would produce a ‘thin’ analysis. Whilst Braun and Clarke (2022) do not state a definitive number of themes that you should be aiming for, they instead share that a researcher should consider different factors such as the analytical approach and “output” (i.e. the parameters of the reporting of them). Whilst I currently had a lot of different potential themes at this point, I recognised that I would have to consider which ones were most pertinent to my research questions and overall analysis so that I would be able to produce a ‘rich’ exploration of the themes. Appendix N demonstrates how the themes were reviewed and developed within this step through the further creation of thematic maps.

3.6.5. Phase Five Refining, Defining and Naming Themes

At this step within the analysis, Braun and Clarke (2022) suggest that the researcher attempts to write a definition for each theme that clearly states what the theme is about, the boundary of the theme, what it contributes to the overall analysis and what makes the theme unique. I wrote a definition for each theme, which helped me refine the themes even further. In doing this, I also ensured that I had created an appropriate theme within the realms of reflexive TA rather than a topic summary. I continued to check my codes in the context of the themes to ensure that they remained grounded in the raw data. I gave the themes some names that were working titles. This can be found in Appendix O.

3.6.6. Phase Six: Writing the Analysis

Braun and Clarke (2022) emphasise that this is not a step that occurs once the previous steps have “finished” but should occur as part of the ongoing analysis. In this phase, I took each theme and wrote my formal analysis. Throughout this phase, I continued to look back at codes and raw data again to ensure they were still relevant in the developing analysis. During the writing, I utilised participant quotations in both analytical and illustrative ways, supporting the analytical points I wanted to make. I continued to adjust the names of the themes and decided to include quotations from participants as part of the theme titles to capture the nature of the theme in the title creatively.

Reflexive Box

Given that there is not supposed to be a definitive finish point within reflexive TA, I noted that I often felt highly anxious throughout the analysis process in the absence of this. It took a lot longer than I had anticipated and I found that I frequently needed to take breaks to manage the anxiety I felt around feeling as though I had made little progress. In hindsight, I feel as though this was a helpful thing to do as I found that I would come back from a break with further analytic insight that I may not have considered before.

3.7. Chapter Summary

Within this chapter, I have outlined my philosophical positionality and approach to analysis within a qualitative paradigm. I have explicitly stated how I have considered issues relating to quality within the research and then provided details about my research design. I ended the chapter with the six steps I followed to analyse the data. The written analysis will be shared in the next chapter.

Chapter Four: Analysis

4.1. Chapter Introduction

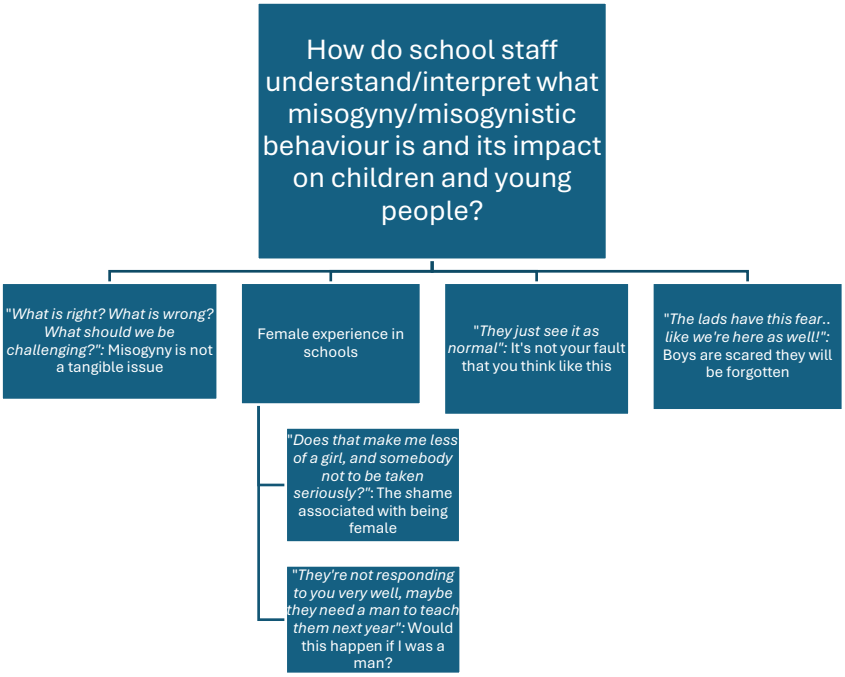
This chapter presents my analysis of the data and corresponds with phase six of Braun and Clarke's (2022) approach to reflexive TA. I have deliberately used the term analysis for this section, rather than "findings" or "results", as these terms can imply a passive approach, rather than acknowledging that I played an active role in the process (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

I have situated the analysis within the existing literature which is reminiscent of a more traditional "discussion" section, per Braun and Clarke's (2022) approach (p. 131-132). Approaching it this way also means I can be more explicit in the reporting of the analysis. This approach also aligns with the "Big Q" qualitative orientation (Braun & Clarke, 2022). This is congruent with a critical realist positioning as it begins to consider causal explanations for the experiences of the participants, whilst also acknowledging their individual contexts.

I have presented my analysis as thematic diagrams from each research question. Each section will begin with the diagram before each theme is reported. Participant quotes are utilised throughout the reporting of each theme. Where data is taken from the focus group, I have indicated this by putting "FG" with the line number at the end of each quote.

4.2. Research Question One – *How do school staff understand/interpret what misogyny/misogynistic behaviour is and its impact on children and young people?*

For this research question, I created four themes, where one of the themes had two sub-themes. The themes are presented in the thematic diagram.



4.2.1. *"What is right? What is wrong? What should we be challenging?":* Misogyny is not a tangible issue

When speaking about the challenges in terms of defining misogyny, participants indicated that there can often be an absence of clear signs that would indicate a potential misogynistic incident. This can then pose a challenge to staff who feel that they would not know how to 'spot' misogynistic attitudes or behaviours in children and young people:

> **Blake:** *What is right? What is wrong? What should we be challenging? What is… yeah what should we be challenging and what's the best way of challenging it, because saying things like slag, or slut, it's quite easy to spot. It's not right. And it needs to be addressed. However, is there anything else we need to be watching for?* (Are) *there certain behaviours we need to be looking out for* (?) (Lines 261-265)

In addition to this, Alex shared her perspective on the implications of staff not being able to agree on a clear definition:

> **Alex**: *None of the teachers are on the same page about it, and that's the first thing that we need to tackle, to get everybody to see that this is a problem.* (Lines 324-325)

Alex positioned herself as somebody who recognises misogyny as a problem in schools, and I sensed that she felt that in the absence of an accessible and clear definition of misogyny, a school would be limited in how it could respond to it. From the examples provided here and from the wider participant contributions, it would appear that the participants' views reflect the current literature in relation to the difficulties in being able to define misogyny effectively (e.g., Loewen Walker, 2024; Manne, 2017; Wrisley, 2021).

The way that Blake described certain actions as being *"easy to spot"* conceptualises misogyny as being something that has clear markers. His wondering, however, around whether there is anything else that "*they need to be watching out for*" suggests that he recognises that there is more to misogyny than "just" actions. As already stated, this is in line with the current literature about misogyny, which does acknowledge a distinct difficulty in understanding it adequately, noting that definitions of misogyny are frequently reduced to being something with clear actions or enacted by an individual misogynist (Manne, 2017). Wrisley (2021) highlights that a tangible action often associated with misogyny is violence against women, but this can typically ignore the underlying structures surrounding why society associates violence against women with misogyny.

Riley shared the following during a discussion about the impact of misogyny on children and young people within the school he worked in:

> **Riley:** *I think in a way, misogyny takes… misogyny is very low down in the kind of set of things for kids to be worrying about around here. It tends to be survival more than anything. I think a lot of the parents probably… so not just the children as well, probably wouldn't identify or even recognise misogyny.* (Lines 128-132)

In this statement, Riley may have been speaking to the debates surrounding the difficulties of defining misogyny. Whilst my interpretation of the phrase "*it tends to be about survival more than anything"* links to the socioeconomic status of the children and young people who attend the school Riley works in, I also wondered if this was indicating a tendency to think about misogyny in a way that conflates it with clear actions. As previously shared, Manne (2017) refers to misogyny as often being understood as an individualistic concept enacted by individuals (typically, but not

always men) who feel hostility towards women. Manne (2017) later refers to this as a "bad apple" view of misogyny, which is a school of thought asserting how problematic behaviour is a result of individual action and largely ignores the role that wider systems may play in this, assuming them to be "safe" (Dekker, 2017). Within the context of the statement made by Riley, I wondered whether this was indicating that one of the dominant discourses surrounding misogyny is that it is often spoken about in terms of how it manifests itself as physical actions. This once again links with Wrisley's (2021) argument concerning how understanding the affective and psychological elements of misogyny is a complex feat, resulting in definitions that aim to try and remove these elements.

While discussing preventative approaches to responding to misogyny, Blake and Riley indicated that they did not do anything specific within their respective schools. Instead, they indicated how their response to other sociocultural issues may also be applicable to responding to misogyny:

> **Blake:** *It's sort of about accepting everybody [within discussions about LGBT], but we do sort of go into detail about what it means, how to respect people, but we try to come from the angle of respecting everybody and everyone's accepted, everyone's respected.* (Lines 169-170)
>
> **Riley**: *There's a lot done within the schools. […] I mean this week, it's anti-bullying week, which kind of links in, in some extent, to it. Erm… and I don't know the things… other groups, other charities that we get to come in and the other organisations to work.* (Lines 50-56)

It seemed that both of these participants were making links to the notion that misogyny or misogynistic behaviours would be associated with demonstrating an overall lack of tolerance, acceptance and respect, presumably towards women. I wondered whether this was evidence of potentially conflating misogyny with other sociocultural issues, which is a factor that Wrisley (2021) identified that happens as a result of the difficulty in being able to articulate what misogyny is fully. Whilst Blake and Riley's assertions that promoting cultures of respect does correlate with literature in terms of a school responding to misogyny (e.g. Varyian & Wilkinson, 2022), other literature has highlighted that it often does need to be within the context of gender equality (e.g., Wescott et al., 2024). I wondered whether linking a response to misogyny with how a school would respond and educate on other

sociocultural issues was a way that the participants were mitigating not having a clear definition of misogyny.

Reflexive box

As stated in an earlier reflexive box, I have additionally found it challenging to define misogyny myself. I spent a lot of time considering some of the participants discussions about how they would define misogyny and their experiences of it and found myself feeling some conflicting things. When it came to the analysis, I had to be careful to not privilege my own understanding of this in comparison to theirs. I was also aware that participants may have considered me as having the "correct" definition in my position as the researcher. An example of this is in one interview where I felt as though the participant was responding to me in a way that made me think they were waiting for me to tell them whether they were right or not. I needed to be mindful of this and I found that I was reminding participants that I was interested in their thoughts on the matter, rather than their ability to provide a correct definition.

Although I recognised that I should not privilege my own understanding of misogyny over a participants, I do wish to admit that I did feel challenged by one participants' perspective as the interview progressed. As I had taken an inductive approach to the analysis, I knew that I could not simply discard this perspective, as this would not have remained congruent with my analysis approach. I instead tried to notice how the perspective had made me feel, and why I felt challenged through some reflective thinking and discussions with my research supervisor. This helped me to reach a point where I acknowledged that there were differing perspectives and it was not my position to state whether somebody was incorrect in their thinking. I instead tried to reframe my thoughts about this and consider what this perspective meant in terms of a wider understanding of misogyny.

4.2.2. Female Experience in Schools

Throughout the course of the interviews, participants shared insight into the female experience in schools, including perspectives from female staff and female students. Two sub-themes were created for this theme. The first is called, "*Does that make me less of a girl and somebody not to be taken seriously?":* The shame associated with being female". It explores how the female experience is often loaded with a sense of shame, from menstruating, which is an experience predominantly associated with womanhood, to the interests that females have. The second sub-theme is, "*They're not responding to you very well, maybe they need a man to teach them next year."*:

Would this be happening if we were men?" This theme provides insight into how students and students' families often treat female staff differently than their male counterparts. It also encapsulates how participants feel that male staff do not fully recognise the gendered treatment of female staff in a school.

In the presentation of this theme, I want to highlight that the participants spoke of "girls" menstruating, and I have interpreted this to mean cis-gendered females based on the ensuing discussions. I feel it is important to note that cis-gendered females are not the only group who menstruate and that not all cis-gendered females menstruate.

4.2.2.1. "Does that make me less of a girl and somebody not to be taken seriously?": The shame associated with being female

At one point in the focus group, the participants began to discuss how open female pupils can be when they speak about menstruation. The participants reflected on how this may indicate a cultural shift in this exchange:

> **Robin:** *Do you think that might be an age thing? Because* […] *my gran would never talk about a period, ever.*
>
> **Charlie:** […] *My mam did to me, but my gran, it was like it didn't exist. But, even to the point where like now, I mean this is my sixth year teaching here, and I think the difference between my first year* […], *like how open kids were then about it to now is massive, like now kids will put their hands up and say in front of the whole class* […] *but yeah, they're just so much more open.* (FG Lines 362-369)

These quotes from Charlie and Robin elicit the notions of a long-held narrative about menstruation and its associated stigma and shame (McHugh, 2020). Both participants seem to think this may not be as prominent anymore, given that female students are much more open. Charlie's statement about students saying it "*in front of the whole class*" appears to demonstrate an element of surprise about these actions, which once again appears to be rooted within their own experience in line with a sense of taboo around the topic.

As stated, these participants were female, and though they expressed what I have interpreted as surprise in relation to how open female students are about

menstruation, they began to wonder how female students navigated this issue with male staff:

> **Alex:** *I always wonder how male teachers handle that, 'cos girls seem quite open to say to me, "Miss, I'm leaking, I need to go",*
>
> **Others:** <laughing> *"Just go!!"*
>
> **Alex:** *and I'm literally like "just go!", but sometimes I want to teach them euphemisms, like, 'the decorators are in', you know what I mean? Just so they don't have to say that, and I think, do you say this to male teachers? Would you feel comfortable saying that? Like how do you get across that you need to go to the toilet?* (FG Lines 238-246)

Alex exemplifies another element of the narrative concerning menstruation and the associated stigma here. Goffman (1963) defines stigma as a characteristic associated with an individual (or group) that can result in them being perceived as socially undesirable. Goffman (1963) notes that the defining characteristic itself does not invite stigma but instead occurs due to the social context. Menstruation has frequently been associated with stigma (van Lonkhuijzen et al., 2023). Alex suggests that a euphemism is needed as a means of talking about menstruation, which seems to be a way of avoiding the embarrassment and stigma associated with it, in line with research by Walker (2014). Whilst Alex is likely to be portraying this suggestion as something that could potentially be supportive to female students, I also wondered whether this could be illuminating further points in relation to the discourse that the participants have experienced about menstruation and the notion that it is something to hide or feel ashamed of. I additionally wondered whether this could be speaking to the discourse of internalised misogyny, which was defined in Chapter Two as women's attitudes and actions reinforcing misogynistic beliefs, typically as a result of living in a misogynistic world (Szymanski et al., 2009). Negativity towards menstruation has been spoken of as being a signifier of the oppression associated with misogyny (Tripp, 2021), suggesting that the belief that it is not something to be spoken about or can only be spoken about with euphemisms occurs as a result of misogyny. Specifically highlighting that female students may feel uncomfortable about informing a male teacher that they are menstruating but not a female teacher suggests that this is because males may also feel uncomfortable about hearing this, which is another long-held view (Erchull, 2020).

In addition to exploring the experience of menstruation and the shame that is often associated with it, Brooklyn also made the following comment, which also began to explore potential shame that female students experience:

> **Brooklyn:** *I was also having a conversation with some of the girls which I thought was quite interesting when some of them were saying they were struggling with the fact that* […] (liking) *traditionally feminine things like liking the colour pink, or liking barbies has almost been put as like* […] *"of course you like that", almost like it's a negative thing, but it's all been pushed by females at the same time. It's like well… I don't understand what's wrong with being girly and liking girly things and why that's such an issue.* […] *The fact that some of our kids are* […] *grappling with why is it wrong to be female and like female, girly things, because there is such a challenge in the media with that.* […] (so) *I was like, you know what? They're right! 'Cos there's nothing wrong, likewise, if you're a boy and you like traditional masculine things, but there's nothing wrong if you're a girl and you like traditional masculine things, but there's nothing wrong… if you just like things, but I think girls are grappling with that at the moment, thinking that, well should I not like those things? Because does that make me…* […] *well one of them said "less of a girl", and somebody not to be taken seriously? And that worries me.* (FG Lines 636-649)

Brooklyn seems to be alluding to the idea of a distinct gender binary in terms of what is viewed as masculine and what is viewed as feminine. This links to the discourse surrounding how gender can be socially constructed, and society can view various interests, pursuits or characteristics as exclusively masculine or feminine (e.g., Lorber, 2010). In a similar vein to how the predominantly female experience of menstruation is spoken about with an element of shame, Brooklyn highlights that something that might be classified as stereotypically feminine (such as liking pink or Barbies) is also viewed "negatively". To say, "*of course you like that",* as an example of a response to liking these things implies a strong sense of ridicule. I wondered whether Brooklyn might have been alluding to the ideologies of second-wave feminism and the concept of the "*girlboss*", which posits that women should reject stereotypically feminine pursuits (such as being a housewife) and instead promotes the idea that women should be embodying more traditionally masculine qualities in order to work alongside them as equals in a capitalist society (Cavallo & Collins, 2023). Whilst the "girlboss" concept has been heavily critiqued for being too Western and White-centric (Nguyen, 2024; Robinson, 2022), Brooklyn seems to be suggesting that this is something they see girls "*grappling*" with, implying that the

ideologies of second-wave feminism may still be operating as a result of media influences. In addition to this, it is interesting to note that Brooklyn highlights that there is not the same association when males like traditionally masculine things, which further perpetuates the notion that to like traditionally feminine things is shameful. I wondered whether this was something that Brooklyn wanted to position themselves against and reject established gender norms as a way of minimising the shame she perceives female students experiencing in relation to their interests.

4.2.2.2. *"They're not responding to you very well, maybe they need a man to teach them next year.":* Would this be happening if we were men?

Participants indicated that a female in a school environment experiences hostility from both children and their families in a way that male staff members do not seem to. Participants also spoke about how female staff members also have certain assumptions made about them by their male counterparts. This often results in female staff members questioning whether the way they experience the school environment is due to their gender.

Quinn, Blake and Riley pointed out that the majority of the staff in the school were women. This aligns with current statistics from the Office of National Statistics about the school workforce in England, which indicates that in 2022-23, 77% of teachers and 93% of teaching assistants were female (GOV.UK, 2024). I found it interesting that the female participants did not specifically highlight that teaching was a female-dominated profession, yet the males did. I wondered whether this was indicating surprise at the situation, suggesting that because females are the more dominant group within a school in terms of the workforce, they would not necessarily expect them to face such levels of hostility based on their gender.

All participants spoke of times when male students had acted in an openly hostile or defiant way towards them or witnessed this occurring towards a female staff member. These quotes provide an insight into some of the information that the participants provided in relation to this:

> **Brooklyn:** *When a female raises their voice, I've witnessed from observing other's lessons, that they* (students) *will then sometimes laugh to their friends, and they don't … it's like* <kissing teeth> *"whatever".* (FG Lines 835-837)

> **Blake:** *What I see with some of our year four, five, sixes, is their attitude towards female members of staff, as if they don't need to follow an instruction from a female staff member.* (Lines 18-20)

> **Alex:** *I had one boy that just kept calling all the teachers that were female witches, saying like "you're a witch, you're a female", and "all the female teachers in this school are witches" and it was just incessant.* (Lines 65-68)

The word "witch" as an insult is typically gendered and evokes "discomfort and hatred" (Smith, 2016). It has connotations of undesirability, particularly when considering how children may formulate their perceptions of what a witch is through stories or films they consume from a young age. I also found this statement interesting when considering the history of witch trials, where women were persecuted out of male fear that they possessed powers that were threatening to the social order (Federici, 2018). The use of the word could be situated within Manne's (2017) definition of misogyny, which states it is enacted to ensure that women do not pose a threat to the patriarchal society. This situates the language that the student uses in Alex's statement as highly misogynistic.

Alex also expressed the following:

> **Alex:** *I'll say to mine* (students), *"would you speak to Mr XX like that"* […] *and I can see the boys thinking 'no I wouldn't', but then they'll say, "yeah", and I'm thinking "I know you wouldn't!" Or they won't say anything, because they're thinking "no, I wouldn't speak to them like that" and then I think, "So why are you talking to me like that?"* (Lines 826-829)

This quote from Alex could be interpreted in a way that suggests this is conjecture, as they do not get a direct answer from the male student in this scenario. However, information provided by Blake does provide support that Alex may be valid in her assumptions:

> **Blake:** *If they're asked to do something by* […] *a female member of staff, they will feel like they're being hard done by, and feel like it's not something they should be doing, despite the fact that it could be something as simple as "right, you need to get this work done", or "you need to go and do this job for me". It's sort of like, […] "well I shouldn't have to", a bit entitled behaviour, and a bit sort of like the privilege that they don't have to follow that instruction and like they might huff about it, or roll their eyes, or shrug their shoulders, and*

> *just not treat people with respect really. Whereas if it was me, from a male point of view, saying you need to get this done, I wouldn't get the eye roll, I wouldn't get the shrugging of the shoulders, the huffing and the puffing, they would just get on with it. They might not be happy about it, but they wouldn't erm, display it visibly for us.* (Lines 50-60)

Riley's contribution extended the differing treatment of female and male staff in school by highlighting how they had seen parents acting in a threatening manner towards female members of staff in school:

> **Riley:** *I think if anything, not with children, but I think sometimes parents. I think there's been more issues with some parents.* […] *There have been examples of quite aggressive threats made to the headteacher and other female members of staff that aren't made to the male members of staff.* (Lines 74-78)

The participants clearly paint a picture that in their schools, female staff members have a different experience from their male counterparts in terms of how they are responded to by both students and parents. As previously mentioned, I wondered whether the male participants felt they would not expect this to happen, given that females dominate the school workforce. Their accounts, however, seem to align with the female participants' experiences, who often allude to "*feelings*" that they are being treated differently as a result of their gender. This aligns with the literature discussed in Chapter Two, where female staff members are reporting that they are experiencing a high level of hostility and harassment from male students that they believe is gendered (Variyan & Wilkinson, 2022; Wescott et al., 2024; Zhao et al., 2024). This could also link to the "sticky atmosphere" framework from Diaz-Fernandez and Evans (2020). Within this framework, the researchers explain that emotions that occur within a particular environment can start to shape how others feel and behave. In schools, the hostility that female staff experience may start to feel oppressive, resulting in an unsafe environment for them.

From how participants spoke about the issue, it seems that there is a sense of "normalisation" of the difference in how female and male staff are treated by male pupils and families, which was also noted in the literature. The process of normalisation is one of the ways in which gender-based violence is facilitated in educational institutions (Holt & Birchall, 2023). I do not wish to suggest that I am

interpreting that all participants' experiences were violent in a physical sense. Violence, however, is a concept with multiple definitions and one which can contain behaviours that may not be able to neatly fit into existing definitions (Hamby, 2017), meaning that the hostility experienced by female staff could potentially be labelled as "gender-based violence".

I elicited a sense of frustration from the female participants when they described what came across as an inadequate response from the wider school staff team when they experienced hostility and defiance from male pupils:

> **Rory:** *Sometimes I think the way that we've been told how to solve the problem in school isn't great either, like we've been told that "that person needs a male teacher", like "oh well they shouldn't be in your class cos they're not responding to you very well, maybe they need a man to teach them next year", which I think isn't the solution either.* (FG Lines 879-882)
>
> **Alex:** *And not just saying to female teachers "oh, we're gonna give you some more training on classroom behaviour management" rather than addressing the real problem which is that some boys will just outwardly not respect female teachers.* (Lines 325-328)

Both of these participants seem to indicate that this is viewed as a problem held only by the individual, and there is a distinct lack of recognition that there may be other factors involved in why female staff experience this. This appears to be in line with research that suggests there is a lack of consideration of systemic oppression concerning gender in a school environment (Vanner, 2022). As highlighted within Chapter Two, male students may additionally feel a need to assert dominance over female teachers in line with the ideals of hegemonic masculinity. This then undermines the typical teacher-pupil dyad, where the teacher would be typically the one with authority (Robinson, 2000).

Alex's comment about "*more training on classroom behaviour management"* implies a simplistic solution and portrays behaviour management as a very objective concept by schools. This would imply that behaviour management is something that can be observed and easily measured and exists as a separate entity independent of context. I wondered if this reflected current school approaches to behaviour management, which are often touted as skills that can be quickly learned and applied yet only seek to respond to the externalised behaviours rather than considering what might be driving those behaviours (Condliffe, 2023).

Reflexive Box

I felt an emotional connection with some of the experiences that female participants shared within this sub-theme, given that I also have previous experience as a teacher. I do recall wondering why the "behaviour management" methods I was often told would be supportive to me as a young, female NQT were often ineffective. This frequently left me feeling as though I was not doing a good enough job. At the time, I would not have considered the role that gender played within this, and I do not recall it being spoken about as a gendered experience. I additionally recall that I was frequently told to observe other teachers who were deemed to have "strong" behaviour management approaches. When I reflect on this now, I recall these approaches being very authoritarian in nature, and usually enacted by female staff. Was this how they felt they needed to act as a means of being successful at behaviour management?

4.2.3. *"They just see it as normal":* It's not your fault that you think like this

The participants shared their views about how children are influenced by many different factors around them, such as their peers, families and wider society. As a result of these influencing factors, the participants expressed a sense of understanding concerning how children may come to have misogynistic attitudes and beliefs. This links strongly to Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory, which posits that a child's development and subsequent behaviours are typically a result of not only their environments but also how these environments interact with each other. Bronfenbrenner (1979) refers to these environments as different systems around a child. The closest system to a child is called the microsystem and includes people and institutions that a child will interact with most closely. The microsystem will include a child's family, school, or other groups or communities with which they may be closely involved (such as recreational clubs). The mesosystem focuses on the interaction between those in a child's microsystem (for example, the relationship between a child's school and their family). The exosystem is concerned with the broader community of the child (such as extended family, the media and local government), and the macrosystem incorporates attitudes and ideologies of the culture around the child. I decided that the information from the participants could be situated within this framework to understand how children can be significantly influenced by the world around them.

Riley shared the following quote when considering the reasons why children may display behaviours or attitudes that could be interpreted as misogynistic:

> **Riley:** *At a younger age, they'd be mirroring behaviours that they'd seen before, copying* (them), *or they wouldn't understand what they're actually doing.* (Lines 18-20)

Riley positions children here as being highly influenced by those that they see. A link can be made to social learning theory, which states that people learn by observing and imitating others' behaviour (Bandura & Walter, 1977). Given that Riley also works in a primary school, his thoughts here may link further to the research about social learning theory, in particular, the work of Bandura, Ross and Ross (1961) where they found that children aged 3 – 6 were more likely to demonstrate aggressive behaviour towards a doll if they had previously witnessed this.

Quinn offered another perspective that I interpreted to link to the notion of copying certain behaviours or actions.

> **Quinn:** *it's giving them the understanding, but also the confidence to stand up to their peers. And that's…* <shrugs> *[…] they're desperate to fit in.* (Lines 435-440)

Here, Quinn is suggesting that children who are in their adolescent stage of development may not challenge misogynistic attitudes because their motivation to *"fit in"* with their peers is stronger. Quinn seems to portray that even if children had a depth of understanding about why misogynistic beliefs and attitudes are problematic, this still might not be enough for them to challenge their peers. Children may utilise misogynistic language as a means of regulating their peers' compliance with stereotypical gender expectations (Romeo et al., 2017), suggesting that conforming to gender norms is a significant thing for adolescents. Doing things that stray from these imposed expectations may place a young person in a risky and exposing position, particularly as Quinn highlights that adolescents are "*desperate to fit in*". I also wondered whether Quinn's thoughts could be linked to a strong desire for belonging, which is particularly important for children and young people in a school environment (Allen et al., 2022).

The participants also spoke about the influence of a child's family on them. As stated, a child's family would typically be within their microsystem, which is the

closest level to a child. Participants seemed to indicate that children may be exposed to misogynistic attitudes at home, which would result in them adopting these. An example was given by Alex:

> **Alex:** *A lot of these kids will experience stuff in their households that they then think is normal and we're not doing enough.* (FG Lines 29-31)

Whilst Alex uses the word *"stuff",* given the wider context of the discussion, I have interpreted this word to be referring to misogynistic comments, incidents or attitudes within the household.

When speaking about a child's family, many of the participants highlighted the role of the father specifically, with examples provided below:

> **Brooklyn:** *Yeah, we've had times when comments have been said, and it's like what we were saying earlier, "that comes from their dad".* (FG Lines 952-953)

> **Quinn:** *They'll* (students*) hear "your dads left home, your dads this, your dads tha'" and "you behave just like your dad".* (FG Lines 180-181)

> **Alex:** *I think what they're saying as well, is that a lot of their disrespect for women, the mams are saying to me "they get that from their dad you know, he cheated on me, he did this* […]*" and then, I dunno, maybe this is then reflected in the boys' behaviour towards women?* (FG Lines 183-186)

As Alex highlights in the above quote, she suggests that boys who have witnessed the mistreatment of their mother at the hands of their father may be more inclined to display problematic behaviours towards women. Whilst this links to the social learning theories as discussed earlier (Bandura, Ross & Ross, 1961; Bandura & Walter, 1977) in terms of imitating certain behaviours, I also wondered whether participants were also referring to narratives around the negative impacts of absent fathers on males (East et al., 2006; Terrance et al., 2022). Other research, however, has found that literature in relation to absent fathers tends to be very deficit-focused, which perpetuates a stereotypical view of a physically and emotionally unavailable father (Mitchell & Lashewicz, 2016). It would seem that the participants' experiences align with the more negative outlook.

Social media was spoken about as having a strong influence on children, as demonstrated in the following quotes:

> **Blake:** *A particular group of boys have started either watching certain things on YouTube or playing particular games online, and have a different attitude towards their teachers in the last few years than they would have done previously.* (Lines 131-133)

> **Brooklyn:** *I also think with like the TikTok generation,* […] *the way algorithms work is that you see one video and if you watch that video through then it presents more videos like that, so I think the problem is that then they have these views instilled into them in an indoctrinating way because actually, they watched that one Andrew Tate video and then here's another 5 or 6 Andrew Tate videos and there's more and more and more.* (FG Lines 764-769)

To refer back to the framework of Bronfenbrenner (1979), given that this was created at a time when technology did not have as significant an impact on society as it does today, research has suggested that technological and virtual worlds need also to be considered as part of a child's microsystem (Navarro & Tudge, 2023).

Many of the participants referred to TikTok as being something that particularly influences children, which correlates with research into how misogynistic information is being promoted to children (Solea & Sugiura, 2023). Brooklyn specifically highlighted the role of algorithms, which is how platforms tailor specific content to their users, often based on factors like age and gender (Fosch-Villaronga et al., 2021). If accessing TikTok, a user can search for a topic or creator or 'swipe' through videos on the 'For You' page, where a user is automatically taken when they open the platform. The videos shown are often based on presumptions about the user. However, as users interact with the content they see (such as 'liking' the video, subscribing to the creator, or leaving a comment), they will be shown similar content (Klug et al., 2021). This then raises the question of whether children are intentionally looking for further misogynistic content, as highlighted by Alex:

> **Alex:** *The problem is that algorithm isn't it, boys watch one video, they'll like it, and then they'll end up watching others like it so much*, (that) *it ends up brainwashing them into believing that women are inferior to them.* […] *That's where I try and give them the benefit of the doubt, because I think, "I know what's happened to you", or I can sense what's happened.* (Lines 184-188)

In this quote by Alex and in the earlier quote from Brooklyn, they used the words "*brainwashing"* and "*indoctrinated*". These words have powerful connotations, suggesting that a child may accept what they hear without criticism or question. This idea was further expanded upon by Brooklyn:

> **Brooklyn:** *Ultimately the child's brain isn't developed enough to know the consequences of what they do and say, or have that view of what they're seeing and going, "Is that true?", as half of them would say, "well, I saw that on TikTok, so yeah it's true."* (FG Lines 1085-1087)

Here, Brooklyn seems to be saying that children may lack critical thinking skills, which include recognising assumptions, taking context into account, considering alternatives, and developing reflective scepticism (Leicester, 2010). She suggests that this is due to the developmental stage children are at, which makes them more susceptible to potentially adopting more problematic views. This additionally aligns with research that suggests that so-called manosphere influencers such as Andrew Tate position themselves so that they are perceived as deliberately outlandish. This then has an affective impact on impressionable young males who see him as an "authentic" voice in terms of gender discussion (Haslop et al., 2024).

4.2.4. *"The lads have this fear… like we're here as well!":* Boys are scared they will be forgotten

Some of the participants stated that they experienced a high level of 'backlash' in school from male students when they explicitly highlighted feminism, misogyny or the patriarchy in both a discrete context and as part of the curriculum. An example of this can be seen in an exchange between Alex and Rory:

> **Alex:** *I've had boys say to me… they wanted to put a complaint in didn't they… Some boys in my* […] *class saying that I talk about women too much!*
>
> **Rory**: *Yeah, same.*
>
> **Alex:** *When we were studying* The Crucible, *which is a text about the Salem witch trials.*
>
> **Rory:** (They say) "*you're banging on about women".* (FG Lines 82-90)

In the current sociocultural climate, the experiences described here by Alex and Rory reflect those of other females who work in schools, as shared in anecdotal (UK Feminista, 2024) and academic research (Ging et al., 2024; Zhao et al., 2024).

Alex referred to male students as using a tactic called “whataboutery” in response to her:

> **Alex:** *There’s a lot of ‘whataboutery’ isn’t there, like I did the International Women's Day competition, and it was, “What about International Men's Day?”, I was like, “It’s in November… I’ll do a competition then!”* <laughs> (FG Lines 331-333)

Whataboutery is a tactic that is typically utilised as a way of criticising or diverting attention away from an issue that is being spoken about (O’Connell, 2021). This is demonstrated in the quote from Alex, who explains that the response from male students to her promoting International Women’s Day is to ask when International Men’s Day is. It can be considered a defence mechanism (O’Connell, 2021), which is rooted within psychoanalytic theory and utilised as a way of protecting one's ego, in line with the work of Freud (2018). This strongly suggests that male pupils who are responding to Alex in this way may feel as though they have something that they need to protect, and engaging in discussions about patriarchy and feminism may be a threat to this.

Participants seemed to conceptualise the responses from male students in a way that suggested that male students may feel as though they would be losing something if they were to engage in the conversations that they were being invited to about feminism and the patriarchy:

> **Robin***: I wonder if they worry about, […] the males then worry about erasing what they have already, like it kind of being taken over almost, like defensive?*
>
> **Rory***: Y’know, I have this argument all about the time about the idea of equality and like when we’re teaching something like feminism, or the suffragettes, or something like that, and the idea that like, I think the boys get really, as you say, defensive about it, but I say well equality just means equal for everyone, it doesn’t mean we want to…*
>
> **Alex***: …take it from you…*

Rory: *Yeah yeah, it's patriarchal.*

Alex: *It doesn't mean you're going to get less, we just want equal rights. I think that's how they see it, that we're taking from them in order to get something more for ourselves which to be fair, in reality, yeah. we are! Because traditionally, you've been in the powerful positions, so therefore you are going to have to relinquish some control.*

Brooklyn: *You're still in the majority.*

Alex: *so sorry […] I maybe I wouldn't say this to them, but ultimately, yeah you are going to have to relinquish some control and let women… achieve alongside you rather than…*

Robin: *It's the only way you're going to match isn't it, like Rory said, you're never going to get equal if you don't give up some of that, but it's almost like that fear of losing that masculinity that they don't like, or…*

Rory: *…or as if we're trying to make them… more… feminine?*

Brooklyn: *Yeah, I wonder if they feel emasculated in some way?* (FG Lines 704-734)

This discussion links strongly to the literature discussed in Chapter Two concerning the so-called manosphere (e.g., Bates, 2020; Ging, 2019; Ribeiro et al., 2021). The dominant discourse within these groups is that men are the oppressed gender as a result of feminist agendas. Research into why males may become embroiled within the ideologies of the so-called manosphere can link to insecurity and loneliness (e.g., Cottee, 2020; Lilly, 2016), borne out of feeling victimised as a result of a "feminised society". The so-called manosphere then seeks to exploit these feelings for capitalist gains (Bujalka et al., 2022), suggesting that the same communities that males may identify with for a sense of solidarity become a means of only seeking to embed their insecurities further. When considering the discussion from the participants as shared above, it would seem that the participants' views about why male students do not want to engage in discussions about the patriarchy and feminism are in line with the research mentioned earlier.

In the following quote, Alex highlighted the importance of having a sense of belonging:

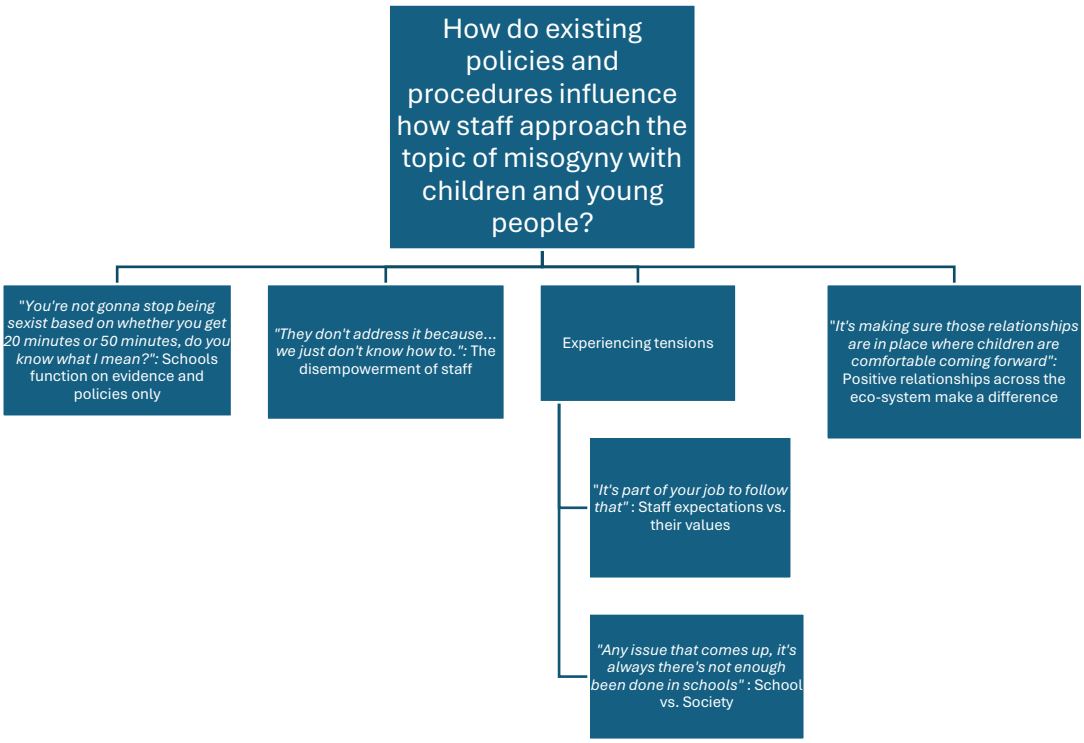
> **Alex:** *They want a word for them, and I get that, I totally understand that, you want to feel like you're part of a community, and they don't feel like the feminist community is for them, but I don't know how else to sell it to them.* (Lines 124-126)

Whilst research into the manosphere also illuminates that the appeal to males is because it promises an offer of community and solidarity (Ballerga & Zurbriggen, 2022; Lilly, 2016), this also led me to consider whether male students feel as though they will no longer belong to the community they currently perceive themselves to be part of if they engage in conversations about feminism. This could then be leading boys to feel as though they will be forgotten if they subscribe to the ideologies of the feminist community, which, as Alex explains, "*they don't feel like is for them".* Feeling as though you belong somewhere is a powerful and fundamental human need (Baumeister & Leary, 1995) and something the manosphere proposes to offer disillusioned males.

In addition to Alex speaking about male pupils not wanting to identify with the feminist community, I wondered about the community with which the male pupils presently identify. Whilst not expanded upon by Alex, I wondered whether she was implying that male pupils do not currently need to identify with a community as we already exist in a highly patriarchal society which males benefit from naturally. This is evident in higher salaries for the same role as a female to being afforded a feeling of inherent physical safety (Schwiter et al., 2021). If a patriarchal society was dismantled, where would it leave those who benefit from it? I considered whether male pupils might recognise this and, as a result, feel as though they would be "forgotten" if they were to engage in these discussions.

4.3. Research Question Two: *How do existing policies and procedures influence how staff approach the topic of misogyny with children and young people?*

Similar to the previous research question, I also created four themes for the second question, where one theme had two sub-themes. The thematic diagram can be found below.



4.3.1. *"You're not gonna stop being sexist based on whether you get 20 minutes or 50 minutes, do you know what I mean?"*: Schools function on evidence and policies only

When participants spoke about how they responded to misogynistic incidents in school, they shared that this would be dealt with through their school behaviour policy. Participants explained that this would typically involve imposing consequences and sanctions onto a student (such as informing parents or spending their break or lunchtime with a member of staff in detention) when they have done something that contravenes behavioural expectations, as demonstrated by Quinn and Blake:

> **Quinn:** *Somebody has* […] *done something wrong,* […] *what do we do, we give them a reflection, is it gonna be* […] *30 minute*(s)? *Is it gonna be an hour? It's just kinda… you're following procedure, you're following the known protocol in the school, for the behaviour system in the school.* (Lines 351-354)

> **Blake:** *So within our behaviour policy there's sort of a clear step system for consequences, however, something like that would move straight to either myself or another senior leader and it would be dealt with like that. It will be discussed with the child and then parents will be informed straight away. So anything like that would supersede our behaviour system so it wouldn't be a stepped or staged approach. It would supersede that going straight to either myself or another senior leader and they would take it on, whereas something lower level a teacher may deal with it and go through the stage process,*

> *however that would go straight past that and parents would be involved for both sides as well.* (Lines 207-213)

A school and their governing bodies are currently mandated to create a range of statutory policies, including behaviour policies (DfE, 2024). Many of these policies are required to include statutory guidance issued by the DfE, meaning that a school behaviour policy will be expected to include appropriate information from "Keeping children safe in education" (DfE, 2023) and "Behaviour and discipline in schools: guidance for governing bodies" (DfE, 2015). The information shared by participants suggests that schools are also incorporating the Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education guidance (DfE, 2019) within their behaviour policy, which requires schools to ensure that they are "alive" to issues such as misogyny and ensure that any occurrences are "identified and tackled" (DfE, 2019, p. 14). Responding to misogynistic incidents through a school behaviour policy and issuing sanctions to children is how the schools that the participants work in are "tackling" the issue.

Participants were knowledgeable about the behavioural policies in their schools, indicating that this is an engrained practice. Riley expressed that they believed the "*procedures in place are quite strong*", which would make it easy to respond to misogynistic incidents. There were, however, some participants who expressed concerns about whether utilising their standard behaviour policy was an appropriate response to misogynistic incidents, such as Alex:

> **Alex**: *It's really hard because* […] *what you said was sexist, but do I give you a 20 minute detention or an hours detention, what's gonna make the difference, really?! You're not gonna stop being sexist based on whether you get 20 minutes or* […] *an hour, do you know what I mean?* (Lines 250-253)

The language that Alex uses (such as detention) correlates with the behaviour management policies adopted in many schools, which are often 'punitive' (e.g., Jones et al., 2023; Maguire et al., 2010). These policies often draw upon behaviourist principles, such as Skinner's (1957) theories about operant conditioning, which work on the assumption that a negative consequence given to a student (such as receiving detention) will deter them from repeating the behaviour that leads to them receiving it. Similarly, if a pupil exhibits a desired behaviour, they are likely to receive a reward (such as a merit or sticker, dependent on the

developmental stage) as a means of encouraging further desired behaviours (Parker et al., 2016). This approach is currently endorsed in government legislation and guidance, but concerns have been highlighted that guidance reflects the viewpoints of specifically appointed advisors, not academic research (Condliffe, 2023). The way Alex says, "*it's really hard*," at the start of the quote suggests that she believes issuing a sanction would not make a difference in a scenario where a student has shared some problematic views. This would then render current methods in which staff have to respond to misogynistic incidents ineffective. This could align with literature by Lloyd and Walker (2023) on how schools respond to harmful sexual behaviours exhibited by students. In their research, they found that schools were successful at creating policies that incorporate all of the relevant statutory guidance as a means of responding to any incidents, but the policies seemed to have limited impact in terms of preventing incidents from occurring. When considering that behaviour policies are often designed to promote a productive and "orderly" classroom (Armstrong, 2018), Alex's recognition that the policy in place in her school would not do anything to prevent the student from displaying a hostile attitude toward females is in line with the aforementioned research. Payne (2015) additionally highlights that alternative methods need to be utilised when trying to impact social behaviour to those designed to affect student approaches to their academic learning.

Participants who work in the secondary phase also shared the following in relation to what happens in the case of children who display misogynistic behaviours:

> **Quinn:** *It's not* […] *explained to them* […] *what you're getting at by saying somebody is that* (a misogynistic insult), *or calling somebody that* […] *it could be used as a bit of a springboard to go onto saying* […] *you don't do that because… this, this, this and this…* (instead) *it's like "that's a horrible thing to say, so just don't do it, there's a reflection for you",* […] *that's the punishment for saying it. Where you think, hang on, you're right they should be punished, but also, let's go into what that meaning is and* […] *how it can be so offensive and why it can be so offensive.* (Lines 332-341)

> **Alex:** *There was talk of doing an intervention with some boys in Y9, but I don't …. I don't think that's even happened? I don't know. We got asked to put some names forward, which we did, and I don't think it even happened. Erm, but again, that was them being sat down by men, spoken to by men, and being told "you must respect female staff."* (Lines 49-52)

Whilst Quinn and Alex speak about action being taken, such as including children in interventions or giving them "*reflections*", their descriptions elicit a sense of control in the way that they refer to children as being told that they should or should not do certain actions. This could link to the work of Armstrong (2018), who refers to behaviour policies in schools as a "manage-and-discipline" model with a number of core assumptions around the idea of student behaviour being something that can be manipulated and controlled in a school environment. Quinn also shared the following about an incident that had occurred where a male student had shared an explicit photograph of themselves with a female peer:

> **Quinn:** *They brought in the police and the police just gave them a talk saying […] if you share an image of yourself, and they share it with somebody else, in the eyes of the law, that's classed as distributing child pornography cos you're underage… and then what can happen with that, social services can come in, all your devices will be taken that could be used for sharing things, big investigations, and it's more like a scare tactic.* (Lines 302-306)

Although not concerning schools and education, research has shown that scare tactics can be ineffective in encouraging the alteration of behaviours (Brookes & Harvey, 2015; Esrick et al., 2019). In a school environment, utilising tactics designed to "scare" students may be similarly ineffective. They could be interpreted as another means to try and control behavioural outcomes, as described by Quinn. These approaches could be classed as authoritarian in nature, for example, using punitive measures to control students' behaviour (Nickerson & Spears, 2007). There is a body of research that highlights the link between misogyny and authoritarian approaches (e.g., Kaul, 2021; Kaul & Buchanan, 2023; Sabharwal, 2023), which could suggest that the methods being utilised in school behavioural policies that are punitive in nature are ineffective as they are being applied to prevent the very thing that they are associated with – misogyny.

The participants who worked in a secondary school indicated that they felt that having the opportunity to discuss incidents with children would be helpful as they could explore what had driven the behaviour in the first place. They acknowledged that this was often difficult, which is illustrated in the following quote from Alex:

> **Alex**: *School is like a treadmill, and you're just constantly moving and moving and moving, and you're constantly going, and there's sometimes not the*

> *opportunity to get off that treadmill and just pause and go "let's address this", because you've got so many other priorities and I totally get that.* (Lines 341-344)

Alex's likening of school to being "*like a treadmill"* and subsequent description of it being difficult to "*get off"* evokes the idea that the school environment is relentless in terms of the demands that are made of staff. I wondered whether Alex felt a sense of resignation with the words, "*I totally get that*", as if to suggest that within the current context, it could continue to be challenging to have the time and space to have meaningful conversations with students.

Reflexive Box

I found myself particularly intrigued by this theme. As previously stated, I was given lots of hints and tips to develop better behaviour management skills as an NQT, yet found myself feeling disillusioned when they did not work. I found that I did come to rely heavily on knowing the procedures though, and I perhaps began to accept that it was "good enough". I particularly resonated with Alex's comment about school being "like a treadmill" – I often wanted to explore issues with children, but I simply did not have the time because of the demands of my role.

4.3.2. *"They don't address it because… we just don't know how to."*: The disempowerment of staff

When it comes to talking to children about the issue of misogyny in school, many participants expressed concerns which appeared to be borne out of feeling as though they lacked the skills to be able to do so in an appropriate way:

> **Alex**: *Like what I think is quite bad is that we haven't had anywhere near enough training on how to deal with misogyny.* (FG Lines 268-269)
>
> **Charlie:** *I don't think anybody knows how to deal with this in schools.* (FG Line 280)
>
> **Quinn:** *And I think they don't address it because …. We just don't know how to.* (Lines 374-375)

This correlates with existing literature in relation to staff feeling as though they do not have adequate training to be able to talk to children about misogyny (Over et al.,

2023). Rory demonstrated a sense of anxiety over the perceived implications of speaking to students about the topic:

> **Rory:** *If you do it in the wrong way, you end up instilling those views into them, and they'll say, "Why are you challenging me on this?"* (FG Lines 291-292)

Rory's words echoed research by Haslop et al. (2024) and Stahl et al. (2023), who highlight that "surveillance" of male students may be ineffective (Stahl et al., 2023) and that openly challenging male students' admiration of misogynistic public figures may only reinforce their appeal (Haslop et al., 2024). Quinn additionally described an incident where a female student had explained that males sending explicit images of their genitalia without consent was "*what lads do now*". Quinn used the word "*powerless*" to describe how this made him feel, and I wondered whether other participants were also experiencing similar feelings in terms of being able to approach misogyny in schools.

Participants indicated that one of the primary vehicles that would be used to speak to students in school about misogyny was through the PSHE curriculum, as exemplified in this quote:

> **Alex:** *The idea is that the PSHE curriculum is supposed to be the way that we inform them about these issues* (misogyny) *and things like that.* (Lines 210-211)

As stated in Chapter Two, schools have had a statutory duty to provide PSHE since September 2020 (DfE, 2021). Governmental guidance currently instructs schools to design their own PSHE curriculum in a manner that "reflects the needs of their pupils" (DfE, 2021) and signposts to the PSHE Association, which is a registered charity in receipt of a government grant to ensure that schools are adequately supported to develop a robust curriculum.

In terms of teaching students about the issue of misogyny, the PSHE Association released specific guidance about how schools can approach this as part of the PSHE curriculum (PSHE Association, 2023). The guidance specifically mentions that the content should be delivered by "*appropriately trained* [and] *prepared teachers*".

With this comment in mind, I wish to highlight this exchange between Alex, Rory and Brooklyn:

> **Alex:** *On my PGCE* (Postgraduate Certificate of Education), *I got absolutely nothing on it* (teaching PSHE).
>
> **Rory:** *I don't think it's even mentioned?*
>
> **Brooklyn**: *You get trained how to deal with your misconceptions in your own subject, or how to teach your own subject, but how do you… when do you get taught to deal with the misconceptions in PSHE lessons that you'll be expected to deliver as a tutor, or the social issues that you'll be expected to deliver as a tutor? You don't… you just kinda get thrown into it.* (FG Lines 1187-1194)

Alex, Rory and Brooklyn highlight how they have completed the appropriate training to be a teacher, but these quotes suggest that the training primarily focussed on equipping them with the skills to teach an academic subject only. When considering the current teacher training model in England, there is a heavy emphasis on trainee teachers being prepared to teach in a particular phase and/or subject (DfE, 2024). The Teachers' Standards similarly appear to place an emphasis on teaching in an academic sense, with examples of subheadings being "*Promote good progress and outcomes by pupils*" and "*Demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge*" (DfE, 2021). I wondered whether Alex and Brooklyn were demonstrating an additional sense of disempowerment regarding how they conceptualise their role as a teacher. They elicit a sense of competence in terms of teaching in a particular subject area, but I have interpreted that the same level of competence may not be experienced when it comes to being able to deliver the PSHE curriculum. In the school where Alex works, she highlighted how several staff members may experience this:

> **Alex:** *You need teachers teaching it* (but) *one might feel completely comfortable and think "no bother whatsoever", and then somebody else* […] *might be like "I have no idea how to do this" and they don't want to teach it.* (FG Lines 438-441)

To refer back to the earlier quote provided by the PSHE guidance (PSHE Association, 2023) about needing "*appropriately trained [and] prepared teachers*" to deliver content about misogyny, I have interpreted that a number of the participants,

particularly those working in the secondary phase, have concerns about how “trained and prepared” staff may be. It is important to highlight that I have also interpreted that the difficulty that staff have in defining misogyny, as shared in an earlier theme, will most likely be additionally contributing to their feeling of disempowerment.

Throughout the interviews and focus group, some participants referred to the differing awareness of Andrew Tate by staff, an individual who was described in Chapter One:

> **Charlie:** *I can guarantee that some staff don’t know who Andrew Tate is so it’s educating them.* (FG Lines 293-295)
>
> **Alex**: *I was having an issue with misogyny in the classroom with sexist boys, and I remember a couple of boys brought up Andrew Tate and I put it on CPOMs straight away, and it was the first time* (member of staff in SLT)*…* (they) *didn’t know who Andrew Tate was and I would say that that was probably last… September, October time? And I remember* (them) *coming into my room and going “who’s this Andrew Tate guy?” and I was like… what?? And I totally get why* (they) *wouldn’t know who he was… because why would* (they)*? Like* (they’re) *not on TikTok, but to me, it’s like if you’re* (SLT) *you should know who that is.* (Lines 345-352)
>
> **Riley:** *I can't remember his name* (Andrew Tate) *because I don't have any social media or anything myself. So I'm kind of out of the loop. So even if I did hear the children going on about it, I would probably find it hard to spot what they’re saying.* (Lines 102-105)

Whilst this is not to suggest that Andrew Tate is the embodiment and definition of misogyny, he has played a significant role in raising awareness of how young people may be adopting misogynistic attitudes as demonstrated in the media and academic literature. The words of these participants suggest that individuals are likely to have varying levels of knowledge, interest or awareness of how misogyny is impacting children and young people and raises a question about the importance of staff who work in schools showing a sense of curiosity about children’s sociocultural worlds. This is clearly for different and valid reasons, such as Riley highlighting that they do not use social media. This differing level of awareness may impact those staff members who perceive this issue to be one of significance and result in them feeling disempowered in terms of the overall influence they can have as a school. I wondered whether this also contributed to a sense of normalisation, as discussed

earlier, as if staff are unaware of the content that children are engaging with, they would be unable to address it.

In the quote shared by Alex above about somebody in the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) being unaware of who Andrew Tate was, she appears to be somewhat troubled by this fact, despite saying that she "*totally gets*" why they might not be aware of him. Whilst this could suggest that Alex potentially recognises that other people may not have the same level of awareness as she does, Alex may also be hinting at how the actions of SLT can have a significant impact on the overall school culture and climate, which is in line with existing research (Morris et al., 2020). I wondered whether there was an implication that if a staff member does not hold a position of significant responsibility in a school, how much influence can they have on the response to misogyny? This could link to the research of Ball et al. (2012), who identified that staff were often placed into different roles regarding policy enactment in a secondary school. Teachers with no additional responsibility were assigned the role of the "receiver" as they predominantly follow the direction and guidance of those in more dominant positions (such as middle leaders or SLT).

4.3.3. Experiencing Tensions

This theme reflected certain tensions that participants experience or notice in relation to their role. These tensions then appear to have an impact on how they would typically respond to and approach the topic of misogyny. Within this theme, I have created two sub-themes. The first sub-theme is, *"It's part of your job to follow that":* Staff expectations vs. their values." This sub-theme is about the tension that staff members may feel between the expectations of their job role and their values. The second sub-theme is, "*Any issue that comes up, it's always 'there's not enough that's been done in schools":* School vs. society." This sub-theme presents the tension felt in schools as a whole as they have expectations placed on them from wider society and families.

4.3.3.1. *"It's part of your job to follow that":* Staff expectations vs. their values

Participants spoke of how they have experienced tension in relation to the expectations placed onto them as a member of staff in a school and how this can

conflict with their personal beliefs and values. One such example was when the participants in the focus group were speaking about the monitoring of skirt lengths in schools:

> **Alex:** *It would make me uncomfortable if I was asked to police the skirt length for girls. That would really make me uncomfortable.*
>
> **Quinn:** *Makes me incredibly uncomfortable… I've seen students where the skirt has been so low, where they wrap their skirts up so many times that you can see the label, the white label at the back, and I'm terrified to say something… I'll say to staff I can trust could you say something as I feel they'd say to me "what you looking at* […]*?" but actually no, I'm not looking, but as a male, I'm trying to follow that school policy, but it's at the back of my mind they'll say "why are you looking? How have you noticed that?"* (FG Lines 195-203)

School uniforms have been a topic of focus in relation to a patriarchal society and how they can enforce gender norms (Cosslett, 2020; Donovan et al., 2023). Research has also explored how female school uniforms have come to be sexualised (e.g., de Lange, 2012). Quinn's additional detail potentially highlights that these may be engrained into society, given that he expresses a severe sense of discomfort about potentially having to say something, but by also predicting how female students may respond to this. Quinn's way of mitigating this situation is to ask another staff member he trusts to approach the student instead. This appears to be how he balances the expectations placed on him as a staff member enacting the policy and how he feels about the situation.

Alex frequently positioned herself as somebody who recognised misogynistic attitudes and challenged them as she saw them occur within the classroom. Whilst the challenges associated with this are largely explored with a previous theme, she described the following incident:

> **Alex:** *When those boys were saying to me, you know, we're talking about women too much* <sigh> *somebody* (a senior staff member) *said to me* […] *"could you just tone it down a bit?" and I was like … it* ***really*** *got my back up.* (Lines 269-272)

Alex delivered this statement with a sense of anger and frustration. To contextualise this statement further, Alex does go on to share that she believes it is because "*misogyny is so normalised"* and implies that this means that others do not see it as an issue. I feel as though this information shared by Alex speaks to discourses

related to oppression and how a patriarchal society typically seeks to prevent women from speaking out against patriarchal norms (Manne, 2017). I also wondered how much this experience, as described by Alex, was linked to the risks of revealing your values when they may clash with an organisation's established culture (e.g., Watton et al., 2019).

When participants spoke about the tension between the expectations placed upon them as a staff member and their values, they seemed to suggest that this emotionally impacted them. As well as the quote above where Alex explains that the situation "*really got my back up*", Alex also went on to share the following about how she feels when she challenges misogynistic attitudes and is met by hostile behaviours from male students, such as eye-rolling or ridicule:

> **Alex:** *It feels so personal. Erm, at the beginning, I found it really, really hard.* (Lines 447-448)

I found Alex's use of the word "personal" interesting, given that it implies a direct attack on your beliefs and interests, potentially as something that could be separate from the imposed expectations of working in a school. Teaching involves a high level of emotional labour (Hargreaves, 1998), and there is often an expectation that teachers should suppress what they feel in the confines of the classroom (Schutz & Lee, 2014). I found this interesting when considering the following statement made by Blake when discussing potential reasons that staff in school may not always challenge misogynistic attitudes:

> **Blake:** *But then part of it could be the backlash they could face from* […] *the boys and especially with the particular group I'm thinking of.* (Lines 96-98)

While Blake's use of the word "backlash" could suggest a hostile response, similar to the one described by Alex, I also wondered whether he was referring to the emotional impact on staff, too. This could imply that staff may be aware of what the impact on them would be if they were to challenge misogynistic attitudes, and this ultimately makes them feel reluctant to do so.

Reflexive Box

I was once again reminded as my time as a teacher within this sub-theme, for a number of reasons. In the discussion about uniform, it made me think about how I used to enact the upholding of uniform policies, even though I did not find myself agreeing with them. It also made me recall how a school I worked in insisted that all members of staff wore blazers at all times and how I was once "pulled up" by the headteacher because I had left my classroom without my blazer. This incident makes me reflect on what the purpose of wearing this was. A blazer in a workplace inherently feels like a nod to "masculinity" in my opinion and also feels linked to an authoritative, corporate work environment. I wondered whether this was what was trying to be portrayed through all staff being required to wear a blazer?

The emotional impact of teaching also resonated with me. In my experience, it often felt as though you were expected to completely separate yourself from your role as a teacher, meaning that you should not show emotion as this would somehow make you an ineffective teacher. I also recall being told to "not take things personally" if I had experienced a difficult scenario in my classroom.

4.3.3.2. "*Any issue that comes up, it's always 'there's not enough that's been done in schools":* School vs. society

Another tension evoked from the information the participants shared was in relation to the expectations placed on schools by wider society. Participants expressed the notion that they feel as though schools are somewhat responsible for responding to all sociocultural issues. This is particularly pertinent against a backdrop of governmental expectations and parental opinions. This can lead to staff experiencing some feelings of frustration, as exemplified in the following quotes:

> **Alex**: *It says RSE* (Relationships and Sex Education) *must engage with boys to tackle sexist behaviour in schools* <audible sigh> *we do?! I think the government think we're doing nothing.* (FG Lines 1-2)
>
> **Quinn:** *It's like, we've put this onto you now, you deal with it.* (FG Line 15)
>
> **Riley:** *Any issue that comes up in society, it's always, "there's not enough that's been done in schools."* (Lines 51-52)

I sensed that participants felt as though the guidance and legislation provided by the Government were often left open to too much interpretation, and this often made it

challenging for staff to know which sociocultural issues to prioritise through the teaching of PSHE. This is exemplified in the following quote from Brooklyn:

> **Brooklyn:** *It's trying to work out what the Government priorities are, 'cos their PSHE curriculum is so vast, and there is so much stuff that needs to go into that curriculum,* […] *like across the 5 years with kids, it feels like it's quite one-off lessons here and there, but there's so much to cover.* (FG Lines 416-419)

Here, Brooklyn seems to be acknowledging the influence that the Government have over what happens in schools, suggesting that if something is prioritised, it will be something that will become a key focus. Alex also shared the following, which links explicitly to the response to misogyny within schools:

> **Alex:** *The Government are constantly saying, well we'll teach this in education, you know, Keir Starmer was saying he would tackle misogyny by teaching more about it in school, but then you have to acknowledge at first that it's a massive problem, it's not even a hate crime yet, which you know,* […] *somebody said, if we made this a hate crime, the police would have too much work to do. Or something along those lines, and it's like… yeah, because it's a massive issue!* (Lines 427-433)

This quote suggests that there is a disconnect between the governmental rhetoric and the action. When considering the current priorities for school (DfE, 2022), participants do appear to be validated in terms of their concerns, given that the main areas within the legislation are mainly focused on progress and achievement and improving student behaviour and attendance.

Participants also shared how they experience criticism and complaints from parents. Brooklyn provided one example:

> **Brooklyn:** *So this is like the 3rd time I've taught this to the full Year 8, the reproduction unit, the first time I taught it, which was about 4 years ago now, it was like "why do I need to know about this, shouldn't this lesson just be for girls?",* […] *but some of them were like, "No, I don't need to know this", and I think in my first year of teaching, I had parents ringing up to ask, "Why are you teaching them about this?"* (FG Lines 348-354)

Brooklyn was describing teaching children about the menstrual cycle, which, as discussed within the theme about the female experience, is often viewed with disgust (McHugh, 2020). This quote exemplifies some of the differing views that parents may have, which led me to think that this was something that the participants might

experience some difficulties with, particularly when the values of staff do not appear to be aligned with those that parents have. This can additionally lead to staff feeling a sense of worry when having to communicate with parents, as further demonstrated by Brooklyn:

> **Brooklyn:** *We do a lot of phone calls home to parents, and well, you* (referring to Robin) *even made comments on how some of the parents will speak to us,* […]*, I mean there's a handful* (of students) *I can think of that we dread ringing the parents of, 'cos of the way that they speak down to you...* (FG Lines 794-797)

The information provided by participants also led me to consider whether they were alluding to a perceived lack of trust from parents, in line with research that suggests that parents are more likely to trust a school if their values align (Adams et al., 2009). Rory suggested that socioeconomic factors could also influence this:

> **Rory:** *I think especially with the sort of area we're in, and not to be stereotypical, but parents don't always necessarily agree with school, or put a lot of value on school I don't think,* (so) *that's sort of passed down and I think why would they listen to anything we have to say or believe us?* (FG Lines 789-792)

The latter part of this quote paints a picture of conflict, where schools must try to overcome long-held discourses about how families perceive education. If the values held by staff and schools as a whole are vastly different from the families of the students who attend those schools, I wondered about how much impact staff feel that they can make when approaching topics such as misogyny with students.

4.3.4. *"It's making sure those relationships are in place where children are comfortable coming forward":* Positive relationships across the ecosystem make a difference

When discussing school and staff responses to challenging misogynistic attitudes or incidents, all participants highlighted the role that relationships with others can play, insinuating that positive and secure relationships built on trust were something that would make a difference. As previously discussed, this can link to the theories of Bronfenbrenner (1979), which include considering who is at the different levels of a child's "ecosystem" and how they can have an influence on their overall

development. Participants identified that having positive relationships at the different levels of the ecosystem is something that could make a difference in terms of a response to misogyny in school. This would include not only the relationships with the students themselves but also the families of students and relationships with other staff members in the school. When discussing positive relationships throughout this theme, this refers to aspects of the relationships such as trust, respect and sincerity (De Cordova, 2019).

An example of highlighting how important relationships with students are was provided in the following quotation from Blake:

> **Blake:** [It's] *making sure those relationships are in place where children are comfortable coming forward, and letting them* [adults] *know either when things are happening or when something's bothering* [them] *or when something's not right.* (Lines 192-194)

Here, Blake shared his opinion that if students have good relationships with adults then this can act as a preventative factor in terms of responding to misogynistic attitudes. This was an opinion also held by Riley, who said that there is so much focus on equality and respect in their school, it "*negates a lot of the problems*". Blake additionally expressed that promoting secure and high quality relationships across the school provides plenty of opportunities for children to see appropriate ways of relating to others respectfully. Blake's words resonate with research that has found that good relationships between staff and students are an important factor in schools to promote good well-being and more prosocial behaviours (Ruttledge, 2022; Swinson, 2010; Vasilic, 2022). While not said explicitly by Blake, there is an implication that a high level of trust and safety has been established within the relationships between the student and adult. This is evident when he shares how children let adults know if something is happening or has bothered them, as to do this requires a high level of trust to be established (Dong et al., 2021).

Quinn shared the following when talking about responding to an incident that could be misogynistic in school:

> **Quinn:** *I would maybe be asked to deal with it* […]*, simply because I may have a better working relationship with that student than what the safeguarding team has.* (Lines 299-301)

Once again, this highlights how good relationships with staff could play a part in responding to misogyny. Quinn's words suggest that students may be more open to a discussion about an incident if they are speaking to an adult they have a trusting and safe relationship with. This can support children in having more difficult conversations with adults (Siegel-Stechler, 2022).

The relationship between a school and a student's family was highlighted by participants, with Alex explicitly stating that they "*needed the support of parents*" when teaching children about misogyny. Alex could be implying that they feel as though there is a current lack of support from student families, which is adding to the difficulty in being able to respond to misogyny in an adequate way. In contrast to this, Riley, who works in a primary school, shared the following:

> **Riley**: *The teachers are also speaking to the parents on a daily basis so they can address* (it) *and sort it out.* […] *With secondary school, it might be harder. I'm not sure.* (Lines 59-61)

Riley has recognised that it may be harder for secondary school staff to establish relationships with parents as the opportunities to see them may be much less frequent. This seems to fit with the narrative that establishing and maintaining relationships with the families of students who attend secondary school is more challenging than it is in a primary school (Beresford & Hardie, 1996). When considering Riley's words, he appears to be stating that simply seeing a student's family member more regularly is enough to communicate with them about their child and highlight issues that may have been concerning. To Riley, this is good enough to act as a way of being able to respond to potential misogynistic incidents as they occur.

The way that a staff team works together was another factor pointed out as something that does make a difference in how a school would respond to misogynistic incidents. For example:

> **Riley:** *So not when just misogynistic things happen, but when things like that have happened, the school responds quite strongly. It's like a multi-pronged approach. So it's not just the class teacher left to deal with it; it would be the*

> *safeguarding aspect, the parental engagement aspect, SLT would get involved to support the teacher and the children… then there's like the pastoral and the kind of like… mental health aspect to it as well. We're quite lucky in this school that we have got lots of support if things like that do happen.* (Lines 213-219)

Here, Riley presents a picture of a supportive staff team that is keen to ensure that everybody who may be impacted by an incident that could be misogynistic is fully supported on both a practical and emotional level. Riley's use of the word "*lucky*" suggests that not all schools benefit from this.

4.4. Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented my analysis of the data. I have presented my research questions and the themes that I identified for each one. I have combined my analysis reporting with a discussion which has included situating the analysis into existing literature. This means that I have remained aligned with my "Big Q" qualitative orientation (Braun & Clarke, 2022) and critical realist positioning.

Chapter Five: Discussion

5.1. Chapter Introduction

In the previous chapter, themes were created to address the research questions that I identified within the literature review. They were:

1. How do school staff understand/interpret misogyny/misogynistic behaviour and its impact on children and young people?
2. How do existing policies and procedures influence how staff approach the topic of misogyny with children and young people?

This chapter provides further consideration of the analysis in terms of how the research questions have been addressed and potential action that could be taken in response to the analysis, in line with a critical realist approach to TA (Fryer, 2022). I will then reflect on the strengths and limitations of the research before discussing the implications for EP practice. I will then provide some suggestions for future research before presenting my overall conclusions.

5.2. Support to Understand Misogyny

In line with existing literature (e.g., Manne, 2017; Wrisley 2021), participants indicated that being able to fully define misogyny is a difficult endeavour. Participants frequently spoke of the clear actions that might be associated with misogyny (such as derogatory name calling or disrespect and verbal abuse of women) but felt as though it is more difficult to recognise when these more overt behaviours are absent. The participants elicit a sense that they would like a definitive definition of the term so that they could potentially understand and respond to the issue more appropriately. This, however, presents a dilemma as the participants speak of misogyny as something that is not tangible, yet they clearly want it to be. This suggests that more constructionist approaches to gender relations or gender norms may not be satisfying for the participants. From a critical realist perspective, misogyny is something that we can understand as real, but our perceptions will be heavily influenced by social context and individual experience. This is not to say that we cannot define or respond to misogyny adequately, but understanding it will require a commitment to ongoing engagement and learning. This is likely to directly

contrast with training approaches utilised in schools that are often delivered in a "one-off" style. I do not want to suggest that specifically designed training sessions from external agencies (e.g. Everyone's Invited) would not be useful for staff to attend. It will instead need to be recognised that staff should not view such training as a one-time event in terms of their understanding. Jones and Spector (2017) speak of misogyny as being something that is "embodied" and highlight that undoing this will take more than one-off sessions and interventions. Whilst the research by Jones and Spector (2017) was centred around children's experiences, I would argue that a similar approach needs to be taken in terms of adults being aware of the impact of misogyny. Jones and Spector (2017) refer to the process of "embracing uncertainty", which I believe would be helpful in how adults in school also approach the topic. If school staff start to feel more confident in their ability to understand misogyny and how it operates, they will be in a better position to be able to take positive action in response to it.

5.3. Recognising the Role of Gender in Schools

The participants shared how the school environment can feel hostile and oppressive for females, which was also in line with existing literature. Utilising anti-oppressive practices in schools and as part of teacher training could be a way of ensuring that gender is considered and acknowledged within a school setting. This could act as a way of making the school environment feel safer for females and also contribute to an ongoing understanding of misogyny. Anti-oppressive practice is often associated with social work and aims to "challenge inequalities" (Burke & Harrison, 1998). This includes the consideration of social differences and power (Burke & Harrison, 1998) as well as demonstrating personal reflexivity (Baines & Edwards, 2015). Anti-oppressive practices have the potential to challenge gender norms in the classroom (Potvin, 2013). Anti-oppressive practices in education can start in the Early Years and Foundation Stage (EYFS), which is in line with research by Farago et al. (2017). This will include the acknowledgement of diversity and experience and "unlearning" what may have been previously considered as the norm (Cowan & Berg, 2023). Staff who work in schools will need to consider how they could unintentionally perpetuate gender norms by examining their own beliefs and biases. An example of this in literature comes from Gray and Leith (2004), who referred to teachers utilising

language such as “needing strong boys” when asking for students to assist with something. Although unintentional, this language contributes to the enforcement of gender stereotypes. This consideration will link with the earlier discussion in relation to understanding misogyny, where there will need to be an openness to ongoing learning, as well as the encouragement for students to “look beyond what is known” when it comes to their education (Kumashiro, 2000).

Allyship from males in schools will also be an important factor in terms of anti-oppressive practice, as males “have vital roles to play in undoing patriarchy” (Almassi, 2022). Participants shared that they feel as though male staff do not always recognise the experiences of female staff and how it can be linked to gender. Allies are typically defined as those who belong to a dominant group in society, supporting those who may experience disadvantage (Collier-Spruel & Ryan, 2022). Almassi (2022) describes allyship as having positive benefits for males, away from the concept of hegemonic masculinities. It is important to note that allyship can be a contested concept as oppression can continue to be enacted whilst positioning oneself as an ally (e.g. Halvorsen et al., 2024). This means that for males to act as genuine allies in schools, they also must be committed to anti-oppressive practices, which will include reflection on their gender privileges informed by feminist values (Almassi, 2015). This will include male staff and students, but it will be important that staff consider children’s understanding of gender when encouraging allyship. As previously stated, anti-oppressive practice should be considered in EYFS, but it may be challenging to introduce the notions of allyship. As children get older and more explicit teaching about gender can take place through either PSHE or other curriculum activities, it will be important to start to make children (particularly males) aware of how they can be allies.

Anti-oppressive practices could also address how some participants felt that their role in school may clash with their own values. A school underpinned by anti-oppressive practices would enable staff to feel safe in sharing their views and feel listened to. Alex’s description in the analysis about being told to *tone it down* when speaking about feminism to children could be thought of as an act of oppression. It is important that staff members are able to safely share their views in relation to responding to misogyny.

5.4. Supporting Children to be Critical Thinkers

Participants frequently questioned whether children were able to think critically about information that they were exposed to. This links to the notion that children may be uncritical consumers and instantly believe what they see. When it comes to the likes of misogynistic influencer Andrew Tate, his messages in relation to self-improvement and his status seem compelling to young males. Literature links this approach to capitalist ideologies (e.g., Bujalka et al., 2022), suggesting that figures like Andrew Tate act in a way that they know will be appealing to a young audience. This suggests that children will benefit from the teaching of critical thinking skills so they are more equipped to question the content that they are consuming. Dialogic pedagogy, with its emphasis on critical thinking and open dialogue, could be a useful approach within a school environment (Alexander, 2019). This approach positions dialogue as a way for differing perspectives to be shared to develop understanding (Phillipson, 2020). This could involve a teacher encouraging a child to share why they think about something in a particular way or asking them to consider why others may disagree with their perspectives. This could be a particularly useful approach within the teaching of PSHE lessons, where misogyny may be discussed in a more explicit way. I would argue, however, that this approach would also be useful across the curriculum as misogyny is systemic and likely to be relevant in many subject areas.

5.5. Engaging Males in Discussions about Misogyny

A school behaviour policy is the tool most frequently used to respond to misogynistic incidents, but many of the participants indicate that this is not effective in being a preventative measure. When considering how school behaviour policies are approached, they can typically be essentialist in nature. This means that they assume that children should already know how to comply with it so that any contraventions of it are effectively dealt with. Within the analysis, I stated how literature refers to policies being designed as a way of ensuring orderly behaviour in the classroom but dealing with social issues requires a different approach (Payne, 2015). When it comes to misogyny, using the school's behaviour policies may prove to be problematic. Scholars have indicated the difficulty in defining misogyny, which

was also something that the participants themselves shared. If school staff do not have a clear definition, this implies that the same will be true for children, who may potentially possess less knowledge about misogyny than adults. This is not to suggest that schools should not respond to misogynistic behaviour by doing nothing, but that their approaches may need further consideration. This is also especially pertinent when one of the identified themes was *It's not your fault that you think like this*, suggesting that participants are aware that children may come to adopt misogynistic beliefs as a result of other influences.

To refer back to the literature, those who become embroiled in the so-called manosphere often do so as a result of insecurity and fear (e.g., Botto & Gottzen, 2024; Lilly, 2016). This suggests that approaches need to validate these states of being as a first step in addressing misogyny in schools. Approaches to engage male students in conversations about misogyny could also draw upon work from initiatives such as *Shift*, which is a project designed to prevent domestic violence in Calgary, Canada. Some of their approaches to engaging men in discussions about gender equality include exploring what masculinity means in the context of a safe space and utilising trauma-informed approaches (Dozois & Wells, 2020). Trauma-informed approaches could be particularly pertinent in light of some participants sharing that they feel as though misogynistic attitudes in boys could be borne from difficult experiences in their home context. The concept of compassionate accountability could be a helpful model to draw upon, as it seeks to minimise shame, which can typically be associated with the act of holding somebody accountable for something (Cimmarusti et al., 2009). This would involve exploring *why* certain behaviours can cause harm, which was something that Quinn felt was missing from conversations with males in the school where he works.

5.6. Building Relationships through Relational Approaches

The behaviour policies adopted by schools also tend to be particularly authoritarian, which, as I have previously demonstrated, can be linked to misogyny (Kaul 2021; Kaul & Buchanan, 2023; Sabharwal, 2023). This provides further justification for exploring other options in relation to how misogyny can be approached, as it seems counterintuitive to rely on policies that may contribute to a misogynistic culture. The

way that participants spoke about the role of relationships as a means of addressing difficult issues suggests that utilising more relational policies may be appropriate. An example of a relational policy can be seen below:

Figure A: *Quick guide to developing relational practice and policy (from Devon County Council)*

One key aspect of a relational approach is fostering good relationships. As highlighted above, these relationships should incorporate safety, security, and trust. As previously mentioned, misogynistic beliefs may be adopted if an individual feels as though these factors are lacking. Relationships with males that are built on trust and safety could act as a preventative measure to them having misogynistic beliefs. Many of the elements within the *Repairing and Restoring* segment additionally link to the approaches that were described in the previous section. This will involve approaches such as compassionate accountability, which could link the point about *Repairing Harm*. The segment about *Responding and Calming* is also pertinent when considering some of the participants' descriptions of the emotions associated with responding to misogynistic incidents in school. Examples of this included Alex, who spoke about the hostility from male students feeling *personal* and Blake, who shared that teachers may fear a *backlash* from children if they were to address

misogynistic attitudes. A school that promotes relational skills may reduce interactions that result in a strong emotional impact on staff. Similarly, if incidents do occur that provoke a strong emotional response, staff may feel more supported.

5.7. Using the Child's Ecosystem to Respond to Misogyny

Within the analysis, I referred to Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory in the context of understanding the many different influences on a child's life. The analysis also revealed that school staff can often feel as though they are expected to respond to issues like misogyny, implying that they feel alone in this venture. This suggests that schools may need to think about the child's ecosystem to consider how they can effectively draw upon these systems in order to respond to misogyny. The analysis suggests that staff who work in primary schools may have more contact with parents, as compared to those who work in secondary schools. This is in line with research (e.g., Beresford & Hardie,1996), but as participants acknowledge that a child's home context can play an important role in terms of how they can formulate certain beliefs, it may be important to consider how schools and parents can work together in terms of responding to misogyny. Drawing upon strategies from the charity *Parentkind*, which specifically focuses on the promotion of good relationships between home and school, could be helpful in formulating these relationships initially. Schools could additionally host specific sessions for parents about issues such as misogyny to promote a collaborative response to it, emphasising the role that all adults can play in a child's development.

A final consideration in terms of the Ecological Systems Theory is the need for adults to be curious about a child's microsystem. As highlighted in the analysis, Bronfenbrenner's (1979) original theory was created when technology had little impact on society, meaning that virtual worlds should be considered part of a child's microsystem (Navarro & Tudge, 2023). The analysis indicated that not all staff are aware of what children are being exposed to online. I would encourage school staff to take a curious perspective in relation to this. It is likely that it will be difficult to know exactly what children consume, given how algorithms can be tailored to individual users (Fosch-Villaronga et al., 2021), and how quickly social media "trends" can emerge and disappear (Haenlein et al., 2020). Nevertheless, it may be helpful if staff share potential influences on children that could be perceived as

harmful. This could then ensure that all staff are aware of what children may be exposed to.

5.8. Strengths and Limitations of the Research

This research has a number of strengths and limitations. Within the methodology section in Chapter Two, I presented the strengths and limitations of the chosen analytical method of reflexive TA and data collection techniques. Here, I will discuss the strengths and limitations of the research as a whole.

One of the key strengths of this research is that it explores how school staff understand misogyny, its impact on children and young people, and how they respond to it. This has been completed from an educational psychology perspective. Whilst there is currently a growing body of literature about how schools understand and respond to misogyny and recognise what the impact of misogyny is on children and young people, scant research exists from the field of educational psychology. A large proportion of existing research into this area has predominantly focused on secondary school staff only, whereas this research has incorporated participants from both primary and secondary phases.

A further strength in terms of the participants was the diversity of gender, role and experience within their respective schools, ranging from support staff to senior leadership. The lack of homogeneity in regard to this means that the research has included a range of experiences that were particularly pertinent in relation to gender, given the nature of the research. This research ultimately provides a valuable contribution to the existing literature and potentially paves the way for further research from an EP perspective.

A limitation of this study is that the participants were self-selecting following invitations to participate being sent to relevant schools. Self-selecting participants are likely to have strong opinions about the research, which may motivate them to participate (Saunders & Townsend, 2018). In this research, those who participated already had some concerns in relation to the impact of misogyny in schools and on children and young people, which was likely to be a motivating factor for them to participate. It would be interesting to speak with participants who may not be self-

selecting or may have more varying views in relation to how misogyny is impacting children and young people.

Something that is often referred to as part of assuring quality in qualitative research is the act of “member checking”, which is the process of returning to your participants and sharing your analysis with them to assure validation (Birt et al., 2016; Braun & Clarke, 2022). I did not do this within my research due to time constraints, and I acknowledge that this may be seen as a limitation of the work. Thomas (2017), however, highlights that there is no evidence that member checking enhances the credibility of research. Braun and Clarke (2022) highlight the ethical element of this and ensuring that participants have been represented fairly. As I chose to take an inductive approach, I aimed to keep the analysis grounded in the data but was explicit about my presence within the research. Braun and Clarke (2022) additionally state that when a number of participants have been involved, elements of the analysis are likely to be unrecognisable to some participants as it is not a single-case study.

A further factor that could be viewed as a limitation of this study is that the participants were all within the same geographical area despite working at different schools. Statistics show that the North East is the least ethnically diverse region in England (GOV.UK, 2022), meaning that this research may reflect a lack of consideration of intersectionality, which is an important factor in current debates around misogyny (Loewen Walker, 2024). The participants all worked in mainstream schools, meaning that the experiences of staff within alternative provisions and specialist settings are not accounted for in this research. Whilst my rationale behind only including mainstream settings within this research was shared within Chapter Two, I feel that including settings other than mainstream schools would be a way to develop this research further.

5.9. Implications of the Research for EP Practice

As previously stated, prior research in relation to misogyny in educational contexts has been undertaken from a solely educational or sociological perspective. A number of psychological perspectives could be applied to addressing misogyny in educational contexts as EPs are well placed to support schools in their response to

it. The work of an EP aligns with social justice (Schulze et al., 2017) and EPs bring a psychological perspective to situations and view them through a systemic lens, recognising that there are many different layers to difficult situations (Cameron, 2006). A key perspective is the humanistic approach, which proposes that humans are fundamentally good and everybody is capable of change or growth (Rowan & Glouberman, 2017). This will be a helpful concept when considering “compassionate accountability” as outlined earlier in the chapter, where there is the need to view young males as having the capability to engage in discussions that explore their beliefs. Within the analysis, psychoanalytical approaches were referred to in the context of recognising certain behaviours from males (such as minimising, deflecting or using “whataboutery”) as defence mechanisms. This can support approaches in school that consider the reasons why defence mechanisms might be being utilised, which could be associated with the fear of losing something. As previously mentioned, trauma-informed approaches could also be useful in addressing misogyny, though I do not wish to imply that all children who display misogynistic behaviours are doing so as a result of a traumatic experience. This will instead look at some of the key elements of a trauma-informed approach, such as promoting safe and trusting relationships across schools.

An EP could provide inter-professional supervision, which is where two professionals from different roles come together in a reflective capacity (Callicott & Leadbetter, 2013). An EP would have the necessary skills to facilitate this reflective space for school staff to support them in their ongoing response to misogyny. EPs are also well placed to support schools with the development of relational approaches rather than behavioural policies that rely on punitive measures (e.g., Macready, 2009). This could also link to anti-oppressive practices in schools.

Community psychology approaches could also be a means of acknowledging the sociocultural contexts of children and young people (Trickett, 2009). EPs are trained to work in ways that align with community psychology approaches, which include collaboratively working in partnership with those involved in a child’s life (Stringer et al., 2006). As well as working in schools and with children’s families, EPs could also work with agencies such as the Youth Justice Service, Social Workers, Early Help, and Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) to address harmful beliefs.

EPs should begin to consider the impact of gender within their psychological formulations. This can include questioning the child's perspective of their gender and the values they associate with it, as well as the consideration of how children understand gender relations. An EP can then reflect on what this means for the child and their needs overall – what could the role of gender be playing in this? I suggest that EPs will need to be aware of the factors that could make a young person vulnerable to misogynistic influence, such as insecurity, loneliness or disillusion with the world. Statistics show that males are more likely to be excluded from school (GOV.UK, 2024), which could make them vulnerable to these feelings.

A final and pertinent implication for EP practice is to recognise that the profession is also not immune to the impact of misogyny. EPs will also need to be engaged in understanding how misogyny is operating in wider society and how this will impact their work. I referred to staff in school as needing to be curious about children's worlds, and I argue that EPs would benefit from adopting a similar approach. Just as teaching is referred to as a "feminised profession" (e.g., Hartnett & Lee, 2003), the same could be said for the EP profession, where the majority of qualified and trainee EPs are female (Atfield et al., 2023). Whilst the work of an EP is varied and does not focus exclusively on working with children and young people, a large proportion of the workload does involve working directly with children (Atfield et al., 2023). The available statistics state that in England, 72% of males have Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), and 62% of males have an identified special educational need (SEN) (GOV.UK, 2024). These figures suggest that direct contact with a child is more likely to be with a male. EPs may need to be alert to the gender dynamics within these situations, which could involve adopting curious and open approaches to the "affective atmosphere" (Anderson, 2009) or explicitly exploring perceptions of gender if appropriate. I would additionally suggest that EPs make adequate use of supervision to consider the impact of gender dynamics within their interactions, which may additionally support them in exploring their perceptions of it.

5.10. Future Research

This research has focused exclusively on the words and experiences of adults. Whilst one of the research questions required these adults to speak about the impacts of misogyny on children and young people, I am acutely aware that this is

not the same as hearing their perspectives. For this reason, future research should begin to incorporate the experiences of children and young people. This would illuminate their perceptions of the sociocultural discourse around gender and misogyny and examine what may make them susceptible to endorsing problematic views.

As shared within the limitations of the research, I also believe that future research could incorporate the experiences on a wider level and not just in one geographical location. This could aim to capture a more diverse participant sample, which may pave the way for intersectionality to be explored in relation to misogyny. Incorporating the experiences of staff, children, and young people from alternative or specialist provisions would also be a future direction for research within this area.

5.11. Conclusion

This research has explored how misogyny is understood by school staff, their perceptions of the impact on children and young people, and how they are responding to the issue from a critical realist and feminist perspective. I utilised a qualitative approach and held a focus group with six individuals who worked in a secondary school and had semi-structured interviews with two people from this group. In addition to this, I also had semi-structured individual interviews with two individuals who worked in a primary school.

I used reflexive TA to analytically interpret the data and created four themes, one of which had two sub-themes for each research question. These themes were congruent with existing literature in terms of misogyny being something that is difficult to define, where the current policies in place are often ineffective in being able to respond to misogyny appropriately. This often leads to participants feeling disempowered within their roles and experiencing a high level of tension in terms of enacting their personal values in a system that may not make it safe for them to do so. The prevalence of misogynistic behaviours in schools also means that the female experience is impacted in ways that can make the environment feel hostile. Another theme that was in line with the existing literature was about how male students' motivations to enact and adopt misogynistic attitudes and behaviours could be driven

by a fear of rejecting hegemonic masculinity and lacking the skills to engage with information that they see critically.

In terms of the implications of this research, schools need further support in terms of coming to understand misogyny so that they feel more confident in responding to it and talking to children about it. They will also need to engage with this understanding as something that is continually being developed. This would include being comfortable with being unable to provide a definitive account of the issue and instead recognise that it is constantly impacted by the social context. Schools would benefit from adopting relational approaches in their responses to misogyny that are underpinned by anti-oppressive practice and the promotion of allyship across staff and students. I would additionally suggest that EPs need to be aware of the impact of misogyny within their work, which will include interactions with children and young people and within formulations.

This research has added to the existing literature by exploring how misogyny is understood by schools and its impact on children and young people. It has also explored the methods that schools are utilising to respond to it. It has also brought an educational psychology perspective to the understanding. This perspective has not yet been explored, meaning this research provides a unique contribution to the field.

5.12. Final Reflections

I opened this thesis with a personal account of when I first became aware of hostile online communities that were misogynistic in tone. Whilst I have been interested in exploring these on a deeper level, this thesis has acted as a vehicle to integrate this topic into my work as a TEP. I feel privileged that I have had the opportunity to complete this work on a topic I feel personally invested in.

I recognise that truly dismantling misogyny is potentially a task that will never be achieved within my lifetime. However, I do feel a sense of hope regarding how my research may be a small “ripple” in terms of contribution to a wider feminist movement, in line with research by Skewes et al. (2021). I aim to embody this within my future work as an EP and hope to create these small ripples further.

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Appendix A: Reflexive Diary Excerpts

11th July 2023 – just after focus group

They have lots to say about this. It's interesting that the majority are women.

Are the staff who are involved showing their own thoughts about this situation and any internalised misogyny? Specifically with the make up and skirts linked to misogyny comment, one really denied that was an issue and said for other reasons. Does this link to school uniform and behavioural policies? What are they trying to enforce with a uniform policy, what does it even mean anyway. I wonder what schools would say they have a uniform policy for. I always used to think it was because of a sense of community when I worked at school and I would tell girls to remove their make up but I never gave much thought about it. Many would argue it makes no difference to their learning and a lot of the time I thought yeah you're right. There's so much judgement about what it means when a woman/girl wears make up.

These staff feel a bit stuck on what to do about this. There's so much wondering about who can help them with this. I wondered if I was being held as someone who could tell them what to do about it.

Interesting comment about the toilets and girls having euphemisms to say when they're on their period. Does this feed into the overall problem? Periods are exclusive to girls and they're being encouraged to not talk about it or use coded language to talk about it, if they want to say they're on their period, what's wrong with that?

I really felt for XX when she spoke about how she uses her lessons as a vehicle to talk about this issue. She seems to experience a lot of backlash from boys and it must be very hard to keep going.

There seems like there's a lot of thinking about the problem as being somebody elses problem. Mention of not getting parental buy in, or primary schools needing to talk about it then. Does this reflect the messiness of problems and when you are struggling to do something, you might look to 'blame' others?

15th November 2023 – all data gathered

I have just finished gathering all of my data. I need to be mindful that there has been a big gap between completing these interviews and the last ones. I notice that there is a bit of a difference in terms of how primary staff speak about this and secondary – I wonder if this reflects it being difficult to get primary participants in the first place? Do they not see misogyny as something that is an issue for younger children? Interesting when secondary staff think that conversations need to be started in primary school.

I feel a bit nervous about starting coding due to the amounts of data and worrying that I'll miss something!

18th January 2024

I have finished a round of coding and I have so many codes. I'm finding it really hard to know what to include and what's relevant? It suggests that I should do another round and think about whether I am being too fine grained. I'm noticing that perhaps I am making codes for similar things. I do feel a lot of pressure to ensure that I capture the meanings of the data as

best as I can. I think I need to recognise that I cannot capture every possible meaning and remind myself that that is not the main aim of doing thematic analysis.

12th April 2024

I think I have just finished creating my themes. I have been surprised along this journey as when I think about how I felt after I initially gathered all of the data, I felt as though I may have been leaning other ways (I felt like blaming others was going to be something that I noticed). I think I have tried to allow myself be led by the data in this respect by not sticking too rigidly to initial ideas though this has been hard!

I still need to be prepared to allow my themes to develop as I write them.

I've noticed so much coming up for me, especially in relation to my previous job as a teacher. I found that I really relate to the female experience theme and it has made me think about my time in schools. How much did I think about gender in my interactions with children?

Appendix B: Ethical Approval

Downloaded: 08/07/2024
Approved: 12/06/2023

Jane Bunker-Bramley
Registration number: 210103351
School of Education
Programme: Doctorate of Educational and Child Psychology

Dear Jane

PROJECT TITLE: An exploration into the educational response to misogyny within schools.
APPLICATION: Reference Number 052761

On behalf of the University ethics reviewers who reviewed your project, I am pleased to inform you that on 12/06/2023 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 052761 (form submission date: 18/05/2023); (expected project end date: 01/06/2024).
- Participant information sheet 1120099 version 4 (18/05/2023).
- Participant consent form 1120100 version 3 (18/05/2023).
- Participant consent form 1120101 version 2 (17/04/2023).

The following amendments to this application have been approved:

- Amendment approved: 17/11/2023

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.

Your responsibilities in delivering this research project are set out at the end of this letter.

Yours sincerely

James Bradbury
Ethics Admin
School of Education

Please note the following responsibilities of the researcher in delivering the research project:

- The project must abide by the University's Research Ethics Policy: https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/research-services/ethics-integrity/policy
- The project must abide by the University's Good Research & Innovation Practices Policy: https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.671066!/file/GRIPPolicy.pdf
- The researcher must inform their supervisor (in the case of a student) or Ethics Admin (in the case of a member of staff) of any significant changes to the project or the approved documentation.
- The researcher must comply with the requirements of the law and relevant guidelines relating to security and confidentiality of personal data.
- The researcher is responsible for effectively managing the data collected both during and after the end of the project in line with best practice, and any relevant legislative, regulatory or contractual requirements.

Appendix C: Participant Information Sheet

Participant Information Sheet

Project title: An exploration into the manifestation and response to misogyny within schools.

Researcher: Jane Bramley (Trainee Educational Psychologist)

Project supervisor:

Invitation to participate

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide whether or not to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you would like to take part. Thank you for reading this.

What is the project's purpose?

Misogyny is defined as 'feelings of hatred and/or contempt towards women' and misogynistic behaviour is defined as an individual behaving in a manner that would lead somebody else to think that the individual hated or held contempt towards women. Misogyny in schools has become an important topic for Ofsted, Teaching Unions and has been discussed in Parliament. News articles have highlighted the concerns of many staff who work in education in relation to the misogynistic attitudes and behaviours that they see in young people that they teach and worry about the impact of social media influencers. This research aims to explore how staff working in schools understand and respond to misogyny and misogynistic behaviour they may see in young people, and what impact this topic is having on them. This research is being undertaken as part of the requirements of the Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology course at the University of Sheffield. It will be completed in July 2024.

Why have I been invited to participate?

You have been invited to participate in this research as you are currently working as a teaching assistant, teacher, middle leader or senior leader within a school and you primarily work with children who are aged 8 and above.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you would be interested in taking part, there is an electronic consent form for you to complete. Please note that completing this form does not guarantee that you will be selected to participate in this research. I am hoping to recruit participants in a range of job roles and genders, so selection will be based on this as well as the number of responses that I receive. If you are selected to participate, you will be informed via email and you may be required to sign a consent form in addition to the electronic one.

What will happen to me if I take part? What do I have to do?

If you are selected to take part in the study, you will be required to participate in a focus group with up to 7 other people who will also be a teaching assistant, teacher, middle leader or senior leader and work in a school. A focus group is a tool that is used by researchers where a group of people come together to discuss a certain topic.

I would like the focus group to take place in your school, meaning that all members of the group will work in the school, however, if I do not have enough people from your school, I will contact other schools to create a focus group, meaning that you could be in a group with people you might not know. You will be informed of the make-up of the focus group before participating.

In the focus group, I will share some recent news headlines that have focused on the topic of misogyny in schools which will generate a discussion between you and the other participants. I would like to know your thoughts on misogyny and how it is impacting children and young people at the moment. I would also like to know how you and your school respond to this issue and what challenges (if any) there might be when responding to it. Although the discussion will be mainly led by you and the other participants, I may provide some prompts if necessary. The focus of the discussion will be on what happens in your school. I will be available for a wider or more personal conversation at the end of the focus group if this is something you would like to speak about. This conversation will be confidential and would not be part of the research.

At the end of the focus group, you and the other participants will receive an invitation to participate in an individual interview which will take place approximately one week later. This individual interview will link to what was discussed within the focus group that you participated in and explore your understanding of misogyny within schools and the impact on young people further. The interview will be 'semi-structured', meaning that I will have some broad questions that I want to ask you, but I will respond to the answers that you give and may ask you questions that link to them. The questions will be mainly open, meaning that you will be able to give in-depth answers. These individual interviews will last about one hour and will take place in a way that is most convenient for you (either online via Microsoft Teams, or in person). The interview will be recorded for transcription and data analysis purposes. You do not have to participate in an individual interview if you do not want to. If you are willing to participate in an individual interview, this should be indicated on the consent form. Please note that indicating that you would be willing to participate in an individual interview does not guarantee that you will be selected to have one. Selection will be mainly based on how many participants are willing to have an interview.

What if I change my mind after I have consented to taking part?

If you have given your consent to take part and you have been selected, you are able to withdraw from the focus group at any point before it takes part. There will be no negative consequence for this and you do not have to give a reason.

After the focus group has taken part, your data will be unable to be removed from the full dataset. This is because the removal of one participant from the data that has been collected will adversely impact the full dataset. You will have the right to request that no anonymised quotations from your data are used in the thesis. You will have until 31st August to request this. If you have been interviewed following the focus group, you will retain the right to withdraw this information until 31st August 2023 with no negative consequence and you do not have to provide a reason.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

Speaking about misogyny and misogynistic behaviour may be an upsetting topic for some people. It is important to consider whether this might be an uncomfortable or upsetting topic for you to talk about before you agree to participate. If you participate in the focus group and/or individual interview, you are free to stop and take a break at any time if you feel

uncomfortable. I will also be available after the focus group to speak to if you would like. The conversation will be confidential and not be part of the research.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Whilst there are no immediate benefits for those people participating in the project, it is hoped that this work will contribute to an area that currently has very little research into it at present and is also an important and current topic for schools and society.

Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?

All the information that is collected about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential and will only be accessible to members of the research team. You will not be able to be identified in any reports or publications unless you have given your explicit consent for this. If you agree to me sharing the information you provide with other researchers (e.g. by making it available in a data archive), then your personal details will not be included unless you explicitly request this.

What is the legal basis for processing my personal data?

According to data protection legislation, I am required to inform you that the legal basis I am applying in order to process your personal data is that 'processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest' (Article 6(1)(e)). Further information can be found in the University's Privacy Notice https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/general.

What will happen to the data collected, and the results of the research project?

The data collected during this research will be analysed using reflexive thematic analysis which is a qualitative method designed to find themes and meaning across a data set. This analysis will be reported within the final thesis. Anonymised quotations will be included in the final thesis unless you have specifically opted out of this before 31st August 2023. A presentation of the findings will be given to other trainee educational psychologists and academic tutors at The University of Sheffield in July 2024. The final thesis will also be available via https://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/. The thesis may also be sent for publication in an academic journal, at a later date. People who may read the thesis will include my supervisor, other academic tutors at The University of Sheffield and external examiners. The information could be published in academic journals, be presented at academic conferences, or used for teaching purposes.Although the data will be used for these purposes, you will not be identifiable in any way through these activities. You will be allocated a unique participant code and this will be used instead of your name. Names and any other identifying information given in answers will be changed. The recordings will stored on my individual university Google Drive which can only be accessed via password and multi-factor authentication. They will be destroyed one year following completion of the thesis, no later than July 2025. The results of the research will be shared with you via email in July 2024 in the form of a 'poster' which will summarise the main findings.

Who is organizing and funding the research?

The research has been organised by myself. There is no additional funding.

Who is the Data Controller?

The University of Sheffield will act as the Data Controller for this study. This means that the University is responsible for looking after your information and using it properly.

Who has ethically reviewed the project?

This project has been ethically approved via the University of Sheffield's Ethics Review Procedure, as administered by the School of Education.

What if something goes wrong and I wish to complain about the research or report a concern or incident?

If you are not satisfied with any aspect of the research and wish to make a complaint, please contact my supervisor at the university. If you feel your complaint has not been handled in a satisfactory way you can contact the Head of the School of Education. If the complaint relates to how your personal data has been handled, you can find information about how to raise a complaint in the University's Privacy Notice: https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/general

If you wish to make a report of a concern or incident relating to potential exploitation, abuse or harm resulting from your involvement in this project, please contact the project's Designated Safeguarding Contact. If the concern or incident relates to the Designated Safeguarding Contact, or if you feel a report you have made to this Contact has not been handled in a satisfactory way, please contact the University's Research Ethics & Integrity Manager.

Who can I contact for further information?

- The trainee educational psychologist undertaking this study:
- My supervisor at The University of Sheffield
- If you wish to talk to an independent representative within the university and someone who is outside of this research study, please contact

What happens next?

Please think carefully about whether you wish to take part in the study. If you do wish to be considered to take part, please complete the electronic Google Form. If you are selected, you will be contacted and informed.

Thank you for considering participating.

Appendix D1: Participant Consent Form (In Person)

Consent Form

Please tick as appropriate	**Yes**	**No**
Taking Part in the Project		
I have read and understood the project information sheet.	☐	☐
I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project.	☐	☐
I agree to take part in this research. I understand that I will participate in a focus group with up to 7 other people and this group will be recorded.	☐	☐
I agree to be considered to participate in an individual interview following participation in the focus group. I understand that this will also be recorded.	☐	☐
I understand that by choosing to participate as a volunteer in this research, this does not create a legally binding agreement, nor is it intended to create an employment relationship with the University of Sheffield.	☐	☐
I understand that taking part is voluntary and I can withdraw from the study before the date of the focus group without giving any reason for why I no longer wish to take part and understand there will be no adverse consequences.	☐	☐
I understand that once I have participated within the focus group, I will be unable to withdraw my data due to the adverse impact this will have on the dataset as a whole. I understand that I will have the option of withdrawing my consent for anonymised quotations to be used within the written report and withdrawing the data from my individual interview if I have one, before 31st August 2023.	☐	☐
How information will be used during and after the project.		
I understand that my personal details such as my name and email address will not be revealed to people outside the project.	☐	☐
I understand and agree that my words may be quoted in publications, reports, web pages and other research outputs. I understand that I will not be named in these outputs, unless I specifically request this.	☐	☐
I understand and agree that other authorised researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.	☐	☐
I understand and agree that other authorised researchers may use this data in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs, only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.	☐	☐
I give permission for the answers that I provide to be deposited in a Google Drive so it can be used for future research and learning.	☐	☐
So that the information you provide can be used legally by the researcher:		
I agree to assign the copyright I hold in any materials generated as part of this project to The University of Sheffield.	☐	☐

Name of Participant:…….

Signature:……

Date:……

Name of Researcher: Jane Bramley

Signature:

Date:…….

Contact details:

Project contact details for further information:

University Supervisor:

A person outside the project who can be contacted in the event of a complaint:.

Appendix D2: Participant Consent Form (Online)

Participant Consent Form

Please read each question carefully.

* Indicates required question

1. I have read and understood the project information sheet dated June 2023. *

   Mark only one oval.

   - ◯ Yes
   - ◯ No

2. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project. *

   Mark only one oval.

   - ◯ Yes
   - ◯ No

3. I would be interested in taking part in the project. I understand that this will involve participating in a recorded focus group. *

   Mark only one oval.

   - ◯ Yes
   - ◯ No

4. If I was selected to take part in the project, I would agree to participating in an individual interview that would be recorded. *

   Mark only one oval.

   - ◯ Yes
   - ◯ No

5. I understand that by choosing to participate as a volunteer in this research, this does not create a legally binding agreement nor is it intended to create an employment relationship with the University of Sheffield. *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

6. I understand that my taking part is voluntary and that I can withdraw from the study before the date of the focus group; I do not have to give any reasons for why I no longer want to take part and there will be no adverse consequences if I choose to withdraw. *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

7. I understand that once I have participated within the focus group, I will be unable to withdraw my data due to the adverse impact this will have on the dataset as a whole. I understand that I will have the option of withdrawing my consent for anonymised quotations to be used within the written report and withdrawing the data from my individual interview if I have one, before 31st August 2023. *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

How my Information will be Used During and After the Project

8. I understand my personal details such as name and email address etc. will not be revealed to people outside the project. *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

9. I understand and agree that my words may be quoted in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs if I am selected to participate. I understand that I will not be named in these outputs unless I specifically request this. *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

10. I understand and agree that other authorised researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form. *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

11. I understand and agree that other authorised researchers may use my data in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs, only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form. *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

12. I give permission for the answers that I provide to be deposited in a Google Drive so it can be used for future research and learning. *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

13. I agree to assign the copyright I hold in any materials generated as part of this project to The University of Sheffield. *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

Declaration

Please complete the following. You will be contacted via email if you have been selected to participate. Thank you for considering being part of this research.

Contact details if further information is required:

14. Name *

_____

15. School you work at *

_____

16. Job Role *

17. Email Address *

This content is neither created nor endorsed by Google.

Google Forms

Appendix E: Focus Group Script and prompts

Thank you for coming to participate in this focus group today where we will be discussing the topic of misogyny in schools. Before we begin, I would just like to highlight a few points to ensure that we keep this as a safe space.

- Allow each group member to speak without interruption.
- Be mindful of your reactions throughout the session and aim to respond to others with curiosity, rather than judgment if something is said that you do not agree with.
- Remain focused on the topic at hand.
- What is said in here is confidential.

I just want to highlight that we do have mixed genders within this group and this could possibly impact our responses to this topic. As previously said, try and respond with curiosity if anybody does say something that might not personally align with you, considering why they might think that and what previous experiences they might have that could lead somebody to think the way they do.

I also want to take this opportunity to remind you that if at any point the discussion becomes uncomfortable for you personally, please leave the group if you need to for a moment, or completely. I'll record the discussion and I expect we'll be here for about an hour.

Does anybody have any questions?

These are headlines taken from a Google news search using the term "misogyny education". There are also statistics from the national education union report with UK feminista from 2017.

Please take some time to look at these different headlines before sharing your thoughts on what you see or the overarching themes of what these headlines are about. I'll begin recording this session now.

PROMPTS IF NEEDED:

"How do you feel as people who work with children and young people seeing these images?"

"Do you feel that what you see is an accurate reflection of your experiences?"

"How do you feel seeing these images/newspaper headlines/statistics?"

"How do you respond to some of these issues in school? As a staff group/individual?"

"Is it easy to respond to these issues in school?"

Appendix F: Focus Group Stimulus

RSHE must engage with boys to tackle sexist behaviour in schools, say MPs

Emily Harle
Wednesday, July 5, 2023

MPs are pushing for relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) to engage better with boys, after an inquiry found such engagement is "crucial" to tackling sexual harassment, violence and misogyny in schools.

SOURCE:
https://www.cypnow.co.uk/news/article/rshe-must-engage-with-boys-to-tackle-sexist-behaviour-in-schools-say-mps

'Vulnerable boys are drawn in': schools fear spread of Andrew Tate's misogyny

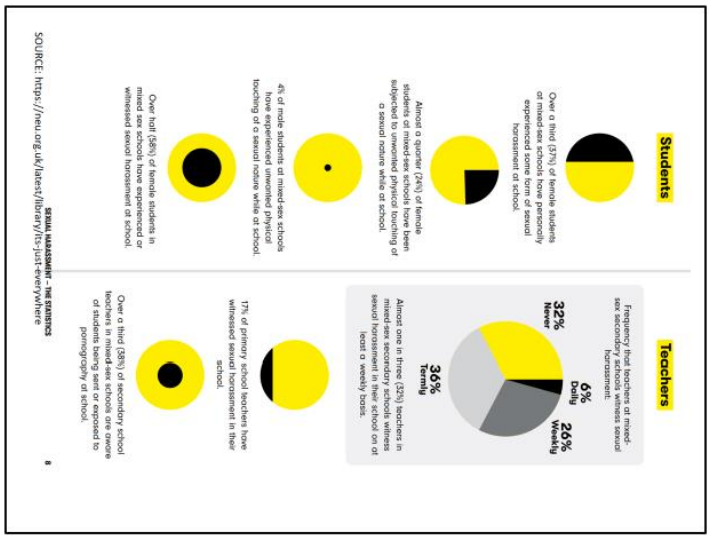
The notorious TikTok 'influencer' may be in jail, but his 'terrifying' ideology has already taken hold in classrooms, teachers say

SOURCE:
https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/jan/07/andrew-tate-misogyny-schools-vulnerable-boys

Pupils submitting misogynistic essays using coded language, claims teaching union

Even primary school teachers are dealing with sexual harassment incidents, National Education Union conference heard

SOURCE:
https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2023/04/04/misogyny-sexual-harassment-primary-school-teachers-union-ne/



Banning make-up, short skirts and toilet breaks is allowing misogyny to run rife in our schools

There is a pervading assumption that female expressions of identity are inherently inappropriate

SOURCE: https //inews.co.uk/opinion/banning-make-up-short-skirts-toilet-breaks-misogyny-schools-2198265

'We're teaching boys too late to tackle misogyny', former headteacher claims

A growing number of young boys are adopting dangerous views about women and girls around them but education expert Andrew Hampton says we need to teach better values sooner

SOURCE: https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/were-teaching-boys-late-tackle-29540252

Stopping misogyny shouldn't just be about Andrew Tate

Schools and parents must do more than respond to the influencer after the fact

SOURCE:https://www.ft.com/content/3ccea7db-9692-41f9-b1c8-ea73d3d8e5ea

Teachers urged to listen for 'manosphere' talk in school corridors amid misogynistic social media trends

Charities have voiced concern after 'misogynistic and homophobic' content creator Andrew Tate blew up on social media over the summer holidays

SOURCE: https://inews.co.uk/news/teachers-list-pupils-chatter-rise-andrew-tate-harmful-internet-trends-1804615

Primary school teachers 'dealing with sexual harassment', education union conference hears

'How have we got to a place where toxic masculinity and misogyny has come to take over the minds of young people, in particular boys and young men? It looks to me that we have gone'

SOURCE: https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/uk-news/primary-school-teachers-dealing-sexual-26632952

Teachers 'must not talk to pupils about Andrew Tate' after spate of 'shocking misogynistic incidents'

SOURCE: https://www.lbc.co.uk/news/andrew-tate-teachers-told-not-to-discuss-misogynist-pupils/

Appendix G: Interview Schedule

How would you define misogyny or misogynistic behaviours? Do you find this to be an easy thing to define?

Do you feel that misogyny or the display of misogynistic behaviours is something that is an issue within this school?

Could you give me any examples of experiences of this, such as things you may have witnessed, dealt with, or heard about?

Thinking about the amount of time you have worked in this school and in educational settings in general, do you feel as though this is an issue that has become more or less prevalent over time or has it stayed the same? – what are the influences on this in your opinion?

How does the school in general, respond to this issue, both preventatively (educating children) and reactively (if there is an issue).

Do you feel as though what is currently in place to respond to misogynistic attitudes/behaviours is successful? Why or why not?

How confident would you feel in responding to incidents of misogyny or misogynistic behaviours? – in your opinion, what do you feel would support you in your response to this?

Appendix H: Debrief Information

Debrief Information

Project title: An exploration into the manifestation and response to misogyny within schools.

Researcher: Jane Bramley (Trainee Educational Psychologist)

Project supervisor:

Thank you for participating in this research study. I am very grateful for the time that you spared in order to participate. I hope that you found taking part an interesting experience.

If you have been affected by any aspect of the research, further support may be found here:

- Addressing misogyny, toxic masculinity and social media influence in PSHE education (pshe-association.org.uk)
- Home - Mind

You may also find it helpful to speak with your Union Representative or School Wellbeing Lead if any aspect of the research has impacted on how you feel at your workplace.

If you are not satisfied with any aspect of the research and wish to make a complaint, please contact my supervisor at the university. If you feel your complaint has not been handled in a satisfactory way you can contact the Head of the School of Education. If the complaint relates to how your personal data has been handled, you can find information about how to raise a complaint in the University's Privacy Notice: https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/general

If you wish to make a report of a concern or incident relating to potential exploitation, abuse or harm resulting from your involvement in this project, please contact the project's Designated Safeguarding Contact. If the concern or incident relates to the Designated Safeguarding Contact, or if you feel a report you have made to this Contact has not been handled in a satisfactory way, please contact the University's Research Ethics & Integrity Manager.

You will be informed of the findings in July 2024 at the end of my project.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions. You can contact me on XXX

Thank you.

Appendix I: Transcripts

Focus Group

ALEX: It says RSE must engage with boys to tackle sexist behaviour in schools <breath> we do. I think the government think we're doing nothing.

QUINN: I think the government just think yeah … it's in the news, lets show that we're addressing it.

All: (yeah yeah)

QUINN: That's the impression I always get from the government, that people are talking about this, what can we do about it, like, make a statement, then… ok sit back, and that's it

ALEX:(yeah)

QUINN: There doesn't seem to be long term, continuing intervention, continually discussing it and trying to resolve it and it's like, we've put this onto you now, you deal with it.

ALEX: And when like, the Andrew Tate thing kicked off, it was like a media storm, and then he went away for a bit cos the media stopped talking about it, and then it came back up again, and then it went away again (others saying yeah)

QUINN: and it was like they provoked it to an extent as well

CHARLIE: the media definitely provoked it, and equally, we're teaching boys and girls aswell, too late to tackle misogyny, like waiting until secondary school to even hear that word or what it means, or the impacts of it, is something that should be tackled in primary school as well, erm..

ALEX: especially around here, as we've got some of the highest rates of domestic abuse in the north east so we should be doing more in the north east to tackle it even more, cos a lot of these kids will experience stuff in their households that they then think is normal and we're not doing enough

RORY: and even if it's not the extreme like domestic violence but even just like attitudes towards it, like boys will boys that kinda thing

QUINN: but sadly I think in the north east that's the culture… it's cultural

BROOKLYN: I don't think they know what misogyny is, I've had to explain it to them.

QUINN: but there's still such a strong culture in the NE of this kinda…how a man should be….

RORY: gender stereotypes

QUINN: A man should be anything from supporting newcastle united, wearing a sports top, getting drunk on a weekend to, you know, being the tough one…

ALEX: being the breadwinner as well

QUINN: yeah, being the breadwinner, the mam, or the parents or the woman should be like submissive like… 'no it's ok, 'll take over this, I'll hold the door open for you, I'll carry this for you' cos I'm the man and you're incapable of doing that and there's that kind of culture that's still quite prominent in the north east. So when you've got a child that you're trying to be or trying to encourage … y'know they can do that, it's hard to voice that, because in hte home environment, they're made out to be the weak person and made out to be the one that's not equal and they'd hear 'oh no, you don't do that son' so it's cultural

CHARLIE: I was gonna say I think the key thing is as well, is that people see misogyny as something that's new, like oh yeah what's this misogyny about

ALEX: do you remember in my interview when even XXX said that like 'is it misogyny or is it just sexism' and I said 'no it's misogyny' and it was like a little bit of a battle or debate, kind of, on what you actually call it, but to me, because of the statistics in society are what they are on how women are affected by abuse, I don't think you can call it anything other than …. Well most of the time, we should be labelling it what it is

CHARLIE: yeah and the thing is, the blurred line between the two you could argue that…

ALEX: well it's both

CHARLIE: well yeah, it's both yeah. And I think most people will think that this is something that's new, but it's probably reported more and therefore, erm, seen as like, it's like when I'm teaching Victorian times when it started coming out and reporting all these murders and stuff, and then people started to do something about it, so I think that's quite similar to what's going on.

ALEX: but then we've found haven't we, that if we try and address stuff through XXX, in our curriculum, we get loads of backlash from boys

RORY: yeah

ALEX: I've had boys say to me… they wanted to put a complaint in weren't they.. Some boys in my Y9 class saying that I talk about women too much

RORY: yeah same

ALEX: when we were literally studying The Crucible which is a text about the Salem witch trials

RORY: 'you're banging on about women'

ALEX: so we HAD to talk about women … saying ‘you talk about women too much’ and I feel like if it was any other minority, like , I said to you didn’t I, like if it was you teaching history and the slave trade, and they said to you ‘you’re talking about black people too much’, there’d be uproar, but it seemed to be ok to say… well it seemed to be ok to them to say ‘you’re talking about women too much’ and I didn’t think that was acceptable

CHARLIE: but even, like we’ve been talking recently with Y8 about gender stereotypes, and 9, in XXX, in particular, looking at like class and gender in Victorian times, and obviously, we talked about how it was illegal to be gay and they can’t believe that, as society has come on such a long way from that point, but even when you say that a woman’s job was to bring up the family, some of them were like ‘well yeah, they have the kids’ and they couldn’t see how that was like wrong, erm, and that was just even last week we were talking about this and gender stereotypes, and they weren’t being like… what’s the word… disobedient or naughty or anything like that, they just couldn’t see what was expectation

ROBIN: we had that with Y10 didn’t we XX , they had two female parents at home and couldn’t understand why they were being asked to wash up or tidy up, they were like ‘that’s your job’ and actually their parents were mortified like they don’t want their child to grow up like that, but that’s how he viewed it because he didn’t have a male role model at home, and that for him, it was like ‘that’s your role because that’s what I see’’ and he couldn’t separate that.

BROOKLYN: social media does a lot

QUINN: but it’s not just social media , it’s everything that the students access from movies, like when you look at the characters in movies, all the prominent characters which are the superheroes, which are the characters that are men, y’know, you look at the modern ones, you might have one which is a woman

ALEX: like black widow?

QUINN: but then everybody is the hulk, sorry, everybody else is strong, like the hulk is masculine, captain america is masculine, you look at the cars, like fiat 500 are usually women drivers, land rovers are a man, driving off road, or driving off to the beach, getting the surf board out, and everyone’s looking at him like ‘my hero’ … and it seems like it’s from every angle that the…. Like they’re being drip fed

ALEX: and they’re used to that drip feed culture aren’t they , because of things like tiktok, and used to scrolling and seeing the next thing and the next thing and the next thing and then they see things like Andrew Tate, if you ask some of the boys what they want to be when they’re older, they’ll tell you how many cars they want , how many Bugatti’s and Maserati they want , whereas the girls might say , well a lot of them would say they don’t know, but a lot might say they want to be a nurse, or come out with like a caring profession, whereas boys are more..

BROOKLYN: materialistic

ALEX: yeah

CHARLIE: I think the biggest thing for me, is like the obliviousness of it,. like when were talking about Andrew Tate, a couple of our kids had Andrew Tate as a screen saver and they were like.. ‘Have you seen what he’s got miss?’ they weren’t being like anything other than ‘well I wanna be like that, I wanna have that’ and they just didn’t see it as wrong

RORY: they don't see the negative side of him do they

ALEX: but even when I was highlighting that to some of the boys in my Y8 class, and saying ‘well do you know that he’s said this’ and they’d go ‘ah I don’t know he’s said that’ and the girls would say ‘you know he’s said that’ because it’s all over tiktok and the boys would like deny things that they know are true, just because they want to idolise him and I don’t know how we tackle that.

QUINN: What I find frightening is how quickly it becomes like the social norm, in like a very short time in the community, in schools, amongst friends, it’s the norm to do that as it’s never been addressed, or nobody has ever turned round and said ‘hang on a minute…no’ because, again, they’d just be shouted down or spoken over, or to an extent, be told ‘you don’t know what you’re talking about man’

BROOKLYN: it’s difficult to break that mould because of everybody around you

QUINN: when it starts becoming accepted in society, you’ll never break that

BROOKLYN: I think it’s reinforced, particularly in the area we live as we have a lot of single parents, normally just a mam. Then there’s mam and son relationships and I think that’s a struggle for both sides of it and quite often, we have loads of cases of it in school, where the son overrides everything the mam says and mam feels guilty about the situation they’re in, and then that lives up to the stereotype of it being ok for men to deal with that in that way, and talk to parents that way

ROBIN: they get told they’re the ‘man of the house’ and it almost gives them that right to their opinion and go over the top of what their parent says as they think ‘I’m the male here’ and I have to be the dominant one

ALEX: but there’s been times where I’ve rang parents up and had conversations with them and said things like ‘your son is behaving like this in my class’ and the mam has gone ‘well they’re getting that from their dad you know’ and start really going to town, saying all sorts about their dad and I’m thinking ‘I don’t really know how to tackle this if the dad is absent”

QUINN: they’ll hear ‘your dads left home, your dads this, your dads that and you behave just like your dad’

ALEX: yeah… but then I think what they’re saying as well is that a lot of their disrespect for women , the mams are saying to me ‘they get that from their dad you know, like he cheated on me, he did this you know’ and then, I dunno, maybe this is then reflected in the boys behaviour towards women?

RORY: then they're picking up on what they're seeing

CHARLIE: looking at this headline here – 'banning make up, toilet breaks, short skirts is allowing misogyny to thrive in schools' … I don't really think it is… although I do (long pause) for different reasons disagree with having make up and short skirts in school, 100%, but I don't think in the context we're talking about today, that has…

ALEX: it would make me uncomfortable if I was asked to police the skirt length for girls, that would really make me uncomfortable.

QUINN: makes me incredibly uncomfortable… I've seen students where the skirt has been so low, where they wrap their skirts up so many times that you can see the label, the white label at the back, and I'm terrified to say something… I'll say to staff I can trust could you say something as I feel they'd say to me 'what you looking at you pervert?' but actually no, I'm not looking, but as a male, I'm trying to follow that school policy, but it's at the back of my mind they'll say 'why are you looking? How have you noticed that?'

CHARLIE: but then it's part of your job to follow that

QUINN: something's triggered that, you see that in the corner of your eye

BROOKLYN: particularly going up the stairs, you can't help it

QUINN: yeah, when I'm going up the stairs I'm looking at the floor, as I'm worried they'll turn round and look at me, and think 'is he looking at us' so as a male, I'm purposely trying to show, no I'm not , I'm not even taking an opportunity you could say, and when I talk to a female, I try to look them in the eye, or even above their head in case they kinda..think … and that's a … and I'm not making excuses, but i think it's harder for a man trying to prove that he's not as we've said it's so prominent in society that it is happening, and you just don't want to be associated with any of those actions, or anything like that whatsoever

RORY: it's constantly apologising for the actions of others. but equally from a woman's perspective, they shouldn't feel like they can't wear make up or something as it could be leading somebody to …. But I do agree not appropriate in a school setting, but ok within wider society. There's standards in school but you shouldn't have to feel you can't wear make up on a night out in case you …. like…

BROOKLYN: I think there's definitely sort of a feeling of … I don't know if it's necessarily misogyny in school from females but like, I've had a lot of problems with toilet breaks, and passes from like girls on their periods and I think they obviously feel that that's quite unfair to have that like, one sort of rule for everyone

ALEX: what do you mean, like the girls going more you mean?

BROOKLYN: yeah, so not allowing girls to go necessarily, like having that 'you don't go to the toilet in lessons' rule, I think a lot of the girls feel like that's (inaudible)

QUINN: if I'm in a lesson, I've always said yes to a female cos I just don't want to… I'm never gonna question why, whereas if it's a lad, nah, you can hang on

ALEX: yeah cos I always wonder how male teachers handle that cos girls seem quite open to say to me 'miss I'm leaking, I need to go'

Others: <laughing, agreeing> 'Just go!!'

ALEX: and I'm literally like 'just go' but sometimes I want to teach them euphemisms, like 'the decorators are in', you know what I mean, just so they don't have to say that and I think, do you say this to male teachers? Would you feel comfortable saying that? Like how do you get across that you need to go to the toilet?

ROBIN: but then I've known students who will use this as an excuse to get out of a lesson with a male teacher because they know they will be uncomfortable

QUINN: but it's just something I'll never…. I'll never put myself in a position where a student would turn around and say 'but I was on my period and I couldn't go because of you'

CHARLIE: I try and say no as much as I can to both, cos I might make a mistake, especially if its say a Y7 or Y8, if I say in the lesson, if somebody says 'can I go to the toilet' and I say 'yes'

RORY: it's a snowball effect isn't it

CHARLIE: then more ask, so it's like I'll try and put them off, saying 'just wait a few minutes' and they don't need it, they're just trying to get out for a little break

ALEX: I always find that they do, like people have said that to me, just tell them to wait 5 minutes and then 5 minutes later they still need it, and I'm like <sigh>

BROOKLYN: well I think if they keep asking

ALEX: mmm. Like what I think is quite bad is that we haven't had anywhere near enough training on how to deal with misogyny and the training that we did have - me and you did it didn't we - was more like how to, like it was a video one, erm, like an optional CPD that was more like a whole school approach and it looked like it was designed for leadership

RORY: ah yeah, it was about having strong male role models and things like that, not really about tactics

CHARLIE: nobody knows how to tackle this

ALEX: exactly, it's why research needs to be done

CHARLIE: I don't think anybody knows how to deal with this in schools.

ALEX: but I do think we could have been doing more, like when I was designing some of the PSHE lessons, I was conscious of 'oh maybe we should be doing some staff training on this' like a lot of the stuff… like when boys are expressing an interest in Andrew Tate, we do tell teachers 'you do need to try and challenge it and talk to students about it' but then we need to teach teachers how to do that cos instead of being like 'why do you like Andrew Tate', you should be saying, you know like, trying to understand why they like him in the first place and saying 'oh I get why you like him, he's got loads of cars hasn't he' and things like that, but I think a lot of teachers don't know how to have those conversations

RORY: and if you do it in the wrong way, you end up instilling those views into them, and they'll say 'why are you challenging me on this'

CHARLIE: and then equally, I can guarantee that some staff don't know who Andrew Tate is so it's educating them

ALEX: but ultimately, he is just a symptom of a wider issue

RORY: I sometimes find it difficult as like a young female as well, trying to challenge it, cos I think they think the only reason I'm challenging it is cos I am a young female, if that makes sense? And like, maybe we need, sort of, more… men to … I mean I don't really know how much is being really done, definitely think men could challenge more in school

BROOKLYN: I've noticed recently some of the students, particularly ones who like Andrew Tate, if you give them a C1, a C2 or a C3, the attitude towards you as a female teacher is like 'well why are you giving me that?' but then I've seen…

QUINN: oh it would be very different if it was a male

BROOKLYN: I've seen it, opposite, in Mr XX' classroom and I'll pop in my head with the same student and they'll just leave and I'll think I've done nothing different, but it's almost like…

CHARLIE: I think it's gender expectations but expectations on both sides, and it's like what women expect of men as well, erm and obviously, when we talk about misogyny in general, talk about the other way around, but I think educating students on both sides of the gender stereotypes

QUINN: there's more women than there is men

ALEX: but this is what we've tried to do a lot in XXX haven't we, we teach about the patriarchy through texts, through like literature, and then say things like 'how is the patriarchy bad for women' and 'how is the patriarchy bad for men' but as soon as we even mention the word patriarchy now, some of the boys just immediately start rolling their eyes, like 'oh she's talking about women again' and I'm like I'm talking about the patriarchy, I'm not talking about women, do you know what I mean

RORY: I don't think they see how it applies to them, being in school, I don't think they understand how they fit into the patriarchal society

ALEX: and there's a lot of 'whataboutery' isn't there, like I did the international women's day competition, and it was 'what about international men's day', I was like it's in November… I'll do a competition then <laughs>

BROOKLYN: I've been quite impressed with some of the younger years though, cos I taught about periods and the menstrual cycle, and I taught this to all students, and I didn't have a single male, considering I teach all but 2 Y8 classes, asking why we were learning this

ALEX: that's really good

BROOKLYN: I have taught this before and that has happened, they just all accepted it as something they needed to know, so I thought that was a glimmer of something good that I didn't have anyone go 'well I'm a guy, I don't need to know this', they just accepted it as something they should know… I do love the reproductive unit

ALEX: have you had that before? Like boys like… really?

BROOKLYN: yeah. So this is like the 3rd time I've taught this to the full Y8, the reproduction unit, the first time I taught it, which was about 4 years ago now, it was like 'why do I need to know about this, shouldn't this lesson just be for girls', and I'd try to explain that it's just a bodily process, like we learn about diabetes but not all of you are going to have diabetes, to help put it into perspective, and some of them at the time were like 'oh ok' but some of them were like 'no I don't need to know this' and I think in my first year of teaching, I had parents ringing up to ask 'why are you teaching them about this'

ALEX: ugh, it's just sad really

BROOKLYN: but this year, I've had like no qualms from any boy, and some of the boys I teach can be quite like, um, in favour of male only views and things like that, Andrew Tate etcetera, and they've just accepted that you know, it's something we need to know

ROBIN: do you think that might be an age thing, cos like my gran would never talk about a period, ever

CHARLIE: I was so like, my mam did to me, but my gran, it was like it didn't exist, but even to the point where like now, I mean this is my sixth year teaching here, and I think the difference between my first year when as like a 23 year old, like how open kids were then about it to now is massive, like now kids will put their hands up and say in front of the whole class like 'miss (inaudible) whatever' … but yeah, they're just so much more open

QUINN: I left university about 26/27 years ago and I remember having a similar discussion, but it was more like around identity in the community, and erm, religion and there was discussions and they were still talking about the attitude of the north east and the man being the man, heavy into industry, expected to be a man and everything, but like 27 years ago, it's only been in the last few years that there's been a difference you can actually see in people's attitudes, so this is nothing new, cos like at the time, you had Roy Chubby Brown who is this foul-mouthed, belittling women at every opportunity, but thousands of people go

and watch him! Thousands of people thought he was funny! And it was accepted… 'oh he's just having a laugh', like no, actually what he's doing is he's spreading this hatred you could say, or spreading 'women are like this, they belong in the house, they are this, they're that, they're stupid', so it's just changed from a man on the stage to a paying audience to go and see him, to Andrew Tate and others but being online now, being able to get to a bigger audience, still the same message they're putting across, and it seems that it's only been in the last couple of years that its become not ok to do that, so it's nothing new that we have people doing this.

ALEX: and also, I feel like in society, I just don't think that we take it as seriously as other things, because misogyny is so normalised, like when I say to kids, oh every 3 days in the UK, a woman is killed by a man, if that was every 3 days in the UK a black person is killed by a white person, we'd be in uproar, or if it was every 3 days a terrorist kills an innocent person, the whole country, it would be splashed all over the newpapers all the time, but because it's just so normal for women to suffer from abuse and domestic abuse and things like that, or be killed by men, i feel like it's filtered down into schools and they just see it as normal.

QUINN:
XXXX

ROBIN: there'll be some parents who say I don't want my child to go to that. It's like, your child needs to know this, this is something that happens in the world, but you're making the choice not to expose your child to that and they're taking that away. They still need to know it, they just might need to have it delivered in a different way, but not knowing the information…

ALEX: but the problem is as well, how do we actually deliver that differently, to actually… it's really hard isn't it, for PSHE cos not only will you have some kids who will, for example, let's take pornography for example, some of them will not even know what pornography is, they'll have never heard of it, the SEN ones especially won't even know what it is, meanwhile, you'll have another kid in the same year group, same age, who will be addicted to it already. And it's like, how do you cover that gap, but it's also the teachers, you need teachers teaching it who one might feel completely comfortable and think no bother whatsoever, and then somebody else who might be like ' I have no idea how to do this' and they don't want to teach it.

CHARLIE: over the last 2 years, they were saying it was ok to deliver this on things like drop down days, where we had specialist days, but 5 specialist days across the year, it's like so sporadic, so randomly spaced, no link retrieval, so random, like one was RSE, the next was prison me no way, like nothing linked the topics together, and like it's gone from that to one lesson a week, but even that's not like, if you were to teach everything that's on the national curriculum, including RSE, which you should, you should have 2 - 3 lessons a week, it's enough to fill a curriculum like history with Y7 and 8.

QUINN: but it seems to be that token gesture again, like yeah tick that box

CHARLIE: it's almost like every kid in the country should do an assessment at the end of their school life in it

ALEX: it says in the guidelines doesn't it that we're only supposed to be complementing what the parents teach them and how can we gauge what one parent is teaching their kid to what another is teaching them?

RORY: and also the other problem is when you have parents who have conflicting views to what we're trying to instil in them and then it's trying to challenge that.

ALEX: exactly

CHARLIE: yeah. And equally, some parents…

ALEX: I bet some dads of our kids absolutely love Andrew Tate, and how can we tackle that when we're telling them 'this is misogyny, you shouldn't be agreeing with them' and then they go home and their dads…

CHARLIE: even then, a couple of weeks ago, in Y9, I'm gonna say XXX, he's really irritating, erm, so he was um… what was the session that you sat in?

ALEX: one punch?

CHARLIE: it could have been that one. He was saying… so XXX was in that session with him, and he was saying… he was like… well whichever one it was, he was like 'well it is ok' and she said 'well i'm just gonna stop you there, do you know how your views are coming across?' and he was like 'i know it is, but this is what I think' and even she was saying when the session finished, he could be somebody who actually abuses his partner just because of what he was saying… and he wasn't.. And how like open he was… he took over the whole class discussion and openly dominating and putting down all her stuff, but, like he blames his dad for where all this comes from, and his parents have split up, and he now has this drilled inside of him

ALEX: don't you feel like there's a thing nowadays where its like well that's my opinion and i'm allowed to have an opinion

All: yeah yeah

ALEX: and like you can't challenge that - saying you can't challenge me, I'm allowed to have an opinion

RORY: I get all the time - it's free speech, freedom of speech

QUINN: they're trying to justify what it is that they're saying, they don't want to be, kind of, admitting to a point, because when somebody says that, you know for a fact what you've said to them … they're like oh yeah… hang on… it's a defensive mode they go into because they haven't got the gain, they haven't got the confidence in themselves to turn round and say 'oh god yeah you're right, I have been…' you know

ALEX: I think it's the culture now though isn't it, nobody on twitter ever will say 'yeah you know what, you're right, I'm wrong'. nobody ever does that

QUINN: and even if they do, it's like oh I'm off, I don't want to be included in this anymore

ALEX: I think we need to teach kids like it's alright to change your opinion and it's ok to like, admit that you're wrong

RORY: I think a lot of it as well though, from the experience that I've had is like the laddishness from a group, like they try and get a rise out of their friends and if you challenge... Like I always want to try and challenge the whole class about it so they all know that sort of, that isn't right, but then they won't back down, as they don't want to maybe look weak or wrong or whatever.

BROOKLYN: see I think you probably get more of that in XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX, cos obviously I'm XXXXXXXXXXXXXX, so in terms of stereotypes, usually I'm wearing bright colours, mainly pink, Disney princessing around the classroom, but I'm a XXXXXXX, so the kids are like um, so in science they're like oh miss XX is aXXXXX teacher, I've never had, like, probably some of the kind of comments you'd get, probably because of the topics we do, but we also have like in physics, we have one female, two male teachers, in chemistry

we have quite a nice balance of male and female teachers, in biology we have a nice balance of male and female teachers, so its very mixed

QUINN: English is all female

ALEX: we make jokes that we actually teach gender and social studies, we don't teach English, because a lot of the time we are just discussing social issues and looking at these issues through the lens of literature and that ends up causing loads of discussions.

BROOKLYN: we do that in XXX we look at STEM and how it's still quite a male dominated field, but it's ok to be <sigh> like a girl, I mean I'm very girly and I teach XXXXX, it's not a masculine subject, it's just a subject and I'll teach how the world works, but typicallyXXXXX is very male dominated and it's always seen as more of a masculine science, whereas biology is always seen as more feminine of the sciences, and I think because we have people who …, I mean we've got Mr X who is male biology and me as XXXXXXXXXXXX, that will show that you can obviously challenge the stereotypes, but you can still be you and like what you like and you don't have to fit to a particular thing just because of your job and things like that. I think that helps to break some of it down in science as we actually challenge some of the stereotypes that are present in science, naturally because of the staff we have

ALEX: we've just got XX <laugh> so we are predominantly female

QUINN: in science, do you not think the students kinda have that because you're proving something by science .. like science shows…

BROOKLYN: like fact based, rather than opinion

QUINN: yeah, like it must be true, science says so, but in English, that's just somebody's opinion written down on a page

ALEX: often, we might say like, right, you're going to write a speech about equality for example, like when we were doing speeches, and you would present them with facts about misogyny or something like that, but even with that, they'd then go, well now can you give us the statistics about men? And it's like, yes, in a second! I mean you'll still get that backlash, even when you're facing them with the facts, it's like they just don't want to hear it a lot of the time … not all of them, not all of the kids.

ROBIN: considering for Y9, you did like the black poetry, and black lives matter, and that was fine , I found the lessons that I was in, the kids engaged great in that, they were fascinated by it, but then that changeover…

ALEX: as soon as you start… we did um… that was black flamingo wasn't it? As soon as I did an article about barbies, and oh my god, the uproar… 'why you not doing about action men?' cos I'm literally just presenting an article about barbies and how it's made women, um, have eating… unrealistic beauty standards

QUINN: it's as if they've got this fear! As if the lads have this fear that, as if it's like 'we're here as well!' as if its kind of like an acceptance of …

ALEX: but you walk into any of my lessons, I can guarantee that most of the achievement points on the board will be for boys, because they're the ones who are confident to speak up and give their opinion and I'm constantly saying please can I have some girls opinions, and they're just sat there like that… and they don't want to speak up and I think we have a massive issue in this school with girls being silenced and not having an opinion.

RORY: absolutely. And I think some of my girls, erm, when we've been doing our Y9 speaking and listening, like have been *terrified* to speak in front of boys, like 'what are they gonna say, what are they gonna ask me' erm like 'are they gonna take the mick out of this presentation', they're not scared of the other girls, they're not scared of their peers, they're like really scared of what they boys are gonna do

BROOKLYN: see I don't think I have as much of that in science, but I think it's because you're doing a lot where it's opinions, so it's quite personal, whereas in my subject which is a lot of maths, it's like it's right or it's wrong, it doesn't matter

ALEX: yeah.. Cos I think we're so subjective

BROOKLYN: so subjective, so people obviously associate it with the individual, and I think a lot will think, oh this is what they will think of *me* as a result of whatever I'm going to say

ALEX: We've had that so many times before in the speaking and listening before though where we've had boys removed, last year we had a boy who is currently in Y10, where there was a girl who was doing a presentation about abortion and it was big at the time wasn't it, when America was banning abortions, and he asked her at the end, bearing in mind she was being recorded, and he asked her if she would ever have an abortion and I was literally like… and then he had to get barred, and then I thought that's the confidence of boys in our school, that they dare to actually say something like that to a woman in the middle of an exam. Like a speaking and listening exam.

RORY: I had a similar one where I had to ask for somebody to be removed because he started going on about Andrew Tate at the end of someone's exam

BROOKLYN: see I don't think in our PSHE curriculum, I don't think enough, thinking about the lads, erm on this, we don't do enough, like challenging that you don't have to have this ultra masculine kind of stereotype, cos I think some of the boys that we have in school, like there's actually a minority I'd say who have that type of masculine view, but then there's a lot who play up to that because they think that's what they should be, but I don't think we do enough on 'there's not a stereotypical boy' or 'there's not a stereotypical girl'

ROBIN: me and XXX had a conversation the other day about how girls who are told they can't be tomboyish, or not girly, like they're told 'you can't be that way' or like if you are that way, then you're not like a proper female, or like you can't like football, and like barbie, you can't like both, like I think that needs to be talked about more as well, that like you can like both?

BROOKLYN: that's what I try and get through when I teach, like I love space, I'm a massive space nerd, but then you'll see me going to Disney world wearing all pink and dresses and I'm like, I'm not one or the other, I'm both! It's just an interest.

RORY: I think we need to get rid of the spectrum of masculinity and femininity don't we, I think that's the issue, which I think is what we were trying to do with that barbie article, talking about why are barbies so like, what was I saying, unrealistic and why are they always presented as like the princess and things like that, and we were talking about how you can get barbies now that have things like jobs that might be more stereotypically male

ALEX: ahh yeah, it was like barbie who was like an insect scientist, I can't remember what it was called, but she had like a perfect outfit on, like pink trousers and everything, and she had like a butterfly on her hand. What I was aiming to do was like challenge this idea of like what Barbie has taught women they should be like, but instead the whole thing got derailed to talk about how action men have given boys unrealistic beauty standards and I was like… I get that's a really good conversation for us to have, but can we balance it, but the boys didn't want to balance it, they just wanted to talk about boys and it was…

BROOKLYN: I was also having a conversation with some of the girls which I thought was quite interesting, when some of them were saying they were struggling with the fact that .. like almost traditionally feminine things like liking the colour pink, or liking barbies has almost been put as like... Oh of course you like that, almost like it's a negative thing, but it's all been pushed by females at the same time, it's like well… I don't understand what's wrong with being girly and liking girly things and why that's such an issue, and I was like the fact that some of our kids are like grappling with why is it wrong to be female and like female, girly things, because there is such a challenge in the media with that and I was like, you know what? They're right cos there's nothing wrong, likewise if you're a boy and you like traditional masculine things, but there's nothing wrong if you're a girl and you like traditional masculine things, but there's nothing wrong… if you just like things, but I think girls are grappling with that at the moment, thinking that, well should I not like those things? Because does that make me.. like … well one of them said less of a girl, and somebody not to be taken seriously? And that worries me.

ROBIN: I've had conversations like that and I always say well when I was little, I had dolls, and I also had a box of JCBs and diggers, like, and I loved both, just as much, but it didn't make me any less of a girl just because I had a box of JCBs. like I liked both of those things.

ALEX: well when I was little, I had 3 brothers and I would play with their action men, along with my barbies and my dad wouldn't say a word, like obviously, but I remember my brother picking up one my barbies and my dad saying 'put that down, that's not yours', it's just instilled, like my dads a proper caveman, and that was just his mentality

BROOKLYN: I think it is instilled in children from like a really young age though, cos you can walk into like you know, Smyths toy shop, and you've got like a pink side, and a blue side haven't you

ROBIN: my gran always used to say I wasn't girly cos I didn't like wearing dresses and I was like 'oh'.. What does that have to do with…

BROOKLYN: but what is girly??

ROBIN: why does me wearing a dress decide that? I just don't like them. It doesn't change who I am.

BROOKLYN: I think there just needs to be, it's almost like, I mean I don't think you'll ever get away from it, but the labels that we assign to things, like as I said, I wear pink but its just because I like the colour, but then lads would wear pink and then the amount of times you'd hear lads go 'oh you're wearing a girly colour' and things like that and erm, it's just a colour!

ROBIN: it's seen as like a negative isn't it, that it's a bad thing

ALEX: even like jobs, I had one.. We were just writing a sentence on the board once and like this girl was like right, all we were doing was talking about was discourse markers and the word consequently and she literally wrote the sentence 'men can't be ballet dancers consequently' and all we were doing was talking about the word and that was it, and then I had a boy saying 'yeah but if you're a male ballet dancer, you're definitely gay' and I was like <sigh>, I was like facing the board thinking, 'I just want to teach my lesson' and I don't want to have to get into this again but I had to because I thought I need to challenge this and so I did, but it just caused like twenty minutes of like, debate, and I don't think he ever had any intention of changing his mind

BROOKLYN: but I think the amount of times I'm thinking back to assemblies I sat through as a student, but also ones I've sat through as a teacher, and I wonder how many times do we show females in jobs that are thought of as traditionally masculine and they've never actually seen the flip side? Like do we show male nurses, male midwives,

RORY: flight attendants

BROOKLYN: when I was teaching about pregnancy and I said obviously about midwives, and one of the students said, I mean I must have used a gender neutral term, but he went 'oh but midwives are female as they're mid *wives*, they're not 'midpeople', and i thought you know what? Fair enough, and I went on to explain, but it was like groundbreaking for them but then I thought you know what, how many times have we sat through an assembly where its been like females can do all the jobs males can do, but not actually the opposite? Like males can do all the jobs females can too? Jobs are jobs at the end of the day.

ROBIN: I wonder if they worry about, because, kind of, female having jobs that kind of are stereotypically not theirs, it's kind of, the males then worry about erasing what they have already, like it kind of being taken over almost, like defensive?

RORY: Y'know, I have this argument all about the time about the idea of equality and like when we're teaching something like feminism, or the suffragettes, or something like that, and the idea that like, I think the boys get really, as you say, defensive about it, but I say well equality just means equal for everyone, it doesn't mean we want to

ALEX: take it from you

RORY: yeah yeah, it's patriarchal

ALEX: It doesn't mean you're going to get less, we just want equal rights. I think that's how they see it, that we're taking from them in order to get something more for ourselves which to be fair, in reality, yeah we are, because traditionally, you've been in the powerful positions, so therefore you are going to have to relinquish some control

BROOKLYN: you're still in the majority

ALEX: so sorry, like yeah ultimately, I would never, maybe I wouldn't say this to them, but ultimately, yeah you are going to have to relinquish some control and let women… achieve alongside you rather than…

ROBIN: it's the only way you're going to match isn't it, like RORYsaid, you're never going to get equal if you don't give up some of that, but it's almost like that fear of losing that masculinity that they don't like, or

RORY: or as if we're trying to make them… more.. Feminine?

BROOKLYN: yeah, I wonder if they feel emasculated in some way

ALEX: like feminism, they hate it so much don't they, as much as I try to persuade them that feminism is for them as well, they'll be like, well give us a word to reflect that and I'm like, but we *have* a word, feminism and to me it means for everybody… getting rid of sexism, that's what feminism means to me. But they don't like it, they think it's like a horrible word and they just think that… they see it as 'we hate men' and I think for a good few months, there was boys in our classes who felt like we hated men.

BROOKLYN: I think that there probably is some, maybe historic, sort of, there are, historically, feminists that have been a bit…

ALEX: yeah giving it a bad name

BROOKLYN: maybe a bit too much, but erm

ROBIN: and I think they probably get the attention in the media which is why they then know about that

ALEX: it's like the trans debate isn't it

ROBIN: they don't actually know what is happening, they just see a title and read it and then think

BROOKLYN: scroll past… everything is a 30 second video

ALEX: it's a tribal mentality of 'us v them', they're constantly been taught like, well pitted against other people, so Andrew Tate sees himself as against feminism, so therefore they see themselves as against… us versus them, sort of thing

BROOKLYN: I also think with like the tiktok generation, now aswell, unlike previous generations where you get news from, it's not balanced, the way algorithms work is that you see one video and if you watch that video through then it presents more videos like that so I think the problem is that then they have these views instilled into them in an indoctrinating way because actually they watched that one Andrew Tate video and then oh, another 5 or 6 Andrew Tate videos and there's more and more and more

ALEX: I remember this from like, when it was Corbyn versus Theresa… was it Theresa May?

Others: yeah yeah

ALEX: and I remember watching, cos I was on facebook all the time, and it was like video after video of Corbyn, and I remember thinking oh my god, without a doubt he's gonna win cos he was everywhere, everybody loves him, and it wasn't until after the election when I was like maybe that was just my algorithm, cos I would click on one video and it would then lead me to another one and it would say 'because you liked this, here's another one' and the kids don't get that

BROOKLYN: I think some of the issues are that if you have kids who are coming from families who, maybe, endorse those views, and they're watching videos online, unknowingly being indoctrinated more because the algorithm goes 'well you've watched this one video, here are 10 more videos you're gonna like' and it just starts with one video that you've watched through and that's it, it then gets them into a cycle and then when we try and challenge their views in school, they go on the defensive because its like

RORY: I think especially with the sort of area we're in, and not to be stereotypical, but parents don't always necessarily agree with school, or put a lot of value on school I don't think, that's sort of passed down and I think why would they listen to anything we have to say or believe us?

BROOKLYN: exactly, it's definitely true from being in the SEN department, we do a lot of phone calls home to parents, and well, you even made comments on how some of the parents will speak to us, haven't we, I mean there's a handful I can think of that we dread ringing the parents of cos of the way that they speak down to you and we shouldn't do, cos actually, you know what, they should be told that 'if you're going to speak to me in that way', but then they'll say 'well you're going on the defensive', but it's..

ROBIN: and I've got to say, the ones that I don't like ringing because they talk down to me, are males

BROOKLYN: yeah

ROBIN: and kind of..

BROOKLYN: but then it's also their children… which I suppose is why we're ringing

ROBIN: they will almost tell me how to do my job, as if I don't know

ALEX: mansplain

ROBIN: but actually, if QUINN rang… they'd have a lovely conversation.

BROOKLYN: and sometimes, if it was… and we're in different power dynamics, and there'll be times where you'll ring, and you'll get a completely different vibe to when I ring, even though we're both females, I've got that slight elevation, but then there's times where I'll ring and they'll completely talk down to me, but if QUINN rings who is on the same level that you are, he'll get the respect of that parent as it's a male voice as opposed to a female voice.

RORY: I think that's reflected in the kids as well isn't it, as well, I mean that attitudes that kids have, and I think we've touched on this, but like, to male teachers.

ALEX: I'll say to mine, would you speak to Mr XX like that, would you speak to Mr XX like that, and I can see the boys thinking no I wouldn't, but then they'll say 'yeah' and I'm thinking 'I know you wouldn't' or they won't say anything, because they're thinking 'no I wouldn't speak to them like that' and then I think 'so why are you talking to me like that?'

BROOKLYN: well again, with having quite a nice balanced department in terms of male and female, it's quite interesting when you have males raise their voices to an individual, particularly another male student, compared to when a female raises their voice, for the most part, not always, but I feel like when a male raises their voice to a male student when they're misbehaving, they listen. When a female raises their voice, I've witnessed from observing other's lessons, that they will then sometimes laugh to their friends, and they don't … it's like <kissing teeth> 'whatever'

ALEX: I also know that some boys in Y9 in particular, do it on purpose to try and wind teachers up, and when they're leaving the classroom, they'll praise each other, like 'oh you've proper wound her up there' and they know that they're doing it, they want to... They want to wind female teachers up.

BROOKLYN: I've also noticed more and more, there's a small minority of students who… well it's starting to get larger, and I've challenged this with certain individuals, and they think that certain female teachers are out to get them, it's like they don't see that sometimes it's their behaviour and it's.. We're challenging the behaviour just as anyone would with anyone, but it's like 'nah you just don't like us' and it's like 'it's not that though' and it's only ever a female teacher I've heard them have issue with, it's never 'that male teacher'

ALEX: but yeah I mean I've even had that from kids like… do you remember that boy who was marking on his arm, so I had a boy in like my Y10 who was as far as I'm concerned he's lovely… lazy isn't he, but he's lovely, and I was telling the class off, I think I was telling him to get back on task because he was talking, I'd say 'so and so, get back to work' and he took out his pen and marked on his arm. I thought, what on earth is he doing? So i went over and

I said ‘what's this, are you doing a tally?’ and it said like ‘girls’ with lines under and it and it said his initial with lines, and I said ‘are you marking how many times I tell the girls off compared to you?’ and he said ‘yeah cos I think you’re victimising me’ or something like that and I was just like…. But even he was like… I was thinking he wouldn’t normally say something like that, so even the nice boys, I think it’s instilled in them that they think the female teachers pick on them, and they don’t pick on girls, like ‘you’re letting the girls talk’ and I said to one of the girls ‘could you hold your work up?’ and she said she had written 2 sides of A4 and I was like ‘you’ve written one paragraph, so maybe I am saying you should shut up and they can carry on’

BROOKLYN: yeah I’ve had that before as well, again, I mean not every girl, there are a lot of lazy girls, but a lot of time in class, I mean it’s reflected in their results, girls do take pride in their work, so sometimes they are chatting, but they’re getting on with their work and a lot of the time they are chatting about the work, whereas I’ve had times, again not always, where the boys are like ‘but you’re telling me I need to be quiet and I need to focus, but they’re chatting’ but I’m thinking but they’re chatting about work, and they’re onto the extension task, but then their attitude is just ‘you're picking on us’ and I’m like ‘I’m not’. But on the flip side, I have had boys who are (inaudible) and the girls will almost challenge you for doing it, they don’t see it as ‘work’ as the thing that’s dividing them, they’ll put it down to something else, and I’ve had times where it’s been like ‘oh you’ve let the boys get away with it’ or ‘you’re letting the girls get away with it’ whereas actually what’s decider on whether I’m letting you talk or not is whether you’re on task?

RORY: Sometimes I think the way that we’ve been told how to solve the problem in school isn’t great either, like we’ve been told that ‘that person needs a male teacher’, like oh well they shouldn’t be in your class cos they’re not responding to you very well, maybe they need a man to teach them next year, which I think isn’t the solution either.

ROBIN: they need to be taught to have that respect

All: yeah

BROOKLYN: respect is respect

ROBIN: like not whether.. If say a kid comes up and they’re upset, I know QUINN will say would you like a male or a female to talk to, I would never dream of asking that?

ALEX: that’s true actually

ROBIN: I would just have that chat but actually, like he was saying earlier from his perspective, that worry of actually what could happen, and he would come up to me and say there’s a young girl who is upset, could you talk to her because I don’t feel comfortable, and it’s like he shouldn’t feel like that just because he’s doing his job, exactly the same way that I’m doing my job. He shouldn’t feel as though he has to question would you feel more comfortable with a male or female member of staff and I’m just able to do that?

ALEX: that’s so interesting because I think I’ve always had this perspective that young female staff have to work harder to control behaviour I think? And men just automatically get

respect as soon as they walk in the room? But I've never, I have considered it from that point of view, but maybe I need to consider it more that they like do have that to contend with as well, like children might not open up to them as much as they would with a female member of staff? But I definitely think in terms of behaviour control, men definitely have the upper hand. Whereas we've had to work… as ECTs we have to work so hard and are taught how to control classes and stuff

RORY: it's just engrained into society I think. I think that sometimes I'm subconsciously more… I dunno, alert? I don't know what it is, as if to when a man walks into the room?

ALEX: but then I think I also have this problem that I'm still wanting to be seen as nice cos I'm a girl?

RORY: yeah. Same.

ALEX: like if it was a girl, and they're like oh yeah she's dead strict, I would think oh they don't like them, whereas if they said 'oh Mr XX is strict', I wouldn't assume they don't like him, do you know what I mean? Whereas I think because I am a woman, I really want to be liked! And that's something that I need to get over.

BROOKLYN: is that partly because you're in early years teaching as well , I think we all go through a little bit of that, cos well

ALEX: hmm possibly, I was a supply teacher for 3 years though and I didn't care when I was a supply teacher

BROOKLYN: I suppose you go round from school to school though don't you

RORY: I think it's when you have your own <year>, cos I feel like that and I feel like I feel less of it than at the end of this year than what I felt like at the beginning, like I just wanted …

ALEX: to be liked

RORY: yeah … a bit more at the start of the year

ROBIN: I used to feel a bit like that when I first became a qualified TA, but now I'm like actually I'm just here to do my job? And it shouldn't matter

ALEX: it is getting better I'd have to admit

ROBIN: at first I was a bit the same, like… oh I can't tell them off for that but now I'm like actually no I don't have any different expectations for anything and sometimes that gets challenged, like 'why are you treating my child like that?' and it's actually because they're the same as everyone else. There's a lot of expectations from our parents that their child should be treated differently, based on SEN, circumstances at home, kind of if they have one parent, and things like that. I think too many of those things are asked to be taken into consideration

BROOKLYN: Yeah, we've had times when comments have been said, and it's like what we were saying earlier, 'that comes from their dad', but that shouldn't be an excuse though, like it needs to be like, if a child has said something outlying in society, or today's views, they still should be challenged on that, irrespective of what has come before them, cos otherwise you go into a cycle of 'oh that's accepted because that's what their dad did' so then that child, if they become a parent and they still have those views, then you need to break that cycle

ROBIN: I tend to have a lot of chats where if say a child has done something, I say what would happen in real life

BROOKLYN: which I avoid, we avoid don't we saying what would happen at home? Because at home, won't be what is accepted in society for a lot of them … like what we would… we've started to change how we …

ROBIN: like what would happen, if this incident happened in society, as an adult, what would happen

BROOKLYN: changing our language

ROBIN: it's becoming a lot more accepted, from the kids as well, because actually they understand some of the stuff they've done in PSHE, that it would have consequences and it would have consequences bigger than a reflection or going into the behaviour room

BROOKLYN: I must admit, I think, I know we've said a lot of negative about kids, but I'll go back to the fact that I think kids are incredibly accepting than what's come before them, again I know it's cos their parents are more accepting than their parents before them, but I had my first lesson this year, I mean I completely redesigned my period lesson, you know my little conflict I had before that, we did some training, on the use of language,

ROBIN: feminista

BROOKLYN: the feminista one, yeah, I couldn't remember the name of the training, and I changed my lesson on periods from it being a period is something that a female has every 28 days to people with uteruses, and it was the first time I'd ever taught it that way, and I remember talking to you beforehand and I said I'm not sure how.. It was almost that fear of the class, of the girls being offended by it, because it was like… or the boys being like 'well no only girls have periods', but you know what, they just accepted it. I didn't have one single person, one single kid,

ROBIN: but it is that thing again of society and what other people will say

BROOKLYN: I was more concerned than the kids were! Whereas they were just like 'yeah people with uteruses, you know what, fair enough!

ALEX: what year group was that?

BROOKLYN: 8.

ALEX: yeah I honestly think that Y8 at the end of… Y8 is sort of like the year where it's like oh are they going to accept it or are they not, and Y9 I always think nah I'm gonna have problems here. I know there's loads of lads in Y9 that would have had a massive issue with that.

BROOKLYN: yeah but do you think that, I'm not sure if its interesting though that, cos then I think some of my Y9s when they were in Y8 were something like always changes in them when they get to Y9, like I feel like when they're younger years they're far more accepting, and I don't know if….

All: yeah

RORY: I can almost see it now, like there's something brewing in the air, I can feel it, like I've got a Y8 form group and I can just tell that some of them are starting to get a bit… like with their views more now

ALEX: there's things that the RS, the PSHE curriculum that I know we're supposed to cover at certain points and there was one lesson, we were supposed to do the dangers of pornography with Y8, and, because of leadership, it got pulled, and they were like that's completely inappropriate for Y8 and I was like but 51% of Y8 will have watched pornography

BROOKLYN: or been exposed to it

ALEX: yeah or exposed to it in some way, and the argument was 'yeah but that's not all of them' and I was like… but they need to know!

RORY: not necessarily all of Y10 will have been exposed to pornography, but when do we start?

ALEX: exactly

BROOKLYN: then I think again, I mean I know it's limited time, but there's things that we teach lower down in the school and like I wanna say, again, kids lower down the school are a bit like sponges, they just accept… they accept and accept and accept, so sometimes I think, you have to do your more challenging ones at that critical period of time when they're starting to have that wobble, so I think mid to end of Y8 is that critical period because I think at the start of Y7 if you taught the dangers of pornography, they'd be like …. Using all sorts of words and that sort of thing

ALEX: and there'd be parental complaints and

Others: yeah yeah

BROOKLYN: whereas towards the end of Y8, there's that critical point

ALEX: and that was gonna be put to them then, I thought it was perfect timing, it was actually recommended by the DFE that that is the perfect time.

ROBIN: I think they're so much younger now though than they ever were before, and that's

BROOKLYN: cos of internet access

ROBIN: yeah that's scary as well

BROOKLYN: they all have mini computers in their pockets

ROBIN: who monitors what they do? To say actually, you're still really young

ALEX: yeah but the comment I got from… like the reason I had for pulling it, was well pornography is something you get from the top shelves of a newsagent, and I was like 'christ'

BROOKLYN: (inaudible) for a long long time

ALEX: yeah, I feel like it's really hard to then be like, I dunno, with this new role to be like actually no you're wrong, and this is when it should be… but it's picking and choosing battles.

BROOKLYN: well I think it is, and again, partly, and again, social media, had loads of benefits but also flaws, and I think if you think about some of our Y7s, I think a lot of them use social media but it's far more monitored when they're in Y7 and Y8, like I know I talk to kids who say 'my mum has to log in for this' , whereas I think they go into Y9 and it's like 'they're in KRORYnow' or they're a teenager now, so they start giving them more freedoms, but I think you go from having, kids having those freedoms, but they don't know what to do with them.

RORY: they don't have the responsibility for the freedom

ROBIN: we get a lot of 'well it's their responsibility now as a teenager, and like that can be down to even like taking ADHD medication, like it's their responsibility as a teenager, no, they're still a child.

BROOKLYN: yeah, I think at times, I think that's why we have that battle where some of these views start to come in at the end of Y8 because that's when parents start to relinquish, not relinquish some of their power, but start to transfer some of the responsibility they have in their child's life to the child, but ultimately the child's brain isn't developed enough to know the consequences of what they do and say, or have that view of what they're seeing and going 'is that true' as half of them would say 'well i saw that on tiktok so yeah it's true'

ALEX: oh god the amount of times… if I had a pound for every kid that said I saw this thing on tiktok, but then a lot of times, they've learned a load of 'an inspector calls' stuff from tiktok didn't they? Like they've memorised quotations, and all sorts

BROOKLYN: yeah there's some science videos on there! But it's like so scattered on tiktok, like they'll see a… they won't be able to go through, as adults we would go through and we'd

go ‘ah yeah that’s not true’ or ‘that’s fake’, ‘yeah that’s not gonna happen’ or ‘that’s a bit of a …. View’ but like

ROBIN: do we not need to teach them those skills? Is that not our responsibility?

BROOKLYN: I think we don’t, I think we don’t, and I know we’ve just banned phones, and again, I was a bit annoyed when we banned phones, well, I mean I know why we’ve banned them and I agree with why we’ve banned them, but we’ve not dealt with the issues of why we banned them.

All; yeah

BROOKLYN: so all we’ve done …

ALEX: it’s like we’ve washed our hands of everything to do with phones, it’s like it’s not our problem anymore

RORY: yeah sort that out outside of school

ALEX: but I can’t … and in some ways I agree with that, but then in other ways, it's like how do we tackle how we teach them to be kind to each other?

BROOKLYN: yeah, so like I was hoping for something, to be like, well we’ve banned them because people are being unkind, and again, I didn’t like the fact they blamed it just on teenage girls, cos I know fine well it wasn’t just teenage girls? And I also felt like they blamed…

ALEX: and I hate like, cos, like I know I’ve had issues with a girl in my form for example of sending nudes and like there’s this whole thing now of like she’s seen as as a bit of a…. Well like a slag basically, and I’m like hang on a second, the two boys who asked her for that photo need to be taught a lesson here

RORY: they’re in the wrong

ALEX: they’re the ones who are in the wrong here by asking her to send it in the first place, but no reputation has been assigned to them. Do you know what I mean? It’s her who has this reputation now.

RORY: I think that the attitude is if a boy did that, then yeah they might be a bit of a creep, but they certainly not a slag, they certainly… I mean they’re revered for it

BROOKLYN: they are aren’t they, but I think partly, I don’t know if our school, or all schools PSHE curriculums are just outdated, because …

ALEX: yeah but do you know that, the government are too scared to accept that our kids need teaching this stuff at a younger age now, like what I consider… some of our kids are gonna leave school, they’re gonna sign up to the likes of tinder and things like that and be sent, the things that these girls are going to be sent on these dating apps…. I really worry for

them, and I think we're not preparing them for that whatsoever and like ok, they might get a string of GCSEs, but like they need to be safe ultimately, more than anything else.

BROOKLYN: in both online, and in the community, cos a lot will still happen when people are out and about in public. And I mean, we've just dealt with stuff recently where, actually it was a Y10 girl that was been…. Men, grown men were been like, coming on to her, and she didn't think anything was wrong with it.

ROBIN: but even like drinking alcohol and driving a car, that didn't trigger a thought of 'oh that shouldn't be happening.' like that was just… nah it's fine, like that's what they're exposed to, that's what they're used to like there's nothing wrong with that

BROOKLYN: I feel sometimes like, obviously, I've gone from being a tutor to now I don't have my own tutor group, so I cover PSHE all the time and I'll be doing, I'll be doing lessons, and I'll look through the lesson and go, as quite a young teacher going I remember being in school, and if I had to sit through this in school, I'd have sat and thought what on earth am I here for? I think there's times like where I will literally go, I mean I said to you before I've gone through the lesson, seen what the topic is and then gone and found my own stuff in a way that's going to actually engage with the kids, cos some of the stuff is not engaging for the kids, and I've sat in lessons before watching other people teaching them, and I've gone 'I'm bored' but they've actually been really interesting topics, and topics you could have a really meaty discussion with, but just the way that they…

ALEX: I think the difficulty is as well though, like having had conversations with male teachers, that really struggle with teaching anything other than their own subject, I'll say well did you have any girls contributing anything? And they'll go well no, it was just boys, and it's like…. And I've had some male teachers say to me 'I don't feel comfortable teaching that topic' and it's really hard because I don't know how, other than like maybe getting people in to teach them, but you can't do that with everything.

ROBIN: but do we not need to get to a point where we're trained enough, or supported enough where we are comfortable to deliver it?

ALEX: that's my argument, like you're not just a maths teacher, you're also a tutor, it's your job to know this, but at the same time as a school we're not training staff enough to actually deliver that curriculum

ROBIN : we have some SEN kids who do come out and we will sit and deliver it 1-1, and I have no problem delivering it, but I don't feel in the slightest bit… that I am trained enough to actually do this.

BROOKLYN: but when we actually, I mean you've had your TA training, and we've all been through teacher training, you never get trained to deliver that.

ALEX: on my PGCE I got absolutely nothing on it.

RORY: I don't think it's even mentioned?

BROOKLYN: you get trained how to deal with your misconceptions in your own subject, or how to teach your own subject, but how do you… when do you get taught to deal with the misconceptions in PSHE lessons, that you'll be expected to deliver as a tutor, or the social issues that you'll be expected to deliver as a tutor, you don't, you just kinda get thrown into it.

ROBIN: and I think that's why I don't have a problem doing it because a lot of my qualification covers the types of things that we cover

ALEX: you're probably more equipped than some of the teachers are at delivering that

ROBIN: but then it's like I lack the teaching side of it, like in how it would be delivered, but then my knowledge of content that needs to be delivered, that doesn't bother me.

ALEX: I think my aim next year is to try and make it so like the resources are good enough but I've been instructed to make sure that there's plenty of guided reading, and like it's hard, because I can't sometimes make it more entertaining

BROOKLYN: it shouldn't be entertaining

ALEX: or more engaging, do you know what I mean, like it is difficult, and then you sometimes look at some of the stuff we've had before, like on specialist days, and they'll say 'oh that's a jumping off point for you XXX' but then I think these scenarios are ridiculous, like some of the things are just like …

ROBIN: there's one where it's 'Tony's at the pub' or something

BROOKLYN: yeah that one. Well we've set scenarios and it's just sometimes, we've even laughed at some of the scenarios, we'll openly say that, because you've gone 'whose written this?' like

ROBIN: also the kids can't relate to the scenarios! It's like 55 year old Tony went to the pub and he was hit around the head, what should he do? The kid can't put themselves in that picture, they can't step into those shoes, because they'll have never been in that scenario before. So I think scenarios actually need to be reflective of some of these topics so they can then actually have a discussion and what they should do and shouldn't do and things like that. I don't think it's pitched right for them.

ALEX: I'm in the process of doing it all for next year and like.. I was like 'ok it's already there, I just need to bookletise it all' … no I don't <laugh> I need to overhaul quite a lot of it.

BROOKLYN: well I think that's why some of our PSHE topics just go over their heads because it's a lots been like taken from TES or taken from wherever, and not actually made relevant to the kids that we have infront of us, and it's just an 'off the shelf' lesson on misogyny, and it doesn't deal with the issues facing XXX, so actually, when you're teaching it, you go, well the kids aren't resonating with this because it's not (inaudible), it's designed for..

ROBIN: we know from statistics that the likelihood of our kids moving out of this area is very slim, so they need to be taught about what is gonna affect them here,

RORY: yeah what's happening here and so on

ROBIN: and how it will affect them and how they can change things, rather than 'in Manchester this happens', because the likelihood of them leaving here we know is very slim.

BROOKLYN: and I think at times using examples from the local area, so XXX, places they've been to, the time when we've done reading in PSHE, when I was a tutor, it was a couple of years ago, I'll have done it and it said 'this happened in London'...

ALEX: they see that as such a distant place , like that would never happen to me

ROBIN: when I was in the police session with Y9, on the student who had relatives in the school, had been stabbed and had died and you could have heard a pin drop because it was in their area, the kids knew the places they were talking about. They could, not like resonate with it, but they could understand it more because they were talking about places they had actually been

RORY: they could imagine themselves in that situation more

ROBIN: so actually you could see the difference between their engagement there, compared to if you are just talking about a generic story, like it might be the same but just a different location.

BROOKLYN: and I think at times it needs to be brought home to them, to say like, when you're saying about like… how many women are killed by men every week, trying to get the statistics from the area to say like this is happening on your doorstep, like

ALEX: did you see somebody was killed in a pub in XXX on Saturday? Oh is he still alive? Oh I was told he died. Did you hear what had actually happened to him? Got whipped with a bloody dog lead

ROBIN: do you know how it started? He was making comments towards a female in the pub. A younger female. So then her partner has then attacked him.

BROOKLYN: but then there's like... I think there's like times you almost need to make like a saved document file of news articles from the local area because I think

ALEX: the problem with some of it though is the problem for some of the kids to be related or know some of these people.

RORY: ah yeah that is true

ALEX: so it's really hard to get a story from the local area and a kid to go 'oh that was my uncle', you know what I mean. Maybe if it was like places further away.

BROOKLYN: yeah, places that they'll know of. I think in times when I've sat in a lot of PSHE lessons, and I know we had a period of time where we got them from Oak Academy, they were designed for the community that Oak Academy was designed, like middle class England, so, like ..

ALEX: oh I dunno, I worked for Oak Academy and I was part of the quality control for that

BROOKLYN: oh really , for the PSHE side of things?

ALEX: well for all of it, it was , the teachers were from right across the country.

BROOKLYN: oh really! We found a lot of PSHE stuff, well it might have just been the ones we cherry picked…

ALEX: yeah… some of them were from like the same school, so say like some English teachers would be like a group from one school, but then a lot of the time they were like all over the country, cos it was all done on teams and zoom

BROOKLYN: maybe not the lessons, but the issues that were covered and then it was like 'this issue is from London' or this is an issue from Manchester, and like it was local to someone, just not our kids, and some of the things I thought you can find an example of something like that happening in the North East. Like the big cities around us, and I think it just brings it home and makes it more relevant to the kids if it is on their doorstep, like I'll talk to kids and be like you say something like, I can't remember what it was I was talking about the other day.. And I gave some statistics like from the local area, and they thought it was an issue that was elsewhere, they didn't realise it was happening here.

ROBIN: like they think well I'm never gonna go to London so that's fine, but it's like no that's just an example that happens everywhere.

BROOKLYN: like I think in terms of some of the issues that are linked to misogyny, it's like it doesn't happen here, and it's like… it does.

Interview: Alex

J: to start off, I'm interested in kind of what your personal definition of misogyny or misogynistic behaviours are?

Alex: so, to me, misogyny is the prejudice against women based on their gender and to me that's different from misandry or mis-andry, I never know how to pronounce it, which is the prejudice against men, some people define it as a hatred against women but to me, that's a really strong word, to me it's prejudice against women based on their gender. Misogynistic behaviours come out in just the disrespect of women, so for example in the classroom, that could be like actively not taking instructions just because it's a woman, and I know that, I think it's something we have a problem with in this school. That's the main way I think it manifests itself in this school, like not following instructions just because it's a woman.

J: I think you've already touched upon it a little bit there, but do you find it to be an easy thing to define?

Alex: yeah, cos I, erm… I don't know, because to me, some people say well isn't it just sexism, but to me it's not, because it's reflected in societies statistics, so things like I know we have the highest rates of domestic abuse in the NE, and I know that women statistically suffer from domestic abuse more than men do, I know that 3 women… every 3 days sorry, that a woman is killed by a man in the UK, and women are more … although men will be killed more than women, it will by other men, and to me it's not men that are the problem, it's the patriarchy that is the problem that we need to sort out, erm... Yeah. But I do find it easy to define because I don't see it as sexism, because sexism suggests that it's a 2 way street but I think it's predominantly women that are the issue, the erm, <tut> victims.

J: Ok, thank you. Again, you've touched upon this a little bit there, but do you think or feel that misogyny or the display of misogynistic behaviours is something that is an issue within this school, and again, we are trying to keep this very much focused around the young people, rather than other adults in the school, so do you feel as though that is something that is quite an issue?

Alex: yeah absolutely, I think there are… it certainly feels like the higher up the school they go, so I'd say as soon as they hit the teenage age, that's when boys start to, um, some boys, absolutely not all of them because we have some absolutely lovely boys in this school, but there are some and I don't know if they're learning it from home because we have a lot of single parent families and it's predominantly women… single mams and I think the boys just in general seem to have less respect for female teachers? And a lot of the female teachers feel this, I think the young female staff have it so much harder because the boys will either just explicitly ignore you because you're a woman, or they will make implicit comments where you're like I know that that's… and that's the hardest thing about it, that you can't pinpoint it sometimes, but you just know that they're treating you differently because you're a woman. So I'll say to them 'would you speak to Mr XX like that?' or 'would you speak to… I don't know, Mr XX' like that?' and they'll go 'well obviously not' and it's like well there you go! I know that you're speaking to me like that because I'm a woman. Erm, this is where I've got a bit of a reputation in the school for being like the feminist teacher because I feel really

strongly about it and I think we need to do something, but I don't know how we tackle it. There was talk of doing an intervention with some boys in Y9, but I don't …. I don't think that's even happened? I don't know. We got asked to put some names forward, which we did, and I don't think it even happened. Erm, but again, that was them being sat down by men, spoken to by men, and being told 'you must respect female staff'. That was what I thought was the intervention they had in mind, and I was like <sigh> and the thing is because it's so engrained in our society, especially in this local area, I think it's really hard. Erm, but for example, some boys will make, like, sexual comments, for example, they'll make it even about other students, like I remember one boy saying to another girl, erm, she said something about leaving school and going on benefits, she was joking, as she was saying she was dead tired, and said 'I'm just gonna leave school, have a baby and go on benefits', which is problematic in itself! But you know, she was clearly joking, and this boy said to her 'oh don't worry, you've always got only fans to fall back on' and he couldn't see how what he had said was misogynistic, or even just sexist, he couldn't see that and I think that's massively what we've got a problem with. We've been doing the Salem witch trials in English, as we've been doing the crucible, and erm, there's a few boys in my class that erm, they just… well luckily it's died down now because funnily enough we've moved on, but you know, I had comments like erm, 'oh women are witches though' and er, and then I had one boy that just kept calling all the teachers that were female witches, saying like 'you're a witch, you're a female', and 'all the female teachers in this school are witches' and it was just incessant, and then I actually had them trying to put a formal complaint in because they, well a group of boys, in that class said that we were talking about women too much in the class! And I was like… we're doing about the Salem witch trials, how can we not talk about women? That's literally impossible. But it feels like they… and that to me, is their misogyny coming out, like, what about men? If we.. you know I ran a competition for international women's day, purely just because I wanted to, and I didn't want to talk about the things that people talk about on twitter, you know things like violence against women, which needs to be talked about, but in school I wanted to do something positive, so I ran a competition which was design a poster of a woman that's inspired you, and all I got from the boys for about a week afterwards was 'what about men? Why've you not done this for men? When's international men's day?' and it was just constant and I just find it so disheartening because it's just… I dunno. It's really hard to keep going with it when you're just like getting that backlash constantly.

J: where do you think… cos you know, I've heard this being referred to as 'whataboutery', and you know I think it's a cross section of men, where do you feel like for young people, why do you think that might be their response?

Alex: I think that with some of the boys, they think that we're taking away from them to talk about women, erm, but in my classes, I find it frustrating because the boys are certainly not silenced in this school, if you walked into any of my classes, it would be the boys who have their hands up for answers predominantly, some girls will, but not that many. I find it especially lower down in Y8 and Y9, the girls won't offer an opinion because they're worried about what the boys will say to them. My whole board, cos what I do is write my achievement points on the board, so I'll fill it up and I'll look at it and go 'why have I only got boys on the board, can I please have a girl contributing?' and I'd do cold calling, but I find it uncomfortable to randomly select a girl to give an opinion, or let us have an insight into their mind through creative writing for example, they don't like that. They don't wanna, erm, they

don't wanna put themselves forward to be judged, and I think that's what they're really worried about, whereas the boys, I find it ironic that they're feeling as if they're not being spoken about when they literally have the floor, the majority of the time. And even when we were doing an article, I think I mentioned this in the focus group, we did an article on barbies and how they've ruined women's perceptions of their bodies and beauty standards and things like that, and as soon as they got the piece of paper, the boys were like 'what about action men?' ' what about boys? What about…' and I think I'm just giving you an article to have a discussion, it just feels like we're taking away from them and I, as PSHE lead, that means that I have constantly had to placate them with 'well here's an article about, erm, eating disorders in men' and it's frustrating, because if you look at the statistics, statistically women are more likely to suffer from an eating disorder than men, yet we're focusing on men because they're doing the 'whataboutery'. I don't know how to find the balance between 'we're talking about women today' and 'ok today we'll talk about men' because they seem to see it as like… as much as I try to explain we're trying to deconstruct the patriarchy and toxic masculinity and that benefits everybody, they don't see it like that. They think that it's just 'oh you just wanna talk about women all the time'

J: Are they responsive to when you do try and deconstruct it, so you know, how is that taken? Are they open to listen, or?

Alex: They think feminism is not for them, they say feminism is for women, it's literally in the title, and I'll say well not to me it isn't, and I'll try and explain. They'll see things on tiktok, and there are feminists that give it a bad name, without a doubt, especially, erm, ones on tiktok and things, really aggressive ones, they just see it as manhaters, and think it's synonymous with man hating. I've tried to incorporate speeches into our curriculum in English, so, erm, Emma Watson did a fantastic speech a few years ago at the UN, where she was launching a campaign called 'he for she', and she was specifically inviting men to join feminism, to try and stop toxic masculinity, and we do that speech in Y8, well I was certainly doing it, and it was just going over their heads. They want a word for them, and I get that, I totally understand that, you want to feel like you're part of a community, and they don't feel like the feminist community is for them, but I don't know how else to sell it to them. I did do a lesson on toxic masculinity for year… PSHE, and that was really successful. It was the first time staff were coming up to me and saying that lesson was really good, it really got them talking, the discussions were fantastic, and I think that really helped. Certainly with my form, we had a great discussion about how toxic masculinity is bad for men and women, but again, I presented them with statistics about violence against women because of toxic masculinity, and it was hands shooting up and 'what about men' and I was like it's literally the next slide, just give me a second! That tends to be what we get all the time.

J: It feels very defensive doesn't it, from them. Thinking about the amount of time you've worked in this school or in previous roles that you may have had, I wonder if you feel that this is an issue that has got better, has it got worse, or has it stayed the same?

Alex:
XXXX

because of that, I sometimes think do I actually see this as a bigger issue than it actually is because of my experiences? And I don't know. But I think because I have more of an awareness of it because of that, I'm like no, I just know more than the average teacher does.

J: Yeah. Yeah I imagine it's an issue where the more you look, the more you realise how engrained it is, in terms of what I've been doing so far, you realise how much it just underpins everything.

Alex: then I feel like it's an algorithm on social media, the more you see something, the more you feel like it's just normal, but to me, statistics reflect how normal it is, do you know what I mean? That's what frustrates me, when some of the boys were a bit hostile towards me, they're not anymore, but there was a point in the middle of this year where they said 'god she's got an answer for everything her', and it was like yeah I know my stuff! So if you hit with something that's not true, I'll hit you with a statistic. And I know that's because I have a vested interest personally in it, if that makes sense.

J: yeah so you feel like it's potentially, the more you look, the more you find, so you might find it difficult to say whether or not it's got worse, it's got better or whether it's just always been there?

Alex: yeah, I think it has, but then I've been working in schools for… oh how long, 7 years, 7-8 year? But I don't think I've ever seen it so explicit before. Where they'll actively call women witches, or they'll be so sexual in front of teachers as well, like I know that yesterday there was an incident where a boy was asking a teacher if she had performed a sex act before, like a very particular one that's disgusting, and erm, I don't think I've ever seen it like that before, erm, but I've only been in this school since last April, so I couldn't say whether it's changed over the years here, you might be better off asking XXX, I don't know.

J: Erm, so you mentioned there like you feel as though it is getting more explicit, and acknowledged that this is something you are very interested in, but I just wondered what you feel is maybe influencing young people at the moment, in terms of this, I suppose brazenness in the way that they are talking, the explicitness in what they say, or this 'whataboutery', I know you've mentioned about the local context and in the focus group, but is there anything else that might be influencing the young people in terms of driving these behaviours and attitudes?

Alex: I think social media, like 90% social media and then 10% what they have in their household, like Andrew Taters for example, and the thing is, Andrew Tate is such a symptom of a wider issue, like if we were to eradicate him somehow, but then the incel culture online is still there. The problem is that these sorts of communities used to be hidden in the dark depths of the internet, but now they're getting spread and spread, so now they're on mainstream social media, like TikTok for example. The problem is that algorithm isn't it, boys watch one video, they'll like it, and then they'll end up watching others like it so much, it ends up brainwashing them into believing that women are inferior to them, and that's where I try and give them the benefit of the doubt because I think I know what's happened to you, or I can sense what's happened, and I think is this your fault or are you just looking for a place to belong, and you've found it in some community that tells you it's not your fault that women

don't want anything to do with you, or it's not your fault you can't get a girlfriend, this is why, and you can see why it happens totally, especially for young boys who are insecure, but would never admit they're insecure, they want to feel that belonging and I think that's where they get it from. Yeah. I mean I've had boys who will actively say that they love Andrew Tate, they love how many cars he's got, he's got this that and the other, but as soon as I say 'well what do you think about his views about women, aren't they problematic? And they will just flat out deny it, they'll say 'well I've never heard anything about that' and I'll think yes you have. And other girls in the room will say yes you have, I mean it's all over tiktok what he says. But they'll purposely ignore, or think they're ignoring every bad thing he says about women, and they'll just want to focus on 'oh he's a good kickboxer, and he's rich and he has loads of cars', they won't think about how he's got to that position, because they don't want to. If that makes sense.

J: yeah, Ok. So I want to move on to thinking a bit about how as a school you feel as though this issue is responded to, so I'm interested in kind of two strands of it, erm, so from a preventative point of view which erm, I'm thinking you'll probably be quite a key driver of given your role in school, but also from a reactive point of view. So erm, how an incident that is misogynistic in nature is dealt with in school, if that happens. So if we maybe start with talking about it preventatively in terms of educating… so what happens with that?

Alex: so yeah, usually the idea is that the PSHE curriculum is supposed to be the way that we inform them about these issues and things like that, however as part of the PSHE policy, we are supposed to embed all of the ideas from PSHE across our curriculums. Now that's a lot easier in English for example, where we can study a book that explores gender for example, which we do, like we've got a book in Y9 that's about a black gay drag queen in London, it's amazing, it's such a good book for deconstructing those sort of boxes that society puts you in in terms of gender and things like that. It's really easy in English to put that into the curriculum, which I see as a preventative thing, like we're trying to deconstruct gender a bit, but then things like science for example, or maths, you can't embed it into them. Um, RE is quite good, you can embed it into that… history are quite good at it, but they'll look at things like how women were viewed at this point in time, like the first world war, and they'll look at it from the perspective of different minorities, like women Sikhs, or black people, like, so they are very good at embedding it into theirs. In terms of reactive, so there wasn't… we've got a register system where you log C1s, C2s, C3s, so C1 is like a warning, a C2 is erm, a 20 minute detention, so if you have a C1, then the next thing is a C2, sometimes you can go straight to a C2 if you feel like it's necessary, like the behaviour has been particularly bad, a C3 is a room removal, like you would send them out, and they would get I think an hour detention now? I don't know, that's bad isn't it <laughs>, I don't care, as long as they're out! But to be fair, I very rarely C3 anybody because it just doesn't really happen that much in this school, we have got a very good… we have got good behaviour in this school, it is a very good school. Erm, but it wasn't until recently where… what was it the boy said… so I had a boy in my class and he said, erm, he sits there, what's why I'm looking at… and I'm trying to remember what he said, so some girl said something about 'what's a prostitute?' and he went 'oh, you' and I put it down as a C2, but he's already done something, so he was on a C1, but I remember being like .. just go, get out, because he was then arguing back about what was so problematic with what he said. And the thing was, I didn't see that as an educating moment because the rest of the class could clearly see what was wrong with what he said, he is a particularly problematic child, so I was like I'll discuss

this with you later. Normally, I will challenge a comment, and I did say that is a sexist comment, we can't say things like that in a classroom, I would never say that's a misogynistic comment, because most of the kids wouldn't know what it means, erm, until they get to Y9 when they do it in PSHE, erm but then I was looking on the system to try and log it, and I was like ok we have a C2 for a racist incident, but we don't have a C2 for a sexist incident? So I went straight to our guy who sorts the register out, and I was like please can we add it on, and we had this big discussion on what it should be called, and I was like it just needs to be called a sexist comment, because it needs to go both ways, it can't be a misogynistic one, because a girl might make comments about a boy, or even if a boy makes it about himself, but he was saying ….. Well what do you class as a sexist comment? And I think it should just be down to the discretion of the teacher, like for them to decide and it totally depends... Like sometimes it might be so bad that it's a C3, it's like that's really bad, you need to … but I dunno, it's really hard because it's like what you said was sexist, but do I give you a 20 minute detention or an hour detention, what's gonna make the difference, really?! You're not gonna stop being sexist based on whether you get 20 minutes or 50 minutes, sorry an hour, do you know what I mean? He is just one of the problems that we've got in terms of sexist boys in the school. So that's one thing that we're doing in terms of reactive, we've now got a quantifiable thing, but whether staff are actually using it all the time, I don't know, erm I mean I'm not the data person so I wouldn't know.

J: um yeah, I was gonna say it sounds like there's not… and going back to the very first question I asked, in relation to defining what this is, particularly misogynistic behaviours, erm and that example there, saying what is a sexist comment? It doesn't like sound there's any like… clear guidance about what it is… how do you think that compares, cos you know you just mentioned about a racist comment and I feel like they might be in similar kind of, arenas, in terms of there's very overt racism, and there's very overt misogynistic behaviour, but a lot of it is quite covert, is quite subtle as well?

Alex: I make this comparison all the time because if somebody says I don't know if this is sexist or not, I'll say imagine this is a black person and they're saying this relatively similar comment to a black person, but I think the problem is that misogyny is so engrained in our society, that people don't even recognise it when it's happening? But like for example, when those boys were saying to me, you know, we're talking about women too much <sigh> somebody said to me, XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX saying could you just tone it down a bit, and I was like … it **really** got my back up because I was like hang on, if you went to a history teacher and said you're talking about black people too much, would you say to that teacher 'can you just tone down the racism talk' or 'tone down the talk about black people' - there'd be uproar. But because I think people just think… because it's so normalised, others don't see it as misogyny half the time, and that's an issue. But I think we are getting better in this school, but I think we need staff training. We need like an expert to come in, but this is the problem, I don't think there's anybody out there whose doing that and I'd love to do it myself, but I don't want to stand in front of a school and give them misinformation and tell them the wrong things, but I would like to do something where we stand up and have a discussion about what is misogyny, how do we recognise it, and what do we do when it happens, because I think there are people in this school who would just ignore comments, there's certainly not a consensus of how to react to stuff

J1: when you say ignore comments, do you think that's because they don't want to take it on, or do you think it's maybe because they don't recognise the implications

Alex: some of them won't recognise it as misogyny, some of them will literally be like 'oh I can't be bothered to handle that' and just not do anything about it, erm or there's such a focus on teaching and learning all the time, which, as there should be, absolutely, erm that they might think this is gonna derail my lesson if I challenge it. But to me, there's nothing more important than challenging sexism exactly when it happens and explaining that... Even if afterwards, you feel that that didn't quite work, it's just having the confidence to do it as well, like I have kids, like one of them told me only women should be ballet dancers and if you're a male ballet dancer then you're definitely gay. And to me that might not be misogyny, but it's certainly sexist, and erm, well homophobic as well, and I outright challenged that, and I remember being in the middle of teaching about discourse markers, and I thought all I want to do is get you to understand the word alternatively, like that's all we're supposed to be doing right now <laughs> but it was 10 minutes of a discussion about ballet dancers, but even, the boy who actually said it… I know I'll never win with him, but I think the rest of the class needed to take that example of I'm not just ignoring a sexist comment, I'm making it known that we don't accept that. And yea.. I don't know whether that's… but we are sending them out into society at the end of school and the end of the school day, where I would like to think therefore, ohh Miss would challenge that, I'll challenge it, Do you know what I mean?

J: so do you think what is currently in place in the school is successful, in terms of responding to misogynistic attitudes or behaviours

Alex: no.

J: ok. So why do you think not?

Alex: I think it's going in the right direction, erm…. I remember in my interview, me and the headteacher had a bit of a debate about it, he asked me what I thought the biggest issue was in terms of this school, and I said misogyny, and he said 'ohh can we not just call it sexism?' and I was like nope, it's misogyny. To me, it's reflected in the behaviour of our boys, in particular, and the silence of our girls and yeah, I think it's just something that we're not addressing yet. You have to first recognise that it's a problem before you can do something to solve it, and I don't think we have. And I think XXXXXXXXXX, that's something that I really want to keep going with. I want to do focus groups with the kids and ask them about this sort of thing, and try and get… if they'll talk to me and who knows, that's the problem isn't it when it's a teacher. The girls will, they're very good at opening up and telling female teachers in particular when they see an issue, erm, but boys wouldn't. But yeah, there's just no… none of the teachers are on the same page about it, and that's the first thing that we need to tackle, to get everybody to see that this is a problem. And not just saying to female teachers 'oh we're gonna give you some more training on classroom behaviour management' rather than addressing the real problem which is that some boys will just outwardly not respect female teachers. So yeah, you can train staff on how to give out a C1, a C2 or a C3, and how to do classroom routines, like 3 2 1 eyes on me, and things like that, but you need to tackle the actual root cause for some of the boys. Some of the boys are just behaviourally bad for everybody, but then some of them, it's just so obvious they're doing it because they're being taught by a woman they don't like.

J: So is there... In terms of… you know you spoke a little bit about how things seem to be dealt with in a behavioural sense, and this is something that it sounds like you try and do, you try and provide opportunities to discuss it, do you think there is the space to discuss incidents afterwards? So say for example, say a boy calls a girl a slag, that would be dealt with through the schools behavioural system, do you feel there is opportunity afterwards to discuss about why that is not an appropriate word to call another female?

Alex: no, cos I see like school is like a treadmill, and you're just constantly moving and moving and moving, and you're constantly going, and there's sometimes not the opportunity to get off that treadmill and just pause and go 'let's address this' because you've got so many other priorities and I totally get that. I do remember… I can't even remember what it was I was having an issue with… I was having an issue with misogyny in the classroom with sexist boys, and I remember a couple of boys brought up Andrew Tate and I put it on CPOMs straight away, and it was the first time our assistant head XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX… he didn't know who Andrew Tate was and I would say that that was probably last… September, October time? And I remember him coming into my room and going 'whose this Andrew Tate guy?' and I was like… what?? And I totally get why he wouldn't know who he was… because why would he? Like he's not on tiktok, but to me, it's like if XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX, you should know who that is. So therefore, like… I don't think safeguarding is even, erm, so I have a deputy head friend, well assistant head, she's the safeguarding officer, and she has put training on for her staff as soon as it hit the headlines last summer, when they came back in September, and that was a choice of herself, but that isn't happening across the board in all schools because the government isn't making it a priority and the government isn't saying Andrew Tate and misogyny is a problem, you need to … like the prevent measures for example, you know, that came from the top. We all know how to prevent right wing.. Erm.. what's the word I'm looking for…

J: extremism?

Alex: extremism… no radicalisation… but to me, this is radicalisation. They're getting radicalised into hating a particular group, or treating a particular group differently because of an aspect of them that's outside of their control, and to me that's being radicalised. So I told him about it, and I said I'll send you the guardian article that came out which was fantastic, it really explained why he's so problematic, and he was like oh my god I didn't realise this was such an issue, and I was like yeah... This was even before I was XXXXXXXXXX. And then one of the behaviour workers came in, and said 'oh yeah I've been told about this Andrew Tate, I'm gonna actually do an intervention with those boys'. He sat them down in an office and tried to get them to understand why he was so problematic, and I know he said to them… he presented them with things Andrew Tate had said, cos he had the article in front of him, and he said 'he's said this and he's said this'. And the boys were just shrugging, so he eventually said 'if this was your mam and he was saying this about your mam, what would you think?' and that was finally the hook that got them, and I hate that, it shouldn't have to be a family member that makes you see women as human, but, if that's what we have to do, then that's the way it is. But ever since then, there's been no interventions, there's been no sitting down with boys and challenging them on their view, I think the things that some of those boys learned from that, was to just not mention it in class and therefore they won't be challenged on it. And then after that, I got a few comments like 'oh my god are

we talking about patriarchy again? Oh my god are we talking about women again?' …. We're doing Romeo and Juliet, yes <laughs> it's in everything we do in English, because it's ingrained, everything in the patriarchy has been ingrained over centuries. But they don't really see it like that. So I think that's the thing, you can put these interventions in place, but then the students... The boys, do they just learn to not mention it, and therefore not get into trouble.

J: yeah yeah, that's really interesting to think about. So I think, just moving onto, you know how confident you feel personally in responding to these incidents and it's obviously something we've touched upon a lot and then I guess, in your opinion, in a perfect world if you had a magic wand, what would you need to kind of support you and potentially the school in general in a better response to this? Or a more a reasoned response to these incidents or attitudes?

Alex: it's hard because the PSHE curriculum isn't enough, erm, so I think they need to do more, erm, because the problem is that the PSHE curriculum isn't taken seriously, it's not taken seriously by the government, and it's not taken seriously by teachers or students, erm, that filters down, if the government doesn't take it seriously, then neither do we. they don't assess it, so therefore we don't see it as much of a big deal, erm but I think they need to do more lessons. Like one lesson a year on misogyny is not enough, one lesson every 5 years even cos they do it in Y9, they never touch on it again and I think that's the problem, erm they need to be constantly addressing it. And I think we need the support of parents, I know there's been an issue, like for example I wanted to do a lesson on the dangers of pornography, because again, I think that is something that has explicit misogynistic attitudes in it, erm and I just had a lot of back and forth with leadership about 'but Y8 is too young' … but 51% of them will have watched porn… and it was 'yeah but 49% of them haven't' and it's just back and forth, back and forth. Ideally I think it would be nice if we had a policy in school overall where we went right, what are we gonna do to tackle this? That's the starting point. We need to recognise it's an issue, and then we need to put a policy in place saying right, this is what we're gonna do going forward. Like be more reactive, or be more preventative by putting in more PSHE lessons, that's impossible as it's taking away from other curriculums and nobodies gonna do that. But, maybe in tutor time? I don't know. We need more staff training, I think we need to get more people into schools to talk to them? So a couple of weeks ago we had "prison? Me no way!" In and actual prisoners come in and talk to them about what prison is like and why they shouldn't end up there. I wanted to go into schools and teach kids about the dangers of rough sex because I saw that as 60 women have died that way. The day I see it happening again is a day like where I feel like we've just learned nothing. And I would love to do that, but the problem is parents would be like 'You're teaching my kid about rough sex, I don't want that.' I think parents are naive about what their kids are doing.

J: yeah there's huge backlash isn't there like about RSE isn't there, like you know in the very right wing press

Alex: yeah! They're just so… the thing is, this is the problem isn't it, you've got the lefty teachers, just wanting to fill the minds of the youth with horrible things!! <laughs> when really no, we're just reacting to things that we see as a problem and we're putting something in place to try and stop it, and the government are constantly saying well we'll teach this in

education, you know, Keir Starmer was saying he would tackle misogyny by teaching more about it in school, but then you have to acknowledge at first that it's a massive problem, it's not even a hate crime yet, which you know, I can't… was it Boris Johnson's words were something like… erm.. Or was it Rishi's, I can't remember, but somebody said, if we made this a hate crime, the police would have too much work to do. Or something along those lines, and it's like yeah because it's a massive issue! So I honestly don't know what we can do, other than yeah like policies… I don't think punishment is always the answer, I think we constantly need to be educating these kids, and I do think as well, the parenting that goes on is just <sigh> they're too concerned with just protecting their child and them not getting into trouble, its 'why has my son got a C2 for this?' And not 'oh my god I'm so sorry, I'm also gonna ground him.' That's what my mam would have done, and if I came out with some of the things that kids come out with nowadays, god I've have got absolutely killed! <laughs> but parents now, they're just like 'my precious little child shouldn't get a detention for that' and 'oh your schools too strict'. Are we strict, or do we just have high expectations? You know, I think that's the problem, there's too much backlash to really make a difference. And I don't know how we can stop that.

J: and then like you said earlier on, you've got the fight, but it gets exhausting after a while.

Alex: it does, especially when it feels so personal. Erm, at the beginning I found it really really hard, when, what was it, I presented statistics to one of my classes, cos we were doing speeches and talking about men and women and inequality, and I said something like, um… you know one of my homicide statistics and men killing women, and 96% of murders are committed by men I think it was? And one of the boys went 'yeah but women are crazier than men!' and I was like I've JUST presented you with a statistic that says 96% of murders are committed by men and you're saying women are crazier?! And then another lad went something along the lines of 'oh yeah my mam shouts at my dad ALL the time!' and I was like… I went 'yeah but she doesn't kill him!' it's like… I just can't… and I remember being so frustrated for a few hours afterwards, but I constantly have to remind myself to just take a deep breath and like.. Just keep going. Just keep going. My partner now, bless him, he's got the patience of a saint with me, but he says to me all the time 'are you sure you wanna keep going with this fight' XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX It just makes you upset. And I say no, when women are given a voice, they're supposed to use it. What am I teaching kids, especially girls, if I'm not using my voice to tackle this. That's how I see it. So yeah it's exhausting, but I won't stop <laughs> Sorry boys, I'm not stopping!

Interview: Blake

J: my first question then is I'm wanting to know, kind of how you would define misogyny or misogynistic behaviours, and whether you think that's something that is easy to define.

Blake: I think it's difficult to define because it depends on the person and what they're saying or what they're doing and what their beliefs are and sort of so in my opinion misogyny would be, sort of, degrading of, a male degrading of a woman, or a male feeling like they were superior to women. Erm, but again, it would depend on the person, their background and where they've came from and what they say, what they do, and what they feel about the opposite sex.

J: Yeah, so kind of it sounds there that you think maybe the cultural context plays quite a big role in kind of understanding that.

Blake: yeah, err, and I think we have a lot of children where there's a misunderstanding of it and they believe it's the norm and it's what they believe, sort of, the people they're watching or speaking to or seeing are sort of, they idolize them, and they believe it is the norm and this is how we should behave towards women.

J: Yeah, okay. I wondered just kind of about in your opinion, what you think are behaviours that could be displayed that might be interpreted as misogynistic behaviour? So what kind of things do you think typically, they might look like?

Blake: I think, sort of from a school point of view from what I see with some of our year four, five, sixes, is their attitude towards female members of staff as in they don't need to follow an instruction from a female member staff. They're allowed to challenge that instruction or show a different behaviour than they would towards a male member of staff. And then, sort of, from an adult point of view what we see with, err, either in the community or with parents is that the male is right and, or the female role, what a female should be doing, And sort of, it's for example, the parents, that it's the mam's job to bring the children to school. It's their mam's job to come and speak with the teacher and it's only the dad's job when it's football or something that would typically would be a male job.

J: Yeah, So, I mean you start to talk a little bit about kind of in the context of your school. So I'm wondering, in your opinion, do you feel as though misogyny or the display of misogynistic behaviours is something that is an issue within your school?

Blake: I wouldn't say it was a big issue. However, I would say it was a new issue. So in the last sort of few years, a particular group of boys have started either watching certain things on YouTube or playing particular games online, and have a different attitude towards their teachers in the last few years than they would have done previously.

J: Okay, and what kind of things, I mean do you think these boys have a particular kind of profile, or just linking back in with what you were talking about in relation to maybe the cultural or societal context or something like that? I wondered if… go on, sorry.

Blake: I think, sort of culturally, the boys I'm thinking of, ermm, some of them do come from single parent families. However, some of them have been involved in sort of county lines or DV or have seen parents, as in their dads, erm, either taken to prison or mam having to flee,

so that could be one side, that they've witnessed certain behaviours, however others are from two parent families and are decent families, however, I think it's become a bit of a norm of what they're watching, what they discuss and they're sort of encouraging others to watch certain YouTubers.

J: And so I mean you said that you see a little bit of the attitude towards female members of staff and you think that that's kind of something that's maybe showing these more misogynistic or sexist behaviours or attitudes. I wondered if there was any other examples that you might have seen, that you've either witnessed, dealt with or heard about that you think maybe fit this criteria of linking to potential misogynistic attitudes or behaviours.

Blake: I think it's the general attitude of the children. So we have, sort of, we have more female staff than male. However, certain groups of children will… if they're asked to do something by like a female member of staff, will feel like they're being hard done by and feel like it's not something they should be doing, despite the fact that just could be something simple as right, you need to get this work done, or you need to go and do this job for me. It's sort of like, it's like, well I shouldn't have to, a bit entitled behaviour, and a bit sort of like the privilege that they don't have to follow that instruction and like they might huff about it, or roll their eyes or shrug their shoulders and just not treat people with respect really. Whereas if it was me from a male point of view, saying you need to get this done, I wouldn't get the eye roll, I wouldn't get the shrugging of the shoulders, the huffing and the puffing, they would just get on with it. They might not be happy about it, but they wouldn't erm, display it visibly for us.

J: Okay, that's interesting. I wondered if you had heard of or seen, like I say, any peer on peer, any maybe comments that maybe your boys are making to your girls or anything like that. Is that anything that you've noticed? Or is it more primarily with staff?

Blake: I wouldn't say it was a big thing, but I would say, I'm just thinking about a certain group of boys in particular and we noticed it last year, they're in year five and it's a class of 29, there's 19 boys in the class, so it's a top heavy boy class and they've become like a little gang <laughs> so to speak and they do think they are superior. So they will sort of go as a group and put girls down or say mean things or exclude them from certain games that might be on say the yard or if it was group work in the class, it'll be 'I don't want to work with them, I want to work with these', so if a girl was put in their group, there will be again the visible 'I don't want that person in my group, I want to be with the lads.'

J: Has there been any space to maybe explore that, I mean you say you've already mentioned that you feel as though this is something that is a new issue and if something seems to be maybe emerging, and I just wondered if there's been any opportunity to maybe explore that with any of the boys, around maybe what are the reasons that you're excluding these girls from joining in this activity, or that kind of thing?

Blake: I think it's something we haven't done head on. We haven't addressed it head on either as a group or with the boys in particular. We have sort of looked at friendships through our place2be counselling service and 'getting along' and through anti-bullying week, I think that's next week, and we don't see it as an 'anti-bullying week', we see it as a 'this is how we treat people' week, rather than anti-bullying, we don't look at bullying in particular. We start

off with what anti-bullying is, but we, we've never dealt with it head on, we've never dealt with it in a roundabout way.

J: what do you think the reasons for that are then?

Blake: I think it is because I don't think we've had the training. I mean yes, we sort of, we look at it through erm safeguarding training, erm, and there's a little bit of it in prevent, I know obviously that's sort of radicalization, but there is a little bit of in there as well, but I don't think we've had, I think there needs to be training available for this issue because it is going to be bigger, and at the moment we've only got it in a small minority of boys, but I think it will become a bigger issue and I think it's certainly something we need to address head on but staff need to be confident and comfortable to be able to address head on as well.

J: Yeah, yeah. So do you feel as though the reasons are that maybe staff aren't confident, I mean, I know you've mentioned that it's a lack of training but just I suppose, is that what you feel is needed or do you feel that there might be other reasons that staff don't particularly feel confident in responding.

Blake: I think part of its confidence, part of its training, but then part of it could be the backlash they could face from say the boys and especially with the particular group I'm thinking of. They are a female member of staff and if she's not in the classroom someone's covering, and it's another female member of staff covering. If there is a male, I mean we do have a male in there who is our sports coach and if he's in there, they see him as more of a mate, rather than a male member of staff. If I went in there, it would be completely different, but they see him as a mate and they'll call him by a nickname. But I think it will be what the backlash would be for the female members of staff in that class if they addressed it head on and would it exacerbate the situation or make things worse or would it damage…. because we're quite big on relationships, well we're really big on relationships in school and would it damage that relationship moving forward.

J I just wanted to come back to, as I was just thinking there, because you said about how you feel like it's a new issue and I know that you have been where you are for quite a while now, and I wondered if you could, could you maybe pinpoint the time when you began to feel as though this was something that is emerging here and maybe able to give it a name?

Blake: I don't know if this is wrong, but I feel like when the whole Andrew Tate appeared online, a lot of our children from year four, so this group and within the last three years, have mentioned him, and that's not something they should want to be watching, or shouldn't be a conversation that is taking place in Primary School whatsoever. And I would say sort of the prevalence of him and him being online was sort of when I noticed it more, it may have been before that, but because I was aware of him, then I could see, but I was hearing that some of the children had been watching some of his YouTube videos.

J: Yeah, okay. So I'm trying to think around…. I'd say it was like last summer wasn't it really, or in the last year when he kind of became this bit of a mainstream figure and…

Blake: Yeah

J: I think those things started… do you feel it's all still something that's talked about or driven by him?

Blake: It's less so now because I think when he first became prevalent in the media, it was like who's this guy? But now I think staff are aware of who he is, what he's about, they're happier to sort of shut those conversations down. Definitely last year hearing year five talk about it wasn't right, but then this year I haven't heard about it as much, however, I do see sort of the behaviours that we've seen last year, just less conversations.

J: okay, so it's still kind of going ahead on that and…

Blake: Yeah.

J: So I thought of something else… I'll come back to it if I remember it, but I think… ah, it was around how you made a comment a while…. It was a few minutes ago, about how you feel as though this is something that you feel is going to progressively get worse. I wonder if I could just explore that a little bit more in terms of what you think will drive that, why you think it's potentially going to get worse and some of the factors around that.

Blake: I think that there's a few reasons. One, we need to address it and if we don't address it, then it's going to become a bigger thing, but then it's going to become other children and other year groups and potentially starting earlier. And we have quite a high, erm, number of DV instances within our school, and a lot of our younger children are seeing this now and they've got no problem whatsoever with, lower down the school, lashing out with… or at anybody, so it doesn't matter, but historically I would have said it's sort of male on male, peer on peer abuse, sort of boys fighting but a lot of our younger kids aren't… and it's not a massive number, but will lash out at females which sort of wasn't really a thing. And again, if we don't sort of train staff on what to look for, and sort of, incel cultures and things like that…. Like there's…. we haven't had any training on it. There's just sort of, there's a tiny bit on the safeguarding training, like a tiny bit when we do refreshers, but it's just sort of a discussion, rather than what we do about it. So I think several things… like the DV incidents around the school, the… the training, the how to deal with it, and the confidence of staff for it as well.

J: Yeah. So again, I know that with some of these things we've already touched upon, but I just kind of want to explore a little bit more in depth. So just thinking kind of about what I suppose policies and procedures that …. because this is something else I'm kind of exploring as a strand, about how schools would respond to this. So I'm kind of thinking about it from a preventative angle at the moment. So, in terms of educating children about the issues of misogyny, sexism, equality and that kind of thing. I'm just wondering, what do you think that your school currently does in order to try and educate children about these things?

Blake: So we did quite a lot of work with the equality teams from the LA, and… we did I think was sort of three or four Twilights with them, but we didn't really touch on this area. I think we touched on sort of race and religion and the more common, more prominent historic issues and… this wasn't something that I can remember coming up. Not something we discussed, erm…. in detail. What was the rest of the question?

J: just about what's in place in your school, I guess as a preventative measure. So maybe it could be that potentially, you can't think of anything where it's spoken about explicitly, but I suppose it's how you teach, or how you share with children about how we need to be mindful of this issue when it comes to sexism, misogyny and… how some people think is a thing and

how it would play out. So I guess it's how you would try and respond to these issues from a preventative measure.

Blake: So I know this isn't sort of directly addressing it, but, again, when we do sort of LGBT with the children, we do quite a lot throughout the year. We do it as… not as What the subject is, but it's sort of about accepting everybody, but we do sort of go into detail about what it means, how to respect people, but we try to come from the angle of respecting everybody and everyone's accepted, everyone's respected. Erm, we do the same when it's anti-bullying week, but we also in school make sure we're sort of… we have a… well we've moved from a behaviour policy to a relational policy and that's it, all of our behaviours are based around relationships now, and it's making sure children are comfortable to come forward and speak to us. So I think one of the biggest things we introduced was a morning meet and greet, where every staff member greeting every single child in your class, or if you were greeting a member staff into school and you were doing a door duty, you would greet them appropriately, so every member of staff had to give eye contact and they had to give a morning greeting, even it was just a hello, or could be a high 5 or handshake. Since we've done that we've had… it sounds bad but we've had a huge increase in disclosures, but also a huge increase in children being more comfortable to come forward and to speak to adults. Er, so we use C-POMS for recording all our child protection stuff, but since we introduced that, we've had a huge increase in staff logging stuff because their children have come forward and told them or come forward and said this happened because they're more comfortable and confident speaking to adults because they have a relationship with at least two adults within the school who they know as a safe person to talk to and speak to them. Again within School we've got Place2be as well, the counselling team and children are referred when we know something has gone on but children can refer themselves and make an appointment with either our counsellor or our volunteer counsellor to go and discuss their issues and it might not be something that's happened, it might just be that they need to go and talk about something. But again, it's another safe space they that can go to when something's on their mind, so it's creating safe spaces, but making sure those relationships are in place where children are comfortable coming forward and letting them know either when things are happening or when something's bothering or when something's not right.

J: So it sounds like it's very much that real promotion of relationships and just the safe space in the hope that that is something that would maybe impact on the overall thinking about the way that they relate and treat each other. is that kind of right?

Blake: Yeah, yeah.

J: Okay, and then I wondered more from a reactive point of view, like you say, the way that you've described it sounds like it's something that is maybe more covert at the moment, where it's maybe more in the attitude towards particularly female members of staff, but I'm just wondering hypothetically there was an incident that was clearly misogynistic. So, some sort of language is used for example, the word slag, slut or something like that and say that was something that you heard a child saying to either a member of staff or another female pupil, I wondered how would that be responded to within your school context?

Blake: So within our behaviour policy there's sort of a clear step system for consequences, however, something like that would move straight to either myself or another senior leader

and it would be dealt with like that. It will be discussed with the child and then parents will be informed straight away. So anything like that would supersede our behaviour system so it wouldn't be a stepped or staged approach. It would supersede that going straight to either myself or another senior leader and they would take it on, whereas something lower level a teacher may deal with it and go through the stage process, however that would go straight past that and parents would be involved for both sides as well. So not just sort of the perpetrator but the victim as well. And then appropriate consequences would be put in place for that, but also education for the child as well for them to help them understand why that language is inappropriate to make sure it doesn't happen again.

J: Yeah, Thank you. And so I'm wondering now in your opinion do you feel as though what is currently in place in your school, so in all of those things you've just been talking about the idea of the relational approach and the way that potential incidents would be dealt with like the hypothetical one we've just talked about, but I just wonder if you feel as though that is something that is enough, you feel as though that would be sufficient to I suppose respond to this issue.

Blake: I think that in a reactive sense, yes, however we need to be a bit more proactive in that we do need some training in misogyny in what it is and how we address it. We do need some proper training on incel cultures and how we address it and how we tackle it head on, and then what can we do to educate children better. So reactively, I think we're in the right place, but proactively I think we can definitely do more.

J: Yeah, And so then I wonder how confident I guess you would feel in responding to those incidents, given you are a male and working in the context of your school, if there was an incident that happened and again, we could always use a hypothetical incident, would you feel confident in responding to that or you mentioned about having a conversation with a child afterwards. Would you feel confident in being able to have that conversation and feel as though you were maybe talking about the right sort of things in your opinion.

Blake: I'd say me personally, yes, in any sort of either discrimination or unwanted or inappropriate language or misogynistic behaviour, it's inappropriate at the end of the day and it's got no place whatsoever in school. So I'd be happy dealing with the child as well speaking to their parents, speaking to the other child as well, speaking to their parents, and coming to a resolution, but even then, I think I would need to understand the whole situation better. I could deal with it, but that's just on 'it's not right, it's the wrong behaviour' but a bit more background into 'how to stop it happening again' sort of training or help or a bit more about the background of where that sort of comes from, I would still need more training in this area.

J: Yeah. Yeah, okay. So I mean I'm trying to find out about what support I guess schools would need and I guess maybe where the role of the educational psychologist fits into all of this as well. So I mean you've mentioned that you think some training is something that would support you, I wondered if there was anything else that kind of comes to mind in terms of what you think maybe staff members would need, or a school would potentially need for support in feeling more comfortable and confident, because I mean, obviously this is about your opinions here and how you were feeling about it, but I wonder if that's something that's felt across the staff in terms of being able to respond to that. So just what you think would support you or the school in general further.

Blake: I think there's a couple of things. I think we need to know where it comes from, is it a cultural thing, is it a regional thing, is it an online thing or is it a mixture of both, or is it a mixture of sort of all of those things and where… what have you been exposed to, or where have you come from or who your parents or what their beliefs and background is so historically where it's come from. I think we need to know what to look out for, because you do the sort of prevent training and you know what sort of signs to look for, what language to look out for, same as safeguarding, county lines again sort of erm, the children having extra money and having extra phones and using different language. But I think education for staff is, sort of, awareness of what we're watching for. And what is right? What is wrong? What should be challenging? What is… yeah what's challenging and what's the best way of challenging it, because saying things like slag, or slut, it's quite easy to spot. It's not right. And it needs to be addressed. However, is there anything else we need to be watching for, is there certain behaviours we need to be looking out for, I think there could be more available on that. I think within the safeguarding training it was minute, it may have been like a slide or two and it was easy just to skim over. So awareness…. but then how do we educate the children sort of, we have sort of, a month of LGBT, we have a month of that and we have work we can follow, we have ideas, we have sort of activities we can do, we have assemblies we can follow and get people in. Same with, sort of, anti-bullying week, we've got a whole week of assemblies, we've got a whole week of activities. But where is the support for this? It's probably out there but I think we need it as well as with the staff and with the children and then it does need to be a piece of work done on it.

J: Okay that's really interesting. Thank you and I think to be honest, that's kind of covered all of the different prompts that I wanted to examine…. I mean I suppose just last question because I've been really keen to include primary schools and secondary in this because I feel sometimes this kind of thing is geared towards more secondary school. And obviously that was why I wanted to kind of explore it from the primary point of view and I'm just wondering about maybe your opinion on that. I suppose in terms of is there space for primary to be included within this alongside secondary schools.

Blake: I think 100% it's definitely more prevalent in secondary schools, but obviously they're exposed to more, and they have stronger opinions. I think if there was available…. there was something available for primary schools, I think it would help secondary schools out in the future because my group of boys I'm thinking of, and it's a group of about eight or nine of them and they're like a little gang culture, I call them the little Andrew Tate's because they just feed off each other and they'll be like 'right we're going online tonight, we're doing this tonight' and if we could put a stop with that now, I'm not gonna say it's gonna change their opinion, but it could ease off any sort of issues, tension, problems in Secondary School.

J: Yeah, okay. Well Thank you. and I think that's probably everything. So yeah, thank you so much. I'm just gonna stop it recording.

Interview: Riley

Jane: Okay, that's recording. If any point you want to stop that's absolutely fine. So my first question is I'm wondering how would you define misogyny? What does that mean to you?

Riley: Erm, I suppose it's discriminatory… prejudice… against women from men rather than sexism which is against either sex, isn't it? But I'd imagine it's aggression as well as… I don't know if it has to be physical… but I don't really know the definitive definition being honest.

Jane: That's absolutely fine, it's kind of more I'm just trying to explore what that means to you, that word. Erm, if we were talking about misogynistic behaviours, what would that mean to you?

Riley: From the point of view as a teacher, or from the point of view of a child displaying them?

Jane: Erm, well both really… well from the point of view from a teacher, but I suppose just in general, what you might class as misogynistic behaviours?

Riley: Erm, well I suppose it'd be anything that is demeaning and would make a woman feel uncomfortable, I think in the most minor aspect. Erm.. and I don't think it has to be intentional on account of by the male involved.

Jane: Did you say it doesn't have to be intentional…

Riley: yeah, I think it could be accidentally, especially in regards to children, if a child is performing a misogynistic act, then they would be… especially at a younger age, they'd be mirroring behaviours that they'd seen before, copying, or they wouldn't understand what they're actually doing. And I think also you could probably argue that with all children and even to an extent some adults.

Jane: Mm- So maybe it's not something that people think about, it's maybe something that you can do without realising?

Riley: yeah, yeah or it could… I suppose some people might see it as normal behaviour from where they come from, or they might even see it as jokey, laddish behaviour but yeah, that's kind of what I mean by it.

Jane: Okay so when talking about misogyny, or misogynistic behaviours, do you find that to be an easy thing to define?

Riley: Erm… not really because I struggled a little bit with it there. Erm… no. Because I think it's also probably in the eyes of the beholder as well isn't it, there's probably someone… or people who suffer from it…I think it's probably more for them to define, them people.. If that makes sense?

Jane: Yeah, does make sense.

Riley: I wouldn't understand it, as much as someone who suffers from it.

Jane: So is that kind of hinting at the fact that maybe because you are a male and…

Riley: Yeah, yeah, and I wouldn't feel comfortable defining it on behalf of a woman. If that makes sense.

Jane: Yeah, I see what you are saying. Thank you for those answers. So I wondered if in the context of your school and I know that you are kind of just within early years, but I suppose thinking on a wider school basis. Do you feel as though misogyny or the display of misogynistic behaviours is something that is an issue within your school and we're thinking more around the kids in this question.

Riley: Erm… it's not something I see on a daily basis. I think there's occasionally displays of it….. I've come from year five so I've seen all the children. But within our school and our area there's quite a lot of female… strong female role models. So, erm, I'm thinking of the Year 6 class that left last year… if anything, it was that the girls were stronger in that class than the boys so if there was any active behaviour further up the school that might be seen as misogynistic, the girls would have almost sorted it out themselves. The boys wouldn't have dared do anything basically… there's some very strong girls in there. Er, and it's… I think……. There's a lot done within the schools. I think…. It's quite often it's the schools… It's said the schools have to deal with it. So any issue that comes up in society, it's always "there's not enough that's been done in schools". And quite often, it's said by people who don't know what the national curriculum is, don't understand what schools cover…. I mean this week, it's anti-bullying week, which kind of links in in some extent to it. Erm… and I don't know the things… other groups, other charities that we get to come in and the other organisations to work. So I think there's so much that we do that I think it negates a lot of the problems. I think also it helps in primary schools that the teacher's constantly with the same children so they know the children, they get to know the relationships, they know…. Quite often, they know the conversations that might be going on and if there is an accusation, the teachers are also speaking to the parents on a daily basis so they can address and sort it out. Erm with secondary school, it might be harder. I'm not sure.

Jane: I think that's a really interesting point that you say about the difference between I suppose primary and secondary and how these kind of things are helped through relationships, I guess

Riley: And then in our school, we have a lot of different groups. So we have quite a big pastoral team, we have a school counsellor who does sessions so if there was an issue identified, the child would be taken out and sessions would be done but erm, I haven't really experienced significant issues.

Jane: Okay, that's fine. Thank you. And so I mean like you said, yeah you haven't really experienced any issues yourself, but I wondered if there was maybe any other incidents or experiences that you might have heard about or something like that, maybe in the wider kind of staff meeting or speaking to other colleagues. Has there ever been anything spoken about that might be defined as misogynistic or something?

Riley: I think If anything, not with children, but I think sometimes parents. I think there's been more issues with some parents. So quite often threats are made against… in primary schools, a lot of the leadership roles are female, in our school it is, and so there have been examples of quite aggressive threats made to the headteacher and other female members of staff that aren't made to the male members of staff. One significant threat was…. Erm

because one of the parents making that threat is now in hospital… no now in prison for quite a serious offense. I think six years… so it's only when things like that happen…. So yes, not with children, but there has been more examples I can think of with parents.

Jane: Yeah, okay, and then I mean you kind of mentioned didn't you that obviously children are products of their environment, of their context and I wonder maybe what the impact of that might be as aswell. I mean thinking about misogyny as an issue erm… because obviously it has been mentioned in the media, there's been a lot of talk about the impact of certain social media figures on children and what kind of influence he is having, and exactly like you said, there's an awful lot of the thing of schools need to do this, schools need to be the one to do this, and I'm just wondering in the span of your teaching career or the time that you've worked in the school, do you feel as though this is something that has maybe always been there, and now it's got a name, or do you feel as though it's something that is becoming a bigger issue than it has been.

Riley: What misogyny specifically?

Jane: Yeah. Yeah, like misogynistic behaviours or attitudes.

Riley: I haven't seen an increase in it, but erm… , yeah I've been teaching in nursery for less than a year. But since I've been in there, since I left up there, until the point I joined the nursery, I haven't seen an increase. I think there's bigger issues that the children and the community deal with, especially around social media. And I think it's just general violence, I don't know if it's some of the things that they do and see on social media. I don't know if it's directly misogynistic or generally violent and generally offensive. And one thing I would think since… since I was in school is that the year 5s and year 6s are the equivalent to year 10s and year 11s in terms of the maturity and the explicit nature of the things they are seeing? Erm… but I have no direct experience of what you're kind of hinting at… I can't remember his name because I don't have any social media or anything myself. So I'm kind of out of the loop. So even if I did hear the children. Often about it. I would probably find it hard to spot what they're saying.

Jane: Yeah can I just want to go back to what you said about the year 5s and year 6s, and feeling as though they're on similar level of year 10s, 11s, is there any kind of names or things that they may be watching or replicating,or just in the way they relate?

Riley: So I'll give you an example, there's kids stood on the door or on the gate watching videos of people getting bombed and dying on TV. There's kind of news articles…. and then a couple of girls getting into fights, quite significant fights, it was the last years year 6 and it was filmed of them hitting each other and punching each other and it was quite violent. But nothing…. That I can remember or any examples that I would say were misogynistic.

Jane: Okay, that's fine. Just trying to understand… just thinking about what I suppose the influences on them might be. So obviously we mentioned about things they watch on social media have talked about the local context that just if there's anything else that you think maybe influences, I suppose the context of the kids, I guess… the things that they're into, the way that they may have started to act like the year tens and elevens now, what kind of things maybe drive that if there's anything else other than what you've already mentioned.

Riley: yeah, it just feels like just from their attitudes erm.. the way the speak, the things that they're into… I just feel like err…. I mean it's pretty anecdotal, it's just almost a sense of what you get about the children, even in the fact that they worry about what clothes they wear more than I think children did at the same age even 10 - 15 years ago. Yeah, I think you've also got to think about the context our school is in as well, er… a very highly deprived area with a lot of violence going on outside our door on a daily basis, erm, young carers, and I know the phrase they like to use is county lines, but I think it's just child drug dealers, that's probably a more accurate phrase… things like that going on, erm… I think those are the kind of things having an influence on the children. I think in a way, misogyny takes… misogyny is very low down in the kind of set of things for kids to be worrying about around here. It tends to be survival more than anything. I think a lot of the parents probably… so not just the children as well, probably wouldn't identify or even recognize misogyny because they are just too busy getting on with things and… other things are probably more of an influence or priority. I think also as well, there is also more clearly defined gender… and… paternal and maternal roles if that makes sense.

Jane: in the kids families?

Riley: Yeah, I think if I don't know maybe children whose…. I don't know… your screens frozen by the way, can you still hear me?

Jane: I can still hear you yeah, but, I don't know why it's frozen…I'll turn the camera off and back on and see if that works.

Riley: yeah, I forgot what I was saying… erm… so yeah, there's more kind of… traditional say… family roles and gender roles… and things like that. And so it's very much that the mums drop off and pick up the children, erm, and the dads, if they are around, tend to work while the mum stays at home. So erm, in a way, it's almost like why would they need to be misogynistic because…. I don't know if it makes sense…. but those roles are still clearly entrenched? So maybe men don't need to… or men that feel that way need to defend or protect those entrenched gender roles some.

Jane: Yeah.

Riley: So they don't feel as defensive.

Jane: Yeah.

Riley: But that could be me just presuming…. I don't know if that makes sense?

Jane: That's fine. By the way. I'm trying to turn the camera back on but it won't seem to come on. I was going to say I can stop the interview and start it again so you can see my face again?

Riley: That's all right.

Jane: I don't know if it just felt a bit weird speaking to a blank screen. Okay, if you're happy to carry on though, that's absolutely fine.

Riley: Yeah yeah!

Jane: And okay, and I want to kind of think about something that you have already touched upon in terms of… I suppose how you kind of promote equality because ultimately, I think that this issue of misogyny does very strongly link to gender roles. And therefore I think very much links to kind of equality and the idea of treating everybody with respect no matter who they are and you've kind of said that you feel as though relationships are something that really helps in those situations. You've mentioned about how it's anti-bullying week this week, so it's things you're doing, but I wonder kind of what other things went on in school because these are the kind of things that I would class as being preventative in terms of I suppose… teaching children about the way that we treat each other and it doesn't matter whether we're a girl, whether we're a boy, whether we're black, whether we're white, and things like that. So what kind of things go on in your school in relation to that?

Riley: okay, so I might not be able to list everything because the nursery is quite cut off and our curriculum is completely separate.

Jane: It's fine, of course.

Riley: So a lot of these things are from when I was further up in the school, but we have a pshe scheme. I think it's called jigsaw, which we do a lot of work on that, we do pshe quite a lot. The RE, even though it is a catholic school and you'd think… with it being catholic, I mean it's not the most egalitarian religion… It's not that fair to women, let's say, the catholic religion… but generally speaking, The Re lessons are quite good? The RE scheme is okay. The… we have the school council, you have to have a boy and a girl representing each class, we have various different groups throughout school…. we have head boys, head girls, We've got, like I say, the school council, the school counsellor, we've got a trainee counsellor who is working with a Secondary School Level Trainer training up the trainee so we have got 2 counsellors. We have someone who does sessions two days a week… she's like a teaching assistant who does things with children who are just suffering with their mental health. We have …. Trying to think of what else we have… I mean it's generally just a constant theme running through the school. I mean in assemblies, things like that. In terms of nursery, we do a lot of ours though modelling through play, erm, we have different areas around the classroom, so we have… so there's like a home corner and we'll make sure we've got the babies in there being different gender, different ethnicity, we'll have like disabled babies and the same, we have a small world area where we have lots of little figures… we have disabled, black, white figures…. male, female. Erm… if there is an issue that comes up will model through our interactions the correct way to do things and model through play and roleplay and things like that. Erm… so I can't think of anything else, but like I say, we are kind of cut off from other things, we're even a separate building. Ermmm… yeah. That's as much as I can think of.

Jane: Thank you for that. So like I said, there's a really strong thread of that real relational aspect to it and that real teaching of equality and everything like that, but I'm wondering now I guess what the response would be if it was a reactive…. so say there had been an incident that could be argued as quite overtly misogynistic. So perhaps some words have been used like a girl's been called something or there's been kind of a bit of a deliberate…. there's an attitude of someone saying that someone can't do something because they're a girl or whatever… like that. I wondered kind of how the school might respond to something like that. That's maybe quite…. as I say, more overt, I guess.

Riley: so we would use the school counsellors of the school counsellor and the trainee counsellor to do individual sessions, because it has happened with other things where …. So I'll compare it to the girls fighting, last year's year six, they then did direct sessions with the girls involved. Erm…. and we would speak to the class broadly, we would include or do specific PSHE lessons or something else…. RSE which is relationships and sex education, something else the school does, I forgot about that one. And there would be explicit…. we've also got our safeguarding leads, and our deputy safeguarding leads who are quite experienced in those situations. They would do a lot of work like social stories, especially with the younger children or the children who have SEN, and again, that's kind of.almost like role-playing and It does depend on the age of the child, but sometimes they would use things like literature or stories and that's something we do quite a bit. Or picture books. Parents would be involved to support them too. Yeah, so not when just misogynistic things happen, but when things like that have happened the school responds quite strongly. It's like a multi-pronged approach? So it's not just the class teacher left to deal with it, it would be the safeguarding aspect, the parental engagement aspect, SLT would get involved to support the teacher and the children then there's like the pastoral and the kind of like… mental health aspect to it aswell. We're quite lucky in this school that we have got lots of support if things like that do happen.

Jane: it sounds like you've got a nice kind of… good support network around it to help kids in these instances as well.

Riley: Yeah, it was good. Yeah, I think where we benefit is because we are quite a deprived area. Our funding is quite good…. So even though the children do have a lot of things going in their lives, as a school, we probably have more money than other schools. So I know in our trust, I think we've got more teaching assistance per child, which is really important because those teaching assistants tend to do a lot of the Pastoral and Mental Health Training and… then different roles and they're just not cutting and sticking, and doing traditional teaching assistant jobs, there's a lot more to it.

Jane: Yeah, okay. thank you. And so again, this is in your opinion, do you feel…. so I mean because it sounds like in terms, so I'm obviously thinking about the response to something that might be misogynistic or something that might be quite a serious incident. Do you feel as though what's currently in place in school is successful and why or why not?

Riley: In our school, I think it is, because I think we've got strong leadership, strong structure, and I think that quite a lot of the roles have been clearly defined for a lot of the staff, and I think a lot of the procedures in place are quite strong. I think even not just the SLT, the general staff are strong as well, and wouldn't put up with things like that. It's almost like, erm.. A 'not on my watch' kind of attitude I think all the staff wouldn't want children getting away with something like that…. Does that make sense? But also having a strong kind of, moral compass, and also knowing that just things wouldn't be acceptable.

Jane: mmm

Riley: And also a duty on the kids because we also know that it's not necessarily the kids fault in primary school…. well that they don't really understand or know what they're saying… so it's making sure that we teach them.

Jane: Yeah, absolutely. Okay, thank you. And so coming back now to thinking specifically about misogyny or misogynistic behaviours, I'm wondering how confident you would feel in responding to an incident that happened. So again thinking of something that was maybe quite overtly misogynistic, so say for example, you hear some quite… some opinions of children that you might think are a little bit worrying and some of the things that they're saying maybe about some of their attitudes towards women and girls or maybe there's been named calling, or something like that. I'm just wondering how confident would you feel, in kind of responding to that incident?

Riley: On my own?

Jane: As like a teacher.

Riley: As a teacher, I'd feel quite confident, I wouldn't be afraid to address it or speak to other staff and children involved in it.

Jane: Yeah.

Riley: As I've said before there's quite a lot of support in place as a school, that I know, as a school and as a staff body, we would sort it out. I don't think it'd be left with the responsibility of just one person. Erm… it would be I think dealt with and… to the best of our ability because I suppose when the children go home, we don't have much control of what goes on at home and with it happening in school. I feel that myself as an individual, I feel like I could deal with it within the framework and the support of the school. Broadly. I wouldn't be left to deal with it on my own. if that makes sense.

Jane: Okay, so I'm just wondering what and if there was anything that you feel as though might… I suppose support….. if there was any additional support that you might feel be needed and again, thinking specifically around the issue of misogyny and misogynistic behaviours, whether there was anything additional that you think might be helpful for you and the staff in general to have, or access.

Riley: Erm… I can't think of anything additional we could do. And again, we can't control. I think it would be good if the age restrictions that government and social media themselves put in place on social media were abided by and adhered to by children. That would help.

Jane: Yeah.

Riley: Erm… so I can't….. so it's the age restriction on something like Facebook. Is it 15 or 16?

Jane: 13. You need to be 13 to join.

Riley: But then there's children in say our school who were 6, 7, 8, with Facebook accounts. So that's tying into what I'm saying about how our children are seemingly older at a younger age. But we can't stop that. And it's not like we can tell parents… well we have done in the past, but nothing's really gonna be done about it at home.

Jane: Yeah.

Riley: So that's the only thing I think I would think could be helped. If the restrictions on social media and online content are actually enforced and followed through.

Jane: yeah, so it sounds maybe a little bit like… kind of how you can support parents to put these things in place?

Riley: Yes, Yeah, but then I suppose it's different because being a parent myself, and I know that when you get home… <laughs> It's a lot easier to judge as a teacher than when you actually get home and be a parent. So sometimes you'll give a child some sweets at that young age, or they might watch a bit too much telly… But as a teacher you know that's wrong. But then as a parent, you might be a bit more lenient.

Jane: Do what it takes to get through the day!

Riley: yeah, exactly, but I haven't got to the point where I have to either restrict or look at phone usage, or social media usage, because that's something that scares me <laughs>.

Jane: I think I've covered everything I wanted to ask you so I'm gonna stop recording.

Interview: Quinn

J: I wonder if first of all, if you could tell me, how would you define misogyny, or misogynistic behaviours?

Quinn: I would, I would, my kind of understanding of that kind of behaviour, it's the all encompassing fact that people believe that women just don't have equal rights, erm, they're kind of a bit of a second class citizen, they don't know, man knows better, man is stronger, a male is more intelligent, erm, the male is more organised, can do things better, they can …. And it's just the belief that they seem to have that women have a purpose in life that isn't equal to a man. Basically, it's not…. They don't have the same and er, it's kinda like a, err, as if it's like kinda, we know better on every level, we can do better on every level. You're there to be at times, a source of amusement, y'know, it's ok for a man to openly make fun of a woman, but he wouldn't do it to his friend. Y'know, unless he was in… but they think it's ok to erm, treat a woman as an object, to suit their… <sigh> well whatever mood they're in, like if they wanna have a laugh at them, erm, whether they're being lecherous towards them, or if they're being dominant towards them, and it's just lack of respect towards women.

J: so you kind of touched on it a little bit, in terms of behaviours you might see, I just wondered if you could maybe, you know if I was to say 'could you give me some examples of misogynistic behaviours', what might you say in response to that?

Quinn: I would.. I think it's errr, it's just not taking them serious, it's thinking that they know better, I know I was talking about in the last thing, it's having this thought that a woman isn't an equal to yourself erm, and it doesn't matter on what level, it's just thinking that erm, that a man can just simply do more. It's, it's like if somebodies, if somebodies struggling, and I'm guilty for this meself and I feel terrible about it because a couple of weeks ago I saw one of the female members of staff carrying a heavy box and I said 'ah can I help you with that?' and they went 'oh no i'm ok thank you!' and I thought 'ah god, what have I said that for?!' but then it wasn't… then I saw another member of staff today, a male member of staff trying to carry something and I said 'can I help you with that?' but that felt ok asking a male member of staff. And i don't know if I was doing that just to try and justify myself from the other week, cos I was terrified of coming across as if I was like 'oh you can't do that, let a man do it' and that's what… that's what I'm scared of now. Whereas other people might say 'come on i'll take that off you', y'know, insisting I'll take it off you because you can't manage that instead of just.. And I think it was that that's the difference, somebody insisting to do something for a woman cos they think they're simply just not capable of doing it, y'know? And whether it's carrying a box, or moving something heavy, or dealing with behaviour in a school, y'know, if you've got behaviour in a school, where you've got a male or female student starting to become angry, and like starting to become verbally abusive, and I've seen that there's a female member of staff standing there, I've seen men purposefully step in front of the woman, like 'no no, **I'll** deal with this'. But they wouldn't do it to another male. It's like they can't allow the woman because the woman's not strong enough, emotionally str… she's not emotionally strong enough to deal with that kind of behaviour, so I'll step in there. And it's just things like, you know that I've actually seen happening within the school where, like I say, the students have been angry towards whoever, and male staff have stepped in, I think with the intentions of 'I'll help', but it's taking away that kind of, disempowering that female

member of staff because you've stood in front ot them, as if it's like 'no it's ok, I'll deal with this now', but you wouldn't do it as a male member of staff, you know

J: yeah I'm getting quite a strong sense about the idea of equality in that. I wondered if … you know, again, I think that the word 'misogyny', do you find that it's an easy thing to define?

Quinn: No, no, I think.. And I think part of the problem is that people have heard of the word, and they're familiar with the terminology, but what… put in a simpler form, if you could just say 'misogyny is…; and then give an easier, simpler explanation to it. Ermmm, and I certainly think to our students, you know, if you turned round to our students and said 'can you give me… do you know what misogyny is?' I think a lot of them would struggle to explain what the meaning is.

J: so you kind of touched there… the example that you gave was very much about… you mentioned about staff, so kind of… putting staff to one side and just thinking about the children in the school, so do you feel, or would you feel in your opinion, that misogyny or the display of misogynistic behaviours is something that is an issue within the school amongst the young people?

Quinn: yeah.

J: Ok, so I wondered if you might be able to give me um, any experiences of this, or it might be something that you've witnessed, or maybe something that you have personally dealt with, or maybe something you've heard about, in terms of speaking with other staff members… if you could try and keep it as confidential as you can.

Quinn: there was an incident a couple of years ago, with one of our Y11 students who left 2 years ago, there was a male student walking through, and a female student felt very uncomfortable and… you know you could sense this and she took a step back and she kind of looked around, looked at me, and I went 'are you ok?' and she said 'oh he asked us out' and I kind of went 'ah right' and I'm thinking whats wrong with asking somebody out for a drink or meeting up sometime… so I said 'whats wrong with that?' and she said 'well I said no' so I said 'ah right… has he been pestering you?' and she says 'oh no no no, it's just the way he done it.' and I said 'oh right'. She said 'he sent us a picture' and of course I'm like 'well he might just be shy' but no, he'd sent a picture of his genitalia. And I went 'ah'. But to him, it was like… you need to see this… then do you wanna go out for… so that example, that he just thought it was ok to do it, but when I spoke to her about it as obviously I had to report it to safeguarding, she said 'that's what lads do now'. And I was just… I went 'what?' and she said 'yeah, lads think it's ok to do that... to send a picture of their genitalia and be like 'do you wanna go out sometime?' as if they're kinda thinking as if you know, that's what we're interested in' and I looked, and I just didn't have an answer. I just didn't have an answer. And that terrifies me, that males who are 15/16 years old thinking that is what girls want, y'know, that that's what make girls interested in a lad y'know? And I just felt powerless, I didn't know what to say, I didn't know what to do, I've been in alternative education 12 years before I came into mainstream, and I came across it a lot, and we'd always find a way to deal with it or find a way of support, but there I was just <sigh>. I just looked and said 'that's not right'. And she's going 'meh, but it happens'. And as I'm saying, I try and explain

and say ;just because it happens doesn't make it right'. But she wasn't uncomfortable because he sent the picture, she was uncomfortable because it was like 'oh there he is again' y'know, and he's… and y'know, that just scares me. It does, it scares me that, again, more that technology is a platform to be able to force that upon women. It's another tool that boys can use as a way of… forcing their misogyny upon somebody. But to the lad, I bet he probably doesn't even realise the severity of what he has been doing because to him, that's what he's heard other people doing, that's what other people have done, and they're now in a relationship so that must work. And that is what I find is more scary, and I touched upon this in the last meeting, when it starts to become the norm, when it's accepted in society, when it's accepted in their group, they turn into adults and think that's what we did as kids, and that doesn't make it right, but I think that's what the scary thing is. The tools and the platforms they can use to kinda.. Behave like that, but also not having the understanding of what it's doing at the same time. you know what I mean, and that's what, so and like the children we've got coming through could be brothers and sisters of the older brothers and sisters who have been exposed and it just becomes… y'know, and then maybe in 10 years time we're gonna be getting their children coming through, who left about 3 - 4 years ago, who were doing that. And that… so, it's the whole dynamics of everything like that and it just sort of becomes the social norm through… and then it gets promoted through the likes of Andrew Tate, y'know, my XXXXXX son talks about him, as he's heard it in the playground from others, he asked who he is, and instantly this fear just ran through us, like I went 'oh no no, he's a horrible, nasty man' and me wife, xxx mam, she went 'actually son, what this person has done…' and she actually explained it in a simple way about how dangerous and how not a nice person he is, and the things that he's done, and she put in the language that xxx, XXXXX would understand, whereas I'm saying 'don't ever!!!' y'know, but in that, I didn't show that some people need to be careful of because… and I didn't get a chance to explain that him because me emotions and me own fear got the better of us.

J: yeah, it's a strong sense of protection, obviously given your adult knowledge of it as well. You touched slightly upon, like you worked in alternative provision before you came here, and you mentioned that in that alternative provision where you worked, there were incidents there as well, so thinking about the amount of time you have, you know, worked in an educational setting, do you feel as though this is an issue that has got worse, got better, or would say it has stayed the same?

Quinn: Oh it's got a lot worse. I do honestly believe it's got a lot worse. When I was in the alternative education, the, the… <sigh> about 95% of the children who came to use came from a single parent family, and I would say form that figure, they typically lived with mam. And.. the female staff in school, they didn't respect as compared to the male staff in school, and it was like that typical thing of where thye're missing a positive male role model and they did, because the expectations of the female staff in school were like 'ah can you get us this' or 'can I have that' or 'whats…' y'know, the educational staff, the teaching staff, erm, were still treated as the support staff where they would expect the teacher to get them something. Y'know, they would say to support staff in school for example, they would be struggling, and somebody would go over and help to deal with something, erm… whereas with the teachers, they would ask them questions that weren't really educational, saying, erm, y'know, 'can I have something from the kitchen?' and they'd look at them as if to say 'what you asking me for?' but to them, they couldn't really answer. So it was kind of like this expectation that the female staff weren't as important as the male staff. The female staff had more of a nurturing

role for them, than what the male staff did. The female staff had more of like a caring, 'it's ok' whereas the male staff were expected to go and play football with them at breaktime, or go for a cigarette with them at the top of the street where they can have a cigarette or if there was gonna be a fight, they'd go up to the male member of staff and say oh this is gonna happen, you need to be aware, you know to the male staff, will you have a game of pool with us? But what about a female? 'Ah it doesn't matter'. And it's that. It's just this… kinda… I can't find the word for it, but to them, like they just don't do that.

J: it sounds like a very stereotypical view of like gender, like the female in this very nurturing role, and then male is just..

Quinn: but that's what they're used to, in CD, from what I've experienced, generation after generation, would be like 'oh my grandma does this, I'm going to see me grandma' 'me mam's this', but where's your dad… y'know, he's just not on the scene, and it's..

J: that's something I found really interesting in the focus group, that you spoke about the context of where we are, and you mentioned about how it's a NE thing, that the man has a certain role in the house and the woman has a certain role in the house. I wondered if you feel that was something that was specific to the NE, or thinking about having this conversation with somebody who maybe lived in Leeds or Manchester, or even further down south

Quinn: yeah it's very very… my wife is from XXXXXX, and their outlook is everybody's equal, it doesn't matter who the main wage earner is. Like it's calculated that the person who brings more money in for the household contributes more compared to the less wage earner, and everything is so, so their attitude is that we're all equal, we're all in this together, we're all a part of this together, whereas in the NE, it's just… and i find this really difficult, even now, cos me wife XXX, she's the main wage earner in the house by far, but I still find it… I still try and show… and she will say it's not the money, but I feel like I'm the man in the house, you know, I… need to be an equal to you by showing.. Or trying to put more in, I mean it's financially impossible, but I need to try and show her that, because that's how you're brought up in the NE, it's the man who is the main wage earner and if the man can't contribute, then the man is a nobody. Y'know, this kind of attitude and if the man can't bring food to the table, y'know, it's embarrassing, like you can't even look after your own family, and it's kind of this stigma that men seem to have, especially the older generation, y'know, I've heard it directly from my mam, my dad, when I was a child, you know? Erm… previous relationship, my ex wife, she was exactly the same, y'know like what I earn is my money, but what you earn is our money and that kinda thing, and you need to do this, because if you can't look after me, you're not a man! And kinda … but even when I was at university and we would have a similar discussion, and it wasn't about misogyny, but it was about role models, and people were saying, even around then that the man should be the provider, the one who provides for the home, and protects the home, and things like that and… and I see it more or just as much now as going back maybe 25…. 30 years.

J: so you feel that this is something the children will also believe?

Quinn: the children, yeah! Just typical NE ….. Y'know, you've gotta be tough to work in the NE, you're from the NE you're a bit of a tough one, because your grandad was, your great

grandad was, and it's like this typical… 'boys don't cry' y'know, 'don't cry, don't cry'. Or like '<sigh> you're crying again?' …. They wouldn't say that to their daughter. Y'know, they wouldn't say that to their little girl who was upset, but it's a boy, then it's 'don't cry, don't cry, be a toughie, little toughie, come on, boys don't cry'. And there's this… kinda thing of … dolls, saying 'I didn't buy him a doll', well why not? 'Oh boys don't have dolls'. Why not? 'Well they just don't. And there's this… i think that when somebody is on a social platform, he's kinda making people.. Well it's already there but he's wording it as if he's trying to emphasise on it, y'know, but do that blame game, y'know and then when they're struggling, it's like 'well, it's not really your fault is it, it's their fault, their fault they don't treat you like this, it's their fault they don't give you the respect you deserve, what you earn' and there's this kind of, like brainwashing that I think is starting to happen, like there's a seed that's been planted

J: do you mean like on social media effects on young boys?

Quinn: yeah and then they see it in the home, I mean a watered down version in the home to an extent where they'll see what a typical role model is, but then you have somebody on social media saying you know… I've got this but this is my attitude towards women and this has helped me to get what I want by… but then you've got these impressionable young lads who are still not mature enough to make their own decisions so to see what somebodies actually doing, they kinda.. 'Oh, he says this…' like me little son says 'oh he's got so many cars you know' and I'm like…. Haway… cars…. And i'm like but then whose the male… I'm there like getting upset and wanting to protect him, but I'm like 'dont …' and I'm showing the same kinda… having the same kinda actions towards other things, but I'm with him, and I'm still showing aggression, well not aggression but anger towards somebody else and I'm blaming him for why me son… and I'm thinking I'm just copying his behaviour to an extent. The topic is different, but I'm still just showing signs of anger and signs of hatred, ok it's not towards females, but it's still the same body language and the same tone as what he sometimes shows on his social media sites. And that is worrying. That is scary.

J; How would you want to react then if it was like, you know, you knew exactly what to say, you knew exactly what to do, what would that look like?

Quinn: Erm, just me talking to XXX quietly, nice and relaxed, ermmm, and just, doing something that we enjoy together, and just saying 'you know son, you were talking about this the other day…' nice and calm, it's trying to be.. More informative, more informative to like explain to him why, instead of just saying no, you know, not just cutting him off, cos you know, I say 'you're not doing that!' and it'll be like 'oh.. Ok then' … <inaudible> I find they say no you're not doing that, so if I explain to him just kinda like, y'know, what the person has done this, you know, not been very nice towards other people, and what he's got from that… put it in a way that he understands what I'm trying to say. You know, with the language, and put it into a very basic format, find a way to explain to him so he understands what kind of person this person is. You know, and putting it to an example of … I dunno, it's like , would you… if a man in the street came up to you and started saying 'oh look I've got all this, do you wanna come and see it? ', would you go and see it? And it's lke oh no of course not. Exactly! So it's trying to explain and put it in a way that he understands, not just the danger of this person, or that kind of, the attitude that people have, but also how it hurts other innocent people as well.

J: and I would I be right to assume that that would kind of extend to… say it was a child you were working with in the school

Quinn: oh yeah

J: So that kind of similar… where the initial response might be out of fear, anger, but you'd want to try and explore that a bit more?

Quinn: But in work, I'm in that professional mode. In work, the students come to me, and I'm more patient with students at work, because I'm doing my job to support them. I'm doing my job to educate them, I'm doing my job to assist them and to guide them, and to hopefully help them through their education. And when it comes to your own family…

J: It's a different playing field?

Quinn: yeah.

J1: I'm interested in knowing kind of what is currently in place in school. So erm, whether there is anything specifically in place to address the issue of misogyny, or address misogynistic behaviours, so both from a preventative point of view, so again this links to… I don't know if you were still part of the focus discussion at this point when erm, another member of the group tries to underpin their lessons with it and use the content of their teaching as a vehicle to talk about misogyny, patriarchy, feminism, that sort of thing, but also in terms of reactiveness as well, if there was an incident, so say there was an incident like you described earlier on where an explicit photograph had been sent to a girl, I just wondered what would the response of the school be, so this is from quite a pragmatic point of view.

Quinn: yeah, I think certain lessons .. there's been times when, if the lesson's are structured, they've got that 'this is what I'm teaching, this is how I'm teaching it', if it's kinda… from my experience, I'm not in lessons, I support SEN students and I 'll be with them in a lesson, or working with them and I've been in…. Especially English when i was in last year and they were doing Macbeth and talking about lady Macbeth, and they were saying 'y'know', she… it was part of the curriculum, you know, in those days when there was no equal rights and women weren't treated the same as men, but with lady Macbeth, she was the powerful one in the relationship, and it was.. I mean please don't judge me when I say this, but the student I was working with, an SEN student, just couldn't grasp the fact that … the equality of women in those days, know what I mean, they just couldn't grasp the fact that in those days, men were the more powerful ones, it was the man who made the decisions, the man who… so when ern, the teacher says that the woman would have been expected to stay at home and look after the castle and bring up the family, it was like to them… that's what they do. You know? Nobody went 'well hang on a minute!' that's not… they just went 'ahh right' . and I'm thinking is it their understanding of the learning that they have, or is it to them like I don't see anything wrong with that. Like they don't see that that's not right in today's society, and today's communities. But I would imagine in English that in the higher… like higher ability group, I would imagine that there'd be so many children saying 'hang on…' because they're encouraged to engage in conversation, they're encouraged to have an opinion on a text, or

on the characters, or on the book or something like that, and I think also because the lower ability… and I hate… but they just don't… grasp that

J: yeah if course, I do think about the future and it's about getting in even further and thinking about how SEN students are supported around their understanding, because these are social issues aren't they, and they're going to need to be delivered at the appropriate point, erm, as far as I understand from what I heard in the focus group, there's PSHE lessons that go on that I would imagine it's touched upon there, and then in terms of say… I mean say there was an incident, like you found out that a boy had sent a sexually explicit image to a girl, how would that be dealt with in school?

Quinn: that would be put down as a safeguarding, and then erm, if I reported it, that would be out of my hands basically. Erm, it would be generally left to the safeguarding team to manage that and deal with that, I would maybe be asked to deal with it from a male side, simply because I may have a better working relationship with that student than what the safeguarding team has. Ermmm, but one time what they had done with that same year group, they brought in the police and the police just gave them a talk saying, you know, if you share an image of yourself, and they share it with somebody else, in the eyes of the law, that's classed as distributing child pornography cos you're underage… and then what can happen with that, social services can come in, all your devices will be taken that could be used for sharing things, big investigations, and it's more like a scare tactic. It's more like a 'you're breaking the law, this is what's gonna happen'. There was no follow up on kind of like actually, do you know what that is doing to the female, do you know what I mean? So at the time it's just like that's the rules, that's procedure, that's what we have to go through, and that's what we have done. And we've ticked all those boxes, and that's … sometimes I do think there's an opportunity there to talk about the wider impact that this can have on somebody, the opportunity is there to talk about it, discuss it and to share exactly what it could be doing to somebody…. For both parties more than anything else. So opportunities like that.. They kind of go missing. Y'know, it's cos they're not kind of written down, it's not structured, it's not part of the lesson, it's not part of the curriculum, it's not part of that, it's, it's as if it's like we'll talk about this and that's the best we can talk about. But when something happens, it just doesn't seem to be talked about with a missed opportunity

J: what about… I mean that is a significant serious incident, and what you've said there, I mean obviously it is a safeguarding issue, but what about something that might be seen as a lower level incident, for example, a boy may call a female student a slag or a slut, or something like that, how would that typically be dealt with?

Quinn: it would be classed as bullying. It would probably just be classed as bullying, the student would probably get a reflection after school, erm, and then spoken to about the equality of women, saying that's a horrible thing to call somebody, erm… and pretty much that's it really. Erm… and there's no excuse for it, but it happens quite often that a boy will call a girl that, because they know… but again, I think it's one of those words that you call somebody to get a reaction, cos… but not knowing why it's getting that reaction, if you know what I mean, it's a lad… or a girl using it towards another girl knowing that it'll get a … it's quite a hurtful word to say but not realising what the full connotations of that word could mean. And I… again it's not been explained to them just exactly what you're getting at by saying somebody is that, or calling somebody that, cos what you're implying there is that

they don't use that as an opportunity, don't use things like that as an opportunity to say do you know how as a male you're implying this about a female, it could be used as a bit of a springboard to go onto saying…educating them a bit more, planting that seed a bit deeper, saying looker, you don't do that because… this, this, this and this… it's like that's a horrible thing to say, so just don't do it, there's a reflection for you, you know, that's your punishment for saying it. Where you think hang on, you're right they should be punished, but also, let's go into what that meaning is and what.. How it can be so offensive and why it can be so offensive. How it can be so hurtful towards another person. I just think there's a lot of missed opportunities where you could have a brief discussion where you can drip feed them why it shouldn't be happening, why we shouldn't be doing that.

J: In your opinion then, what do you think is preventing… you know you keep saying you feel there's a missed opportunity to explore about what that actually means, why that could be classed as misogynistic, what do you think is preventing those opportunities from taking place and having those conversations?

Quinn: It's just … that's what you do because it's happened so many times. You know, that's the procedure. That's that… you know somebodies kind of done something wrong, right they've done that, what do we do, we give them a reflection, is it gonna be a 30 minute, is it gonna be an hour, it's just kinda, you're following procedure, you're following the known protocol in the school for the behaviour system in the school, erm… you know, if a male was purposefully going up to female students and verbally abusing them, physically attacking them or verbally belittling them, and going round telling everybody about it, then it would be dealt with in the correct way. But because it's so obvious, but even then to an extent it would be 'right, policy states that we have to do this, right you've done this, so let's do some restorative work' and it's like <laugh> it's not restorative work that you need to do, it's actually quite intense… you know if there was a male student going around doing that, you know it's quite clear that that student needs to have some quite intensive, clear and focused 1:1 work with him to try and find out what the cause of it is and support him through that. And like I say, they just go through like the policy of behaviour in the school, so … yeah

J: So I'm getting the sense that you don't feel as though what is in place is particularly successful

Quinn: no

J: when it comes to this, because obviously there's the behaviour policy and in some ways, this is viewed as a behavioural incident, but you feel as though something else is needed?

Quinn: i just feel as if it's …. It's just, erm, sometimes I get the impression they just want to try and skirt around it, instead of addressing it. And I think they don't address it because …. We just don't know how to. You know, where they talk about Andrew Tate, and they talk about other people like him, it's nothing new. It's nothing new. He's just … he's using social media as a platform to spread it around more but like I've said before, in the past there used to be a comedian in the NE called Roy Chubby Brown, and he was.. Is a vile person. But people pay to go and see him cos they'd say he's funny, because the culture and belief then, 3-4 generations ago, thought it was funny and as they've come through.. You know, you can make the decision whether to go and see him or not, you know, and erm, it's for adults, and

only adults should be able to laugh at that, only adults can attend that, where like now on a social platform, children are accessing it, but when you have grandparents or great grandparents paying to go and see someone who had a really big reputation in the NE of being misogynist, and a racist, you know, so when they see their grandchild or great grandchild saying things about it, they think well it's not that important cos I went to see somebody meself, who talked about the same thing. But it's still been spread out there, it's still been spoken about, it's just changed from the format of somebody making fun of it, even worse, belittling and making fun of women to somebody who is now spreading their hatred on a social network or platform, so it's still been there, but people just don't want to address it because to an extent, it's like if I did, I don't want to be accused of it meself. I don't want to be accused of that myself, so I don't talk about it, and I can't.. You know, but also where do they begin? How do they talk about it, how do they start that conversation off? How do you try and do enough where you see an actual change? Y'know and I think within mainstream education, you're only credited with actually seeing changes and improvements. Saying 'oh behaviour points are going down this month' brilliant, we're doing a really good job, right ok then but… you know. But… what have they gone down in? Have they gone down in homework, have they gone down in lateness, have they.. You know… so you're not kinda… and I just think they don't know how to. Or even worse, it just doesn't even come to them that there is something that they should be addressing a bit more.

J: so in your opinion, like if it was an ideal world, what support could you draw upon as a school, as an individual staff member, in kind of supporting you in your response to misogynistic incidents, or just the prevailing attitudes?

Quinn: I think in …. Certainly what I was saying before for example, in Macbeth and in lady macbeth where they were talking about lady macbeth and she didn't have this you know at the time, and I think something just kinda saying like… trying to put out there more to the class for example, you know if the opportunity does arise, saying 'how do you actually feel about that? What are your personal thoughts on that?' and folks are more on it in the curriculum, when the opportunity comes up, cos you know it depends on them, what the theme is about a certain thing, you could bring it up, but I think also, there should be, erm, certainly more boys groups, I think there could be more boys groups on erm, attitude and respect, and erm, it's like, you know, if they believe in something, it's very difficult to change that because they believe it's ok to do that. And I think it's, it's… there should be just regular, erm, groups for males from an early age to work through, and I think it's also promoting and encouraging as many times as we can empowering women in society and in the community, wherever they can, you know, trying to promote, like equality amongst all, you know, and women can do exactly the same stuff that men can do, you know, apart from the physical shape of a female to a male, there's nothing different apart from that. You know, we're **all** equal and that needs to be, um, from the home and from the school. Y'know, it's not just our job to be doing that. It's all so… and I know you're asking nigh on the impossible in communities, but still what I'm saying is it needs to be…

J: remember, ideal world <laugh>

Quinn: yeah it would be! You know? Like Clean energy and world peace… I just don't think we're gonna be able to achieve that you know, and it is heartbreaking because I've got a little lad and a little girl, and I know I'm not gonna be around for me daughter when she 's

older, but if me son can be there, and he's treating XXX and his female girlfriends, and his erm… the females that will come into his life with respect and equality, I'm just hoping that that can be passed on and passed on and passed on. And when you've got somebody there who is being misogynistic towards females who are making derogatory comments, he'll stand up and say 'no … no no no , you don't know what you're talking about' and I want to give him the confidence in doing that as well, you know , that's what it is, it's giving them the understanding, but also the confidence to stand up to their peers. And thats… <shrugs>

J: it's very difficult isn't it as teenagers to say to your peer group,

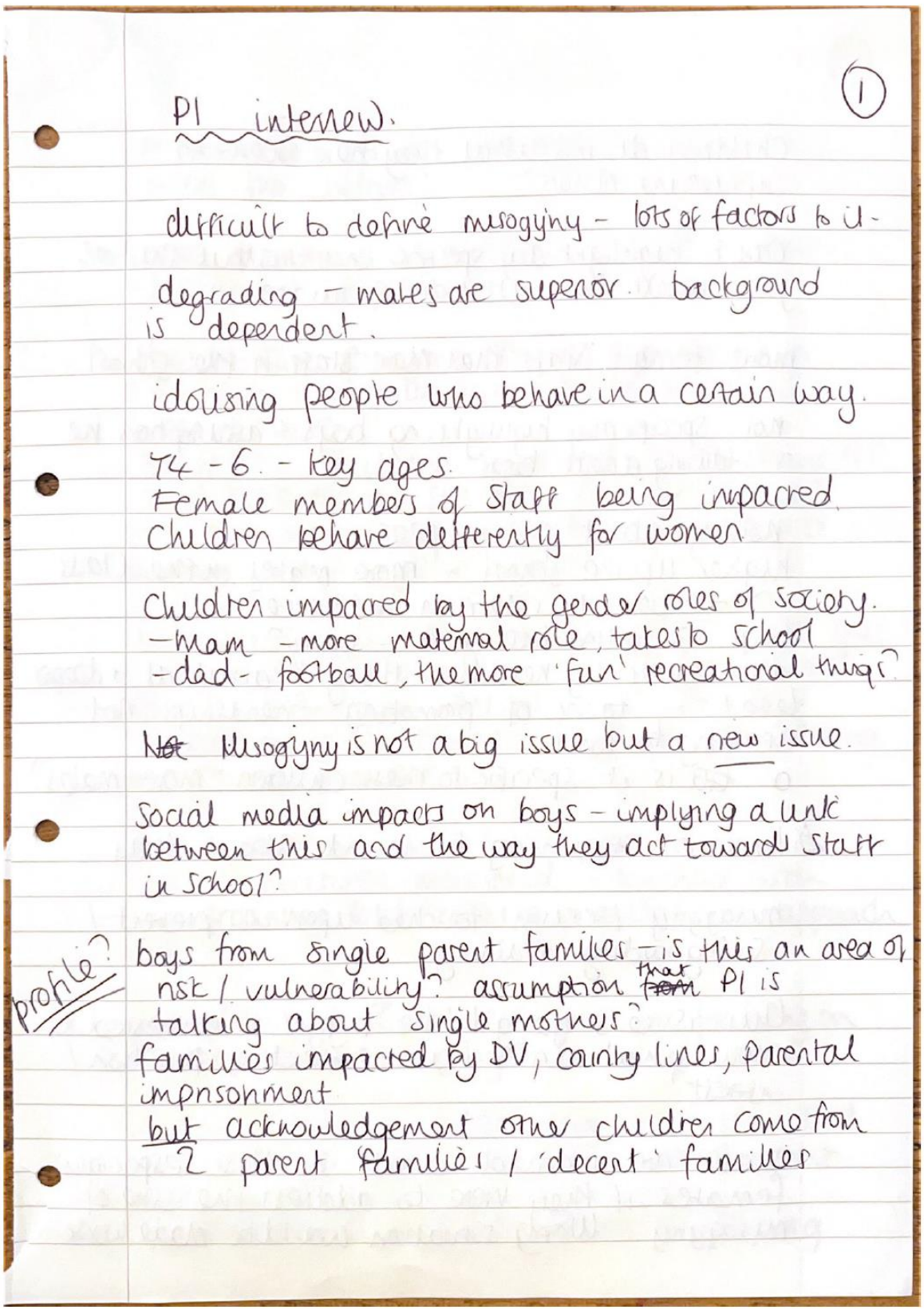
Quinn: they're desperate to fit in

J: actually what you're talking about is really not ok

Quinn: that's rubbish, you're wrong, I don't like that, but they just haven't got that..

J: yeah it's hard.

Appendix J: Example of Critical Engagement with the Data from Phase 1: Familiarity



P1 interview. (1)

difficult to define misogyny - lots of factors to it -

degrading - males are superior. background is dependent.

idolising people who behave in a certain way.

Y4 - 6 - key ages.
Female members of staff being impacted.
Children behave differently for women

Children impacted by the gender roles of society.
- mum - more maternal role, takes to school
- dad - football, the more 'fun' recreational things?

~~Not~~ Misogyny is not a big issue but a new issue.

Social media impacts on boys - implying a link between this and the way they act towards staff in school?

profile? boys from single parent families - is this an area of risk / vulnerability? assumption ~~from~~ that P1 is talking about single mothers?
families impacted by DV, county lines, parental imprisonment
but acknowledgement other children come from 2 parent families / 'decent' families

Children discuss what they have seen - ~~the~~ influencing others?

Can't highlight any specific incidents but this is just about the attitudes of children.

more female staff than male staff in the school

not specifically highlighting boys - assumption he is talking about boys.

nothing about peer on peer.
higher up the school - more males in the class
→ does this have an influence?
boys excluding the girls - why?
does something need to be thought about at a deeper level - tactic of promoting friendships not seeming to work.
or ~~the~~ is it specific to these children - more males?

⚠ lack of training to think about this.

misogyny / sexism touched upon in prevent / safeguarding training

this issue is going to be bigger - interested to know what drives this, context of position / interest?

staff are worried about backlash, especially females, if they were to address the issue of misogyny. Wordy situation would be made worse,

or exacerbated or damage the relationships with the children?

Some male members of staff seen as a mate – from children or staff?

Andrew Tate emergence - Children mentioning him watching or because he was talked about and a 'moral panic'?
Staff can shut the conversation down about AT said behaviours are still there but not mentioned, does this imply children have learned not to say it because they'll get into trouble?

becoming bigger – Children will learn about this earlier and staff don't know how to respond.
Children witnessing DV at home - does this impact on their aggression? More children lashing out. - implication of a link

train staff on what to look for.
Local cultures mentioned - touched upon in training but nothing about how to approach it.

Work from LA Equalities team is not focusing on area of sexism / misogyny

nothing directly addressing this issue but lots of other things in school about respect and acceptance.
Relationships policy in place – hoping

that this means that they will feel safer and comfortable - children are coming forward to share things. Safe relationships with adults. - but how effective is this if the boys act or hold certain attitudes towards a predominantly female staff? [redacted] Is it boys with issues here (misogyny / sexism bad for everyone imo) but what about girls coming forward to report incidents, when they see how their female members of staff are treated?

an obvious misogynistic incident would go to an SLT and there's space for a discussion. (I used example of derogatory name calling)

need training about what misogyny is and how to address it. Incel cultures mentioned. what can they do to educate children better.

participant feels as though they would be able to have a conversation with children but perhaps on punitive level - implying that may not be able to fully explain the meaning of why this is not appropriate though. Felt like an honest admission - I wonder if he thought I could do that. I know that I would have to think about it and provide more thought behind it. This places me in position of feeling like I am definitely not an expert in this and I am learning too. Maybe I would just know more where to engage

(3)

with how I find out a deeper meaning behind it.

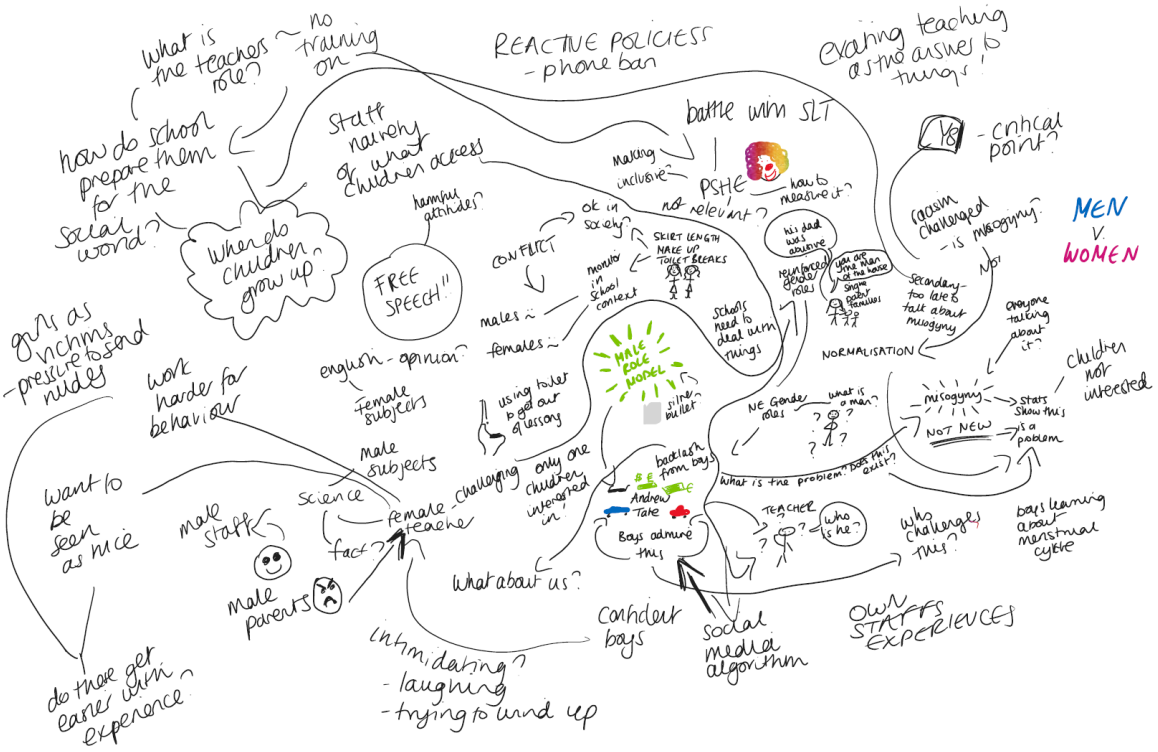
Sometimes wonder where when staff say where it comes from. is there a definitive answer on this? participant mentions culture, society, backround, Location, all of these things may play a part? Thinking of Bronfenbrenner!

What do staff look for? compared to County lines, clear signs, again how easy would this be in reality? what should be being challenged overt behaviours are more obvious, seems to be saying how subtle this can be.

My question about primaries being included was partly from my research prior but knowing I had secondary before this.

primary preparing for secondary in terms of this issue - easing off issues.

Appendix K: Familiarisation Doodle Example (from the Focus Group)

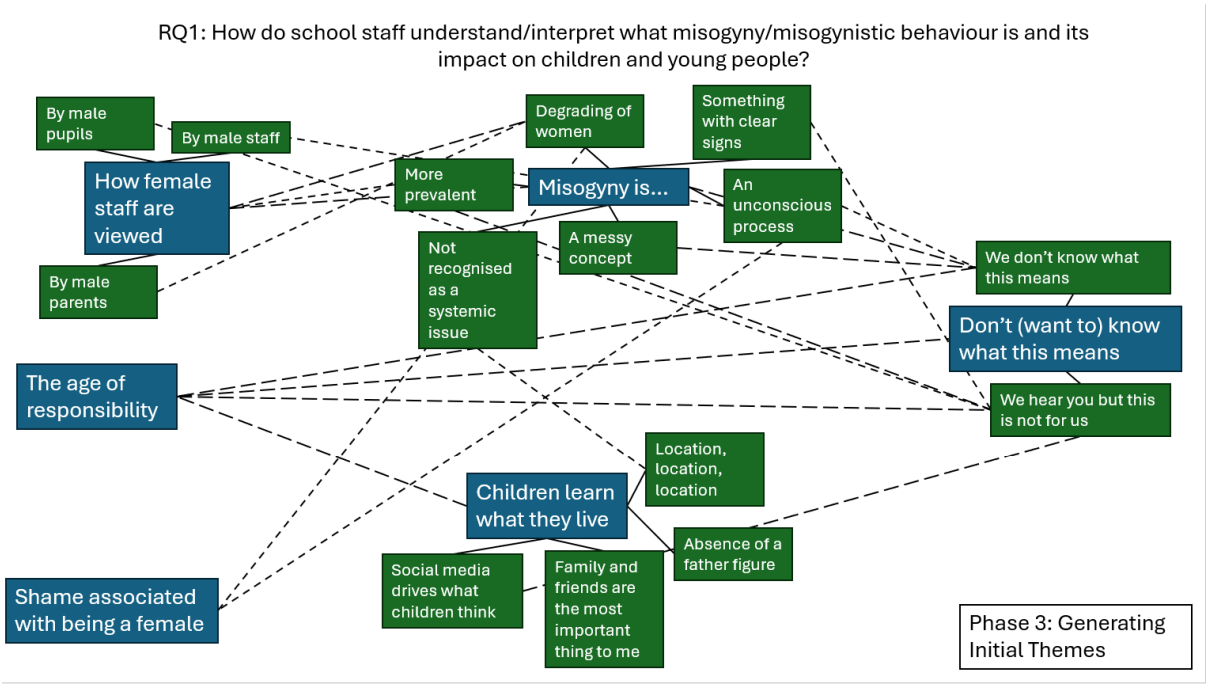


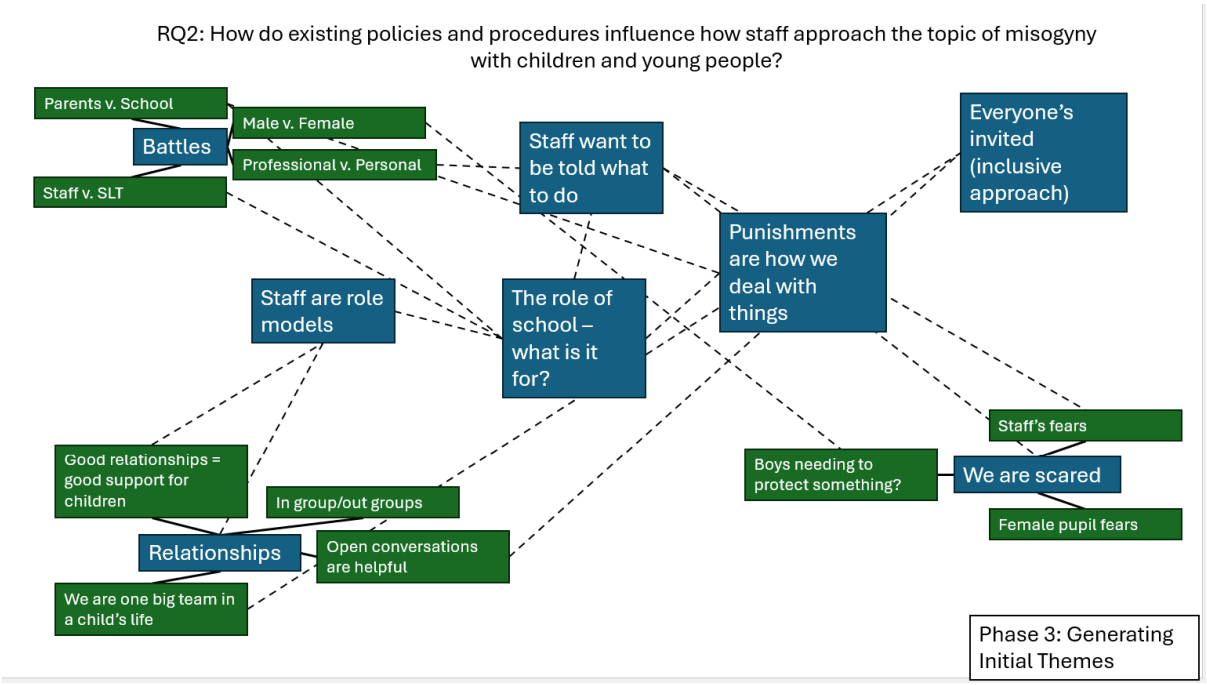
Appendix L: Code Examples from NVivo

Name	Files	References
A staff members interest influences ho	3	6
Adults have expectations of what childr	2	5
An expert needs to train staff in how to	1	2
Assumption that you are misogynistic u	1	1
Attitudes and values need challenging	1	1
Banning make up doesn't have the sam	1	2
Boys acting in defensive ways	3	17
Boys are accepting of being taught abo	1	3
Boys are acting in ways to exclude girls	1	1
Boys are confident and use their voices	2	6
Boys are openly more misogynistic and	2	7
Boys are told their struggles are wome	2	2
Boys attitudes don't change, they just l	1	2
Boys can display misogynistic attitudes	1	1
Boys can't see how their behaviours are	2	5
Boys don't want to engage with unpack	3	14
Boys fathers are blamed for their misog	1	5
Boys from single parent families more li	3	5
Boys in single parent households are to	1	1
Boys like the things that influencers hav	3	4
Boys make sexual comments about and	2	5
Boys making generalisations about wo	1	2
Boys might feel emasculated if they en	1	1
Boys missing a positive male role mode	2	2
Boys need explicit teaching about miso	1	1
Boys need to educate and challenge th	1	1
Boys send explicit images to girls	1	1
Boys think female staff are deliberately	1	3
Boys thinking feminism and female issu	2	4
Boys thinking women are taking from t	2	7
Boys using explicit methods of trying to	1	1

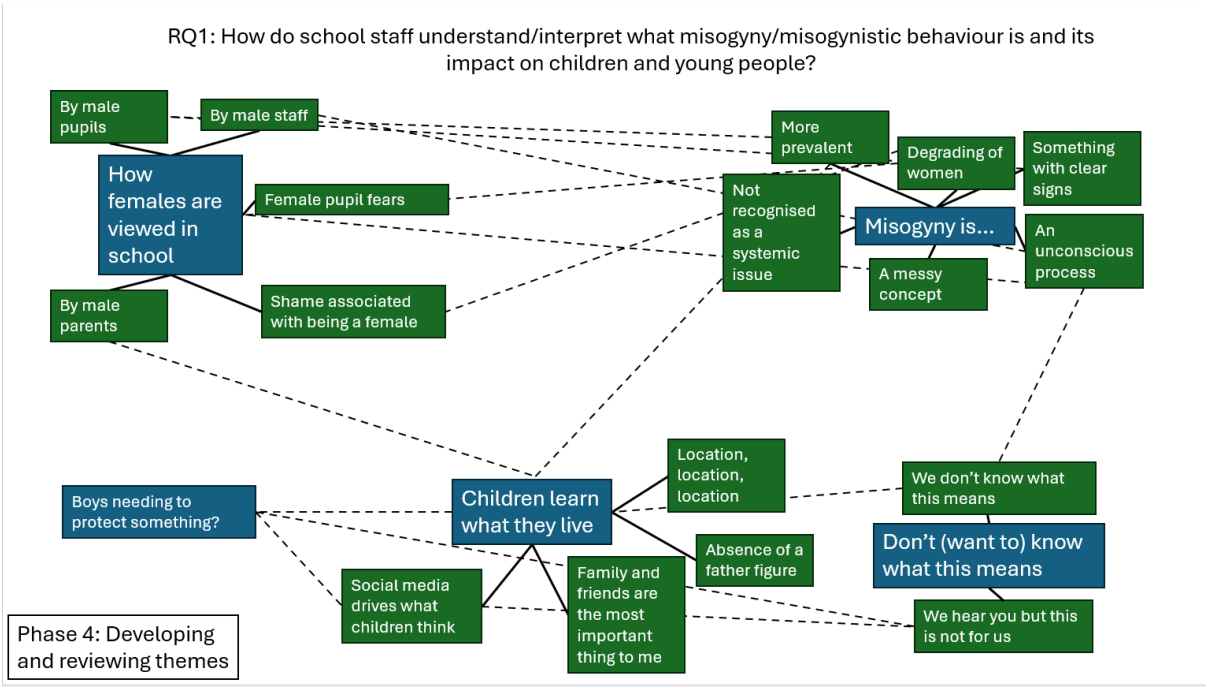
Name	Files	References
Equality and respct is something that u	1	1
Everybody in a child's life can help to te	1	3
Feeling as though you have to adjust w	2	2
Female staff are not treated well by mal	3	13
Female staff are seen as having a servin	1	2
Female staff are viewed as having poor	3	4
Female staff face misogynistic behaviou	1	1
Female staff feeling an emotional toll w	1	4
Female staff want to be liked by studen	1	2
Females do not want to share that they	1	2
Females need euphemisms to talk abou	1	1
Feminism is for everybody	2	4
Feminism is seen as hating men	2	2
Gender equality in representation withi	1	1
Gender equality needs to be promoted	2	4
Gender roles are enforced across a ran	1	2
Gender stereotypes need to be examin	1	3
Girls are blamed solely for issues	1	1
Girls are fearful of speaking out infront	2	6
Girls are more likely to choose caring pr	1	1
Girls are more open about their issues t	1	1
Girls can display misogynistic behaviour	1	1
Girls feel discriminated against by not b	1	2
Girls use knowledge of male discomfort	1	1
Girls work quality and rate is often bett	1	2
Good relationships will help children to	2	2
Governmental influence of what happe	2	4
Greater numbers of one sex gives domi	2	2
Having more context about the issue of	1	1
Having periods was seen as somethign	1	1
Higher ability children are encouraged	1	1

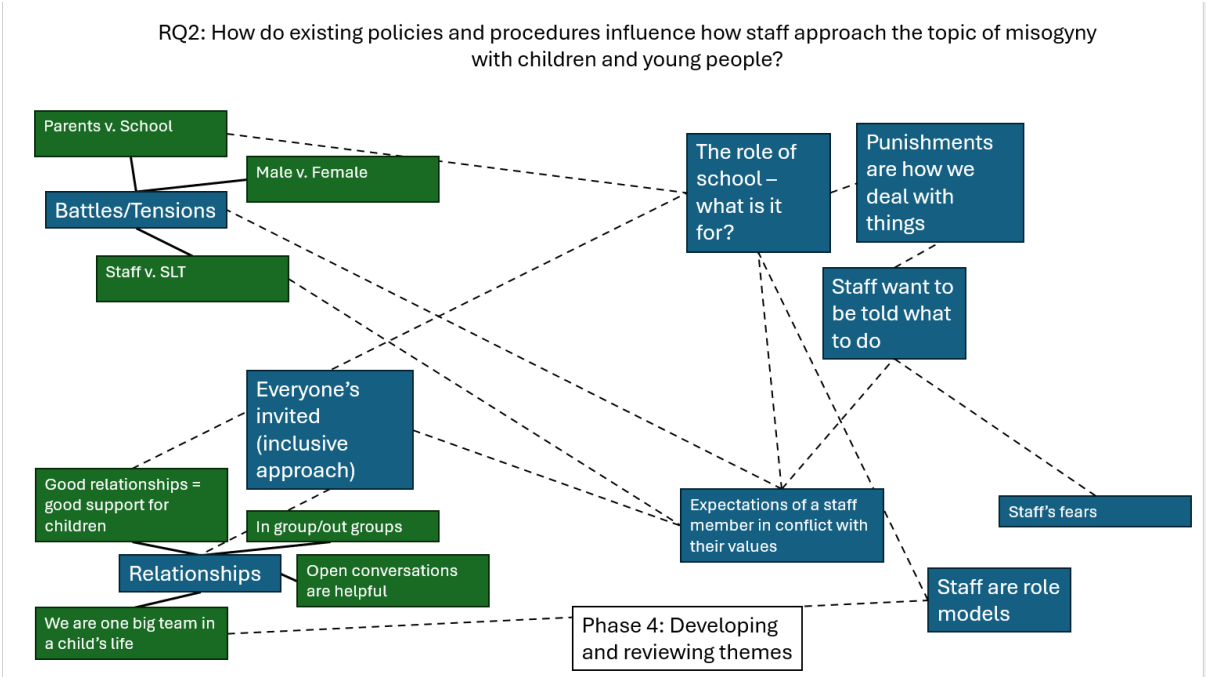
Appendix M: Thematic Map for Phase Three: Generating Initial Themes



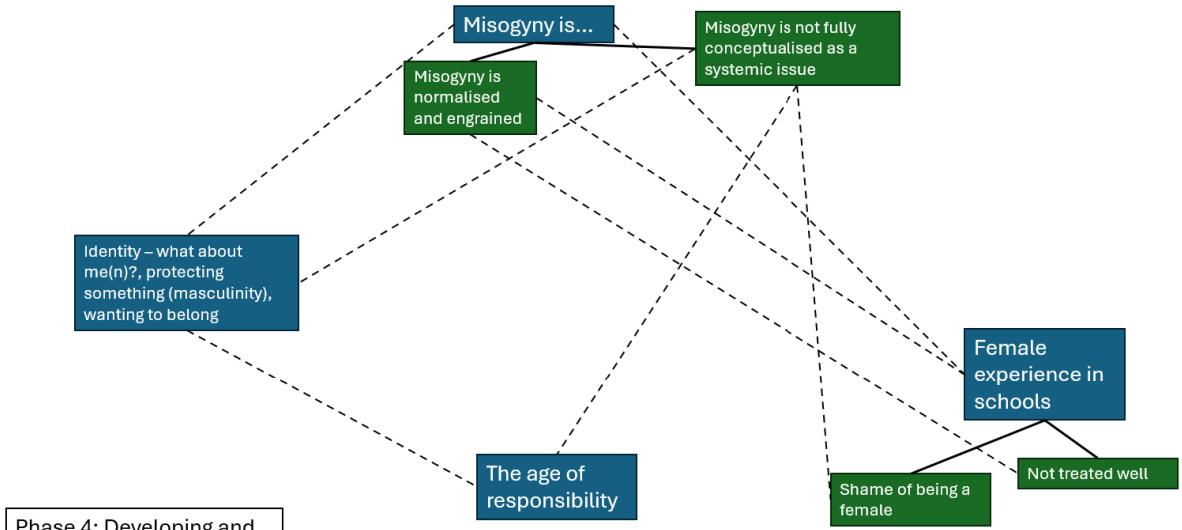


Appendix N: Thematic Maps at Phase Four: Developing and Reviewing Themes



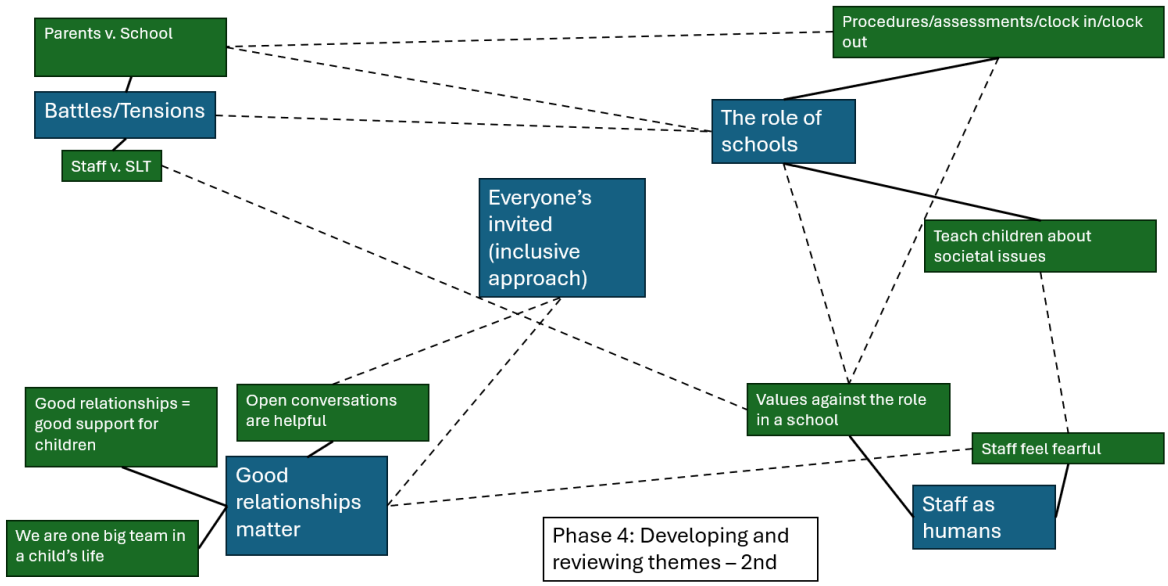


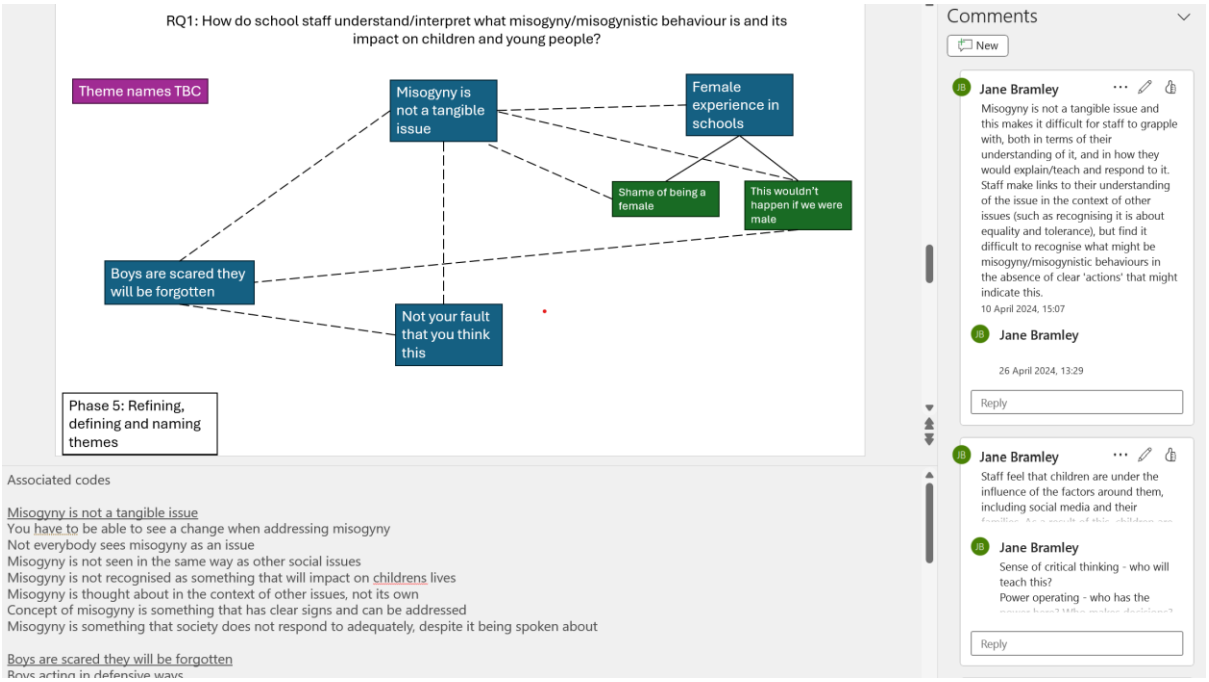
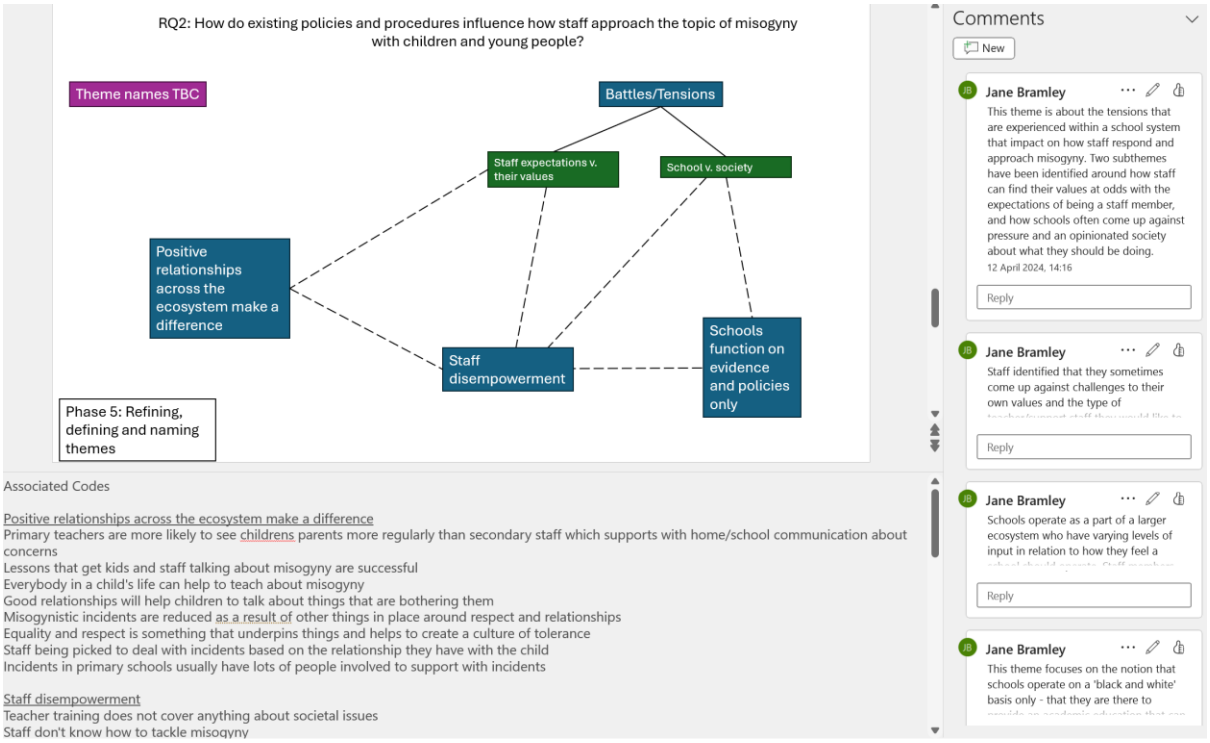
RQ1: How do school staff understand/interpret what misogyny/misogynistic behaviour is and its impact on children and young people?



Phase 4: Developing and reviewing themes – 2nd

RQ2: How do existing policies and procedures influence how staff approach the topic of misogyny with children and young people?



Phase 4: Developing and reviewing themes – 2nd

Appendix O: Thematic Maps for Phase Five: Refining, Defining and Naming Themes