Title Page

“Be your own shepherd, instead of following the other sheep”- ‘successful’ reading, school belonging and discursive reader identity development over primary to secondary school transitions - a participatory research project with young people.

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Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Education

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Intellectual Property and Publication Statements

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A co-authored book chapter, that reports on one part of the data set presented in this thesis, has been accepted for publication and is due to be published in August 2025:

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Figures 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4 in Chapter 3 and Table 5.4 in Chapter 5 of this thesis will also feature in the book chapter.

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Abstract

Primary-secondary school transitions are significant for young people, as part of an ongoing process of adaptation (Jindal-Snape, 2018). Negative experiences at this time can threaten wellbeing and attainment (e.g., West et al., 2010) including for reading outcomes specifically (Hopwood et al., 2017). Despite increased reading demands and the fact that reading skills become more resistant to intervention at secondary school (Clarke et al., 2017), there is a scarcity of transitions research about struggling readers, adolescent reading motivation and pupil perspectives of 'successful' reading.

Pupils' perceptions of 'good' and 'struggling' reader identity labels and of what is most important to be a 'successful' reader during primary-secondary transitions, alongside their reading self-efficacy (RSE), reading task value (RTV) and sense of school belonging (SB) and relationships between these factors were explored. A three-stage longitudinal and mixed methods design was applied with an overarching participatory approach, including collaboration with the participants as advisors. It was found that RTV and SB declined significantly, along with a non-significant reduction in RSE. Although understanding and enjoyment were ranked as consistently most important to be a 'successful' reader, perceptions around 'successful' reading and of reader identity labels changed. Key changes were a marked shift towards public self-consciousness led by a fear of peer judgement, and increased emphasis on independence and high-stakes attainment. The 'struggling' reader identity label was stigmatised and pupils recommended that reading difficulties should be masked and performance aspects minimised to deflect negative social repercussions.

Considering Multiple and Multidimensional Transitions (MMT, Jindal-Snape, 2016) theory, how positive transitions and reading experiences can be facilitated are discussed. Primary-secondary transitions are positioned as opportunities to take an individualised approach to cultivate agency and self-compassion as an MMT-Habit

of Heart within an MMT-growth mindset and SB environment to promote positive reader identity development and improve outcomes for young people.

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List of Abbreviations

ANOVA	Analysis of variance
BOS	Bristol Online Surveys
BPS	British Psychological Society
DBS	Disclosure and Barring Service
DPA	Data Protection Act
EAL	English as an Additional Language
E&LT	Educational and Life Transitions
FSM	Free School Meals
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
IQR	Interquartile range
M	Mean
Md	Median
MMT	Multiple and Multi-dimensional Transitions
MMT-GM	Multiple and Multi-dimensional Transitions- Growth Mindset
MMT-HOH	Multiple and Multi-dimensional Transitions- Habits of Heart
MMT-HOM	Multiple and Multi-dimensional Transitions- Habits of Mind
MRIB-S	Motivation for Reading Information Books School Questionnaire
MRIB-NS	Motivation for Reading Information Books Nonschool Questionnaire
MRQ	Motivation for Reading Questionnaire
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
PIAAC	Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies
PSSM	Psychological Sense of School Membership
RSE	Reading self-efficacy
RSEQ	Reading self-efficacy Questionnaire
RTV	Reading task value
RTVQ	Reading task value Questionnaire
SATs	Standard Assessment Tests
SB	School belonging
SD	Standard deviation
SDT	Self-determination theory
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
SENDCo	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator
SVR	Simple View of Reading
T1	Time 1
T2	Time 2
T3	Time 3
Y6	Year 6

Y7	Year 7
WWW.	What Went Well…

Chapter 1 Introduction

As an experienced practitioner working in literacy, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and inclusion for 22 years in both primary and secondary school settings, it became clear that primary-secondary school transitions are often a time of anxiety and uncertainty for all stakeholders, which can be particularly magnified in relation to pupils with SEND. It was also evident that each year there were pupils who navigated the move from the primary to the secondary school without securing functional reading skills prior to their transfer, and that the fast paced and complex secondary school environment was not commonly equipped with systems and approaches to effectively identify and support them. As a specialist teacher, developing provision to support young people with reading difficulties of this age, these challenges were compounded by how many struggling readers, who were now in the early stages of adolescence, would often rather miss out on support rather than reveal their difficulties and influence how they were perceived by their peers.

In 2015, during my MA (SEN) I began researching the experiences of young people over primary-secondary transitions using a participatory methodological approach. This research drew upon my own experiences and achieved an insight into the pupil perspective. Throughout this initial project there were many opportunities identified to expand beyond what was considered achievable within the academic requirements of the task. My doctoral research builds upon this earlier project and provides the scope to be able to explore the pupil perspective of 'successful' reading and reader identity labels alongside reading motivation and wellbeing factors. It was therefore my experiences in practice with young people and families that sparked the idea, which ultimately led me to design this study with the aim of shedding light on how practitioners like me, could best facilitate inclusive practice at this critical time to improve the process and outcomes for struggling readers.

It is well recognised in the literature that the transfer from primary-secondary school is a significant event in the lives of young people (Packer et al., 2021).

Transitions have been conceptualised as an ongoing process of adaptation across multiple domains (Jindal-Snape, 2018), encompassing the academic, social and emotional (Harris and Nowland, 2021) because of multiple changes (Jindal-Snape, 2018) such as, changes in teachers, peers, increased independence and navigating a new physical environment (Coffey, 2013). Multiple and Multi-dimensional Transitions (MMT) theory, (Jindal-Snape, 2016) which is applied as a lens in this study, highlights the ongoing, multiple and dynamic nature of transitions that a young person experiences simultaneously alongside primary-secondary transitions, including the onset of adolescence, which interact with and impact each other reciprocally.

Although it is now understood that most young people have broadly positive primary-secondary school transitions experiences (Jindal-Snape et al., 2023; Jindal-Snape and Cantali, 2019), it is recognised that some groups of young people are more vulnerable to negative experiences than others (Jindal-Snape et al., 2023). Negative transitions experiences have been associated with attainment dips (Galton et al., 1999; West et al., 2010) including a decline in reading attainment specifically (Hopwood et al., 2017). Although most existing transitions research focuses upon attainment (Donaldson et al., 2023), primary-secondary school transitions can also disrupt social and emotional development. Psychological wellbeing can be challenged (Poorthuis et al., 2014; Harris and Nowland, 2021) and mental health can be negatively impacted (West et al., 2010; Rice et al., 2011), persisting for some in the longer term (West et al., 2010). It is particularly relevant to this research that competency beliefs can be undermined (Jindal-Snape, and Miller., 2008), that engagement and motivation dip (Jindal-Snape et al., 2020) and that feelings of school belonging (SB) decline (Uvaas and McKevitt, 2013; Lester et al., 2013; Jindal-Snape et al., 2020).

Reading skills are needed to be able to access most aspects of life (Breadmore et al., 2019) and therefore play a crucial role in determining the life chances of young people (Scott et al., 2012). The demands on literacy skills increase in the secondary school context (Clarke et al., 2013; Bark and Brooks, 2016) and reading difficulties

have been found to be more resistant to intervention for pupils of this age (Clarke et al., 2017). This is particularly concerning for those young people who have not secured functional reading skills before transferring to secondary school (Mays, 2018). Despite this, little is known about the differential outcomes of primary-secondary transitions for those who face additional educational barriers (Hughes et al., 2013; Cantali, 2019; Jindal-Snape et al., 2020), including struggling readers as a group, or indeed about reading development more generally for pupils of this age (van der Kleij et al., 2023). It is important that research is carried out to contribute new insights, so that young people at increased risk can be identified, to support the development of inclusive education (Cantali, 2019) and to work towards improved outcomes for young people.

Struggling readers are also identified as a group who are at increased risk of experiencing mental health difficulties and disorders in the first instance (Maughan and Carroll, 2006; Boyes et al., 2016; Boyes et al., 2018; Wilmot et al., 2023). Anxiety is identified as the key mental health difficulty connected to reading difficulties (McArthur et al., 2020; Francis et al., 2022; McArthur., 2022) with poor reader self-concept acting as a moderating variable in this relationship (McArthur et al., 2020; Francis et al., 2022; McArthur, 2022). Self-concepts are closely related to self-efficacy beliefs (Hughes et al., 2011) which are more task specific, often acting as a precursor to broader and more fixed self-concept beliefs (Bong and Skaalvik, 2003).

Reading motivation and engagement diminish over adolescence and current levels of adolescent reading enjoyment and engagement (Webber et al., 2023) alongside volitional reading for pleasure (Maynard et al., 2008) are at an all all-time low. The reasons why reading for pleasure declines into adolescence is not currently well understood (Webber et al., 2024). Distal affective factors, such as motivation, psychological wellbeing and self-concepts for reading all influence reading motivation and engagement (Breadmore et al., 2019). Affective factors are highlighted as being important for developing reading with adolescents (Cockroft and Atkinson, 2017a). Targeting components of reading motivation such as reading

self-efficacy (RSE) and reading task value (RTV, McBreen and Savage, 2021) is one such approach, although there is currently a lack of research into the effectiveness of reading interventions that focus upon motivational factors with adolescents (Cockroft and Atkinson, 2017a). Interestingly, initial associations have been made between self-efficacy and having a positive sense of SB (Prince and Hadwin, 2013) and recent research has shown that developing a positive sense of SB is a promising approach for mediating the association between reading difficulties and mental health problems (Wilmot et al., 2024). It is therefore of current research interest to find out more about the impact of primary-secondary transitions on RSE, RTV and SB and how these factors interlink, to contribute to the understanding of reading motivation and psychological wellbeing factors over transitions and to the development of reading intervention for pupils with difficulties at this age. Both the perspectives of self-determination theory (SDT, Ryan and Deci, 2000; Ryan and Deci, 2020; Ryan and Deci, 2024) of motivation and psychological wellbeing and situated expectancy-value theory (Eccles and Wigfield, 2020) are utilised to support this research.

Literacy and identity are inextricably linked (Moje and Luke, 2009) and both transitions (Jindal-Snape, 2018) and adolescence (Erikson, 1968; Branje et al., 2021) are characterised by changes in identity. Reader identities are another distal and affective factor that influences the development of reading proficiency (Breadmore et al., 2019), and reader identity development is interconnected to both self-concept (Breadmore et al., 2019; Verhoeven et al., 2019) and intrinsic motivation for reading (Skinner et al., 2017). Reader identities are dynamic (Kucirkova and Cremin, 2020) and are constructed both internally by individuals and through an individual's participation in sociocultural contexts (Verhoeven et al., 2019). Discursive identies are those that are constructed by others through discourse (Bamberg et al., 2011) in the social context (Flowerdew and Wang, 2015). Discursive reader identities constructed at school are important because of how they position young people as being certain types of readers in classrooms (Kucirkova and Cremin, 2020), which can influence reading behaviours (Henk and Melnick, 1998) and inadvertently advantage those perceived as 'good' readers and reinforce

inequalities by disadvantaging those labelled as ‘struggling’ readers (Hall, 2009; Moje and Luke, 2009).

There is currently a dearth of research into the pupil perspective of what constitues ‘successful’ reading or ‘good’ readers (Smith et al., 2023), which is problematic since it is insight into the pupil perspective of reader identity labels that has the potential to shed most light on what it is that young people are working towards as readers at school (Moses, 2015). Therefore, it is important to open up the dialogue with young people to explore their perceptions of ‘good’ and ‘struggling’ discursive reader identities and what they think is most important to be a ‘successful’ reader, particularly during primary-secondary school transitions where identity formation is paramount and reading skills so critical for future life outcomes.

This research takes a participatory approach and draws upon the principles of inclusive research with young people (Walmsley and Johnson, 2003; Nind, 2014a). It regards young people as “experts in their own lives” (Mason and Danby, 2011, p.185) and aims to be transformative, empowering and accessible (Walmsley and Johnson, 2003; Mason and Danby, 2011; Nind, 2014a). These inclusive aims connect to the social diversity of literacy practices, which is consistent with the multiliteracies theoretical framework that seeks to reduce inequities in literacy learning (Cope and Kalantzis, 2023). The multiliteracies perspective is influential in this research as it emphasises epistemic diversity (Nind, 2014b; Serafini and Gee, 2017), the importance of individual literate identities (Levy, 2011) and multiple perspectives of literacy practices (Barden, 2012; Cope et al., 2018), including a complex view of learning to read that takes into account the individual context (Levy, 2011).

Overall, this research aims to further understanding of RSE, RTV and SB; of pupil perceptions of reader identity labels and of what is most important to be a ‘successful’ reader during primary-secondary school transitions and contribute to the development of the inclusivity of the transitions process through taking a participatory approach. Therefore, the added value (Walmsley et al., 2018) that can

be achieved through applying a participatory approach to the methodology is also critically considered.

In Chapter 2, the literature review provides an overview of the existing research across the relevant fields to provide the relevant background to contextualise the current study. Following this in Chapter 3, the methodological approaches are outlined including the context, design, methods and analysis applied to answer the research questions. Next, in Chapters 4 and 5 the quantitative and then qualitative findings respectively from the data collected over the three time points and with reference to the research questions that they answer are presented. Finally, in Chapter 6 the key findings are discussed in relation to the research questions whilst evaluating the significance and implications of the findings, in the context of existing research and relevant theories. Based upon the findings in relation to the influence of RSE, RTV, SB and of pupils' perceptions of reader identity labels and 'successful' reading during primary-secondary transitions and the connections between them, recommendations for theory, practice, policy and future research are made. I argue that the recommendations for policy and practice could contribute towards the development of the inclusivity of the primary-secondary school transitions process, and ultimately improve social, emotional and reading outcomes for those struggling with reading, psychological wellbeing or both during this uncertain time in the developmental and educational lives of young people.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter provides an overview of the existing research in the fields of primary-secondary school transitions and reading development considering the influence of adolescence and emphasising the importance of distal affective factors on learning to read. These include reading motivation and engagement, the relationship between reading and psychological wellbeing and the importance of reader identities, within the wider contexts of identity development and school belonging.

It also draws upon key theoretical perspectives that are influential in this study and demonstrates the relevance of this research within existing knowledge.

2.2 Primary to Secondary School Transitions

The move from primary to secondary school is a normative, educational transfer which takes place worldwide for the majority of pupils aged between 10 and 14 years (Evans et al., 2018). This transfer happens in the UK at the start of the academic year after the young people reach 11 years of age. At this time, pupils navigate the move into the secondary school context, which is usually a physically larger and more complex environment (Jindal-Snape et al., 2020) and where it is understood that major changes take place across multiple domains (Jindal-Snape et al., 2023), academically, emotionally and socially (Bloyce and Frederickson, 2012; Harris and Nowland, 2021) in the lives of young people.

How 'transitions' are conceptualised is not often explicitly discussed in the literature (Cantali, 2019; Jindal-Snape et al., 2019; Jindal-Snape et al., 2020). It is essential to have a shared understanding of the researcher's worldview in terms of their conceptualisation of key terms, as when this is missing it can reduce confidence in the strength of the research (Jindal-Snape et al., 2019). Without shared understanding, this can lead to misconceptions that could potentially limit the impact that the findings can make in practice. In this research transitions are conceptualised as: "an ongoing process of psychological, social and educational adaptation over time due to changes in context, interpersonal relationships and identity, which can be both exciting and worrying and requires ongoing support." (Jindal-Snape, 2018, p.283). The emphasis on ongoing adaptation in multiple domains because of multiple changes, as part of the process, highlights the child as an active participant in the process (Pollard and Filer, 1999).

Therefore, based on this conceptualisation, I use 'transitions' in the plural throughout to recognise the multiplicity of the adjustments taking place for young people in multiple domains (Jindal-Snape et al., 2023) and the terms 'transfer' and

‘move’ are used to refer to the physical move from the primary to the secondary school environment. Although I recognise that ‘transition’ in the singular form is still often used in the field, this suggests a more simplistic conceptualisation is being taken. In addition, the terms ‘pupils’, ‘children’ and ‘young people’ is used to refer to the 11-year-olds that transfer (Kellett, 2010).

It has long been acknowledged that for many young people primary-secondary transitions are a potentially anxious but exciting time (Lucey and Reay, 2000; Zeedyk et al., 2003; Jindal-Snape and Foggie, 2008), often referred to as pupils experiencing a state of ‘anxious readiness’ (Giddens, 1991). Although some positive transitions experiences have been reported (e.g. Evangelou et al., 2008), until more recently the research landscape around primary-secondary transitions took a predominantly negative discourse (Jindal-Snape et al., 2020). Transitions have largely been understood as challenging for pupils (Cantali, 2019). Adverse transitions experiences have been connected to attainment dips (Galton et al., 1999; West et al., 2010), including a reduction in reading attainment specifically (Hopwood et al., 2017), mental health difficulties (West et al., 2010; Rice et al., 2011) and a detrimental impact upon future transitions experiences (Benner, 2011). This has meant that transitions policy has often been constructed based upon “pessimistic assumptions” (Ecclestone et al., 2009, p.4).

More recently, it has been found that most young people in fact have mainly positive experiences. It is estimated that those who do not have positive primary-secondary transitions experiences ranges from between 22% (Jindal-Snape et al., 2023) with a sample size of 2559 to 34% (Jindal-Snape and Cantali, 2019) with a sample size of 61. Although it is important that research takes a balanced viewpoint (Jindal-Snape et al., 2020), it is also crucial to recognise the noteworthy minority who do have negative experiences. This is significant, as although it has been found that for the majority of pupils that any initial negative impact is short-lived (Topping, 2011; Bloyce and Frederickson, 2012), for some the negative impact on academic and wellbeing outcomes has been shown to persist throughout adolescence and into adulthood (West et al., 2010).

It is recognised in the existing research that some groups of pupils are at increased vulnerability to negative transitions experiences than others (Jindal-Snape et al., 2023). When exploring risk factors, it is important to take a multidimensional approach and consider the multiple and interconnected impact on academic, social and emotional domains (Harris and Nowland, 2021) to gain a holistic view. Social stratification has also been highlighted as significant, since social categorisation, based on for example, gender, ethnicity or disability, can hinder young people's opportunities for adjustment across the multiple domains (Harris and Nowland, 2021) and therefore also needs to be taken into account.

Of particular interest to this study is that pupils who are classified as having Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are identified as a group less likely to have positive experiences than those without additional needs (Bailey and Baines, 2012; Cantali, 2019; Jindal-Snape and Cantali, 2019; Jindal-Snape et al., 2023). Despite this, there is currently a gap in the existing research literature about how the effects of primary-secondary transitions may differ for children who experience additional barriers (Hughes et al., 2013; Cantali, 2019; Jindal-Snape et al., 2020) or who may experience transitions differently (Harris and Nowland, 2021). SEND transitions research has predominantly focused on autistic children in recent years (Cantali, 2019), and whilst more is now known about the transitions of autistic young people (e.g. Fortuna, 2014; Mandy et al., 2016; Peters and Brooks, 2016; Hebron, 2018) more research into the transitions experiences of pupils with other SEND is urgently needed (Hughes et al., 2013; Cantali, 2019; Jindal-Snape et al., 2023).

This emphasises the need for future research to focus upon developing the inclusivity of the transitions process and to find out more about other distinct groups of young people with SEND. For example, very little is known about the primary-secondary transitions experiences of struggling readers as a distinct group or about reading development generally for pupils of this age (van der Kleij et al., 2023). Much of the existing research focuses on transitions experiences and the impact this has on outcomes for young people and it is recommended in the

literature that further longitudinal research is needed that focuses upon transitions as a process (West et al., 2010; Bloyce and Frederickson, 2012; Hughes et al., 2013; Cantali, 2019; Jindal-Snape et al., 2020). Studies that have adopted longitudinal designs have often only collected quantitative data (e.g. Lester et al., 2013; Poorthuis et al., 2014; Mandy et al., 2016; Neal et al., 2016) and it is argued that most longitudinal studies only focus upon the time period immediately after the transfer making it challenging to determine if any effects persist in the longer term (Jindal-Snape et al., 2020).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills [OFSTED], 2015) reported that poor management of transitions experiences was contributing to stagnated progress in the early years of secondary education. Despite this, and the overall magnitude of primary-secondary transitions for young people, there is currently no centralised statutory guidance, or transitions policy for maintained schools (Department for Education, 2024a) or academy trusts (Department for Education, 2024b) in England. Instead, local authorities and schools have their own individual policies, which can lead to inconsistencies in practice (Garner and Bagnall, 2024).

In summary, it is highlighted that more research is needed into the transitions process (Bloyce and Frederickson, 2012), with longitudinal designs (West et al., 2010; Bloyce and Frederickson, 2012; Hughes et al., 2013; Cantali, 2019; Jindal-Snape et al., 2020) to support the development of inclusive education (Cantali, 2019), across a range of pupils to identify those at particular risk (Hughes et al., 2013; Jindal-Snape et al., 2020) so that more positive transitions experiences and outcomes can be realised in practice.

2.3 Transitions Theory

The conceptualisation of transitions adopted (Jindal-Snape, 2018) is based upon the Educational and Life Transitions (E&LT, Jindal-Snape and Ingram, 2013; Jindal-Snape,

2016) and the Multiple and Multi-dimensional Transitions (MMT, Jindal-Snape, 2016; Jindal-Snape, 2018; Jindal-Snape et al., 2020, Jindal-Snape, 2023) theories.

The E&LT model provides insight into the pupil experience (Jindal-Snape and Ingram, 2013) and explains that young people experience multiple educational and life transitions alongside normative educational transitions, such as the move from primary to secondary school. These transitions may or may not be within the same domain and they interact with and impact upon each other (Jindal-Snape, 2016). This suggests that pupils experience both normative and non-normative transitions simultaneously and that the process is complex and variable for individual pupils who may appear to be experiencing the same move (Jindal-Snape, 2016). It is explained that the transitions experienced, in either the same or different domains, can be either positive or negative, and positive experiences can act as a protective buffer unless negative experiences outweigh them (Jindal-Snape and Ingram, 2013). This model can therefore be utilised when planning transitions support for an individual pupil, in terms of considering potential risk and protective factors.

MMT theory also emphasises the ongoing nature and multiplicity of transitions that the individual pupil experiences simultaneously that interact and impact upon each other, as well as the multiple transitions experienced by significant others in the young person's life that also impact and interact reciprocally. This theory is often represented by a Rubik's Cube analogy, where one colour represents the multiple transitions experienced by an individual young person and the other colours represent their significant others. This makes clear how one small change can trigger multiple changes for significant others (Jindal-Snape et al., 2020). This emphasises how educational transitions impact upon all stakeholders involved, for example, parents and professionals as well as pupils. Transitions can therefore be better understood from consideration of multiple perspectives (Jindal-Snape, 2009).

One example that is particularly important to note is the onset of adolescence which coincides with primary-secondary transitions, and therefore young people are experiencing a myriad of physiological changes simultaneously, whilst navigating

this process (Poorthuis et al., 2014; Neal et al., 2016; Peters and Brooks, 2016). Along with these changes, this period is also characterised by various other changes, including those related to personal identity (Erikson, 1968; Branje et al., 2021) and the self, and heightened feelings of self-consciousness (Pfeifer and Berkman, 2018). It would not be possible to separate the impact of primary-secondary transitions from the other changes taking place, such as adolescence, or indeed any cumulative effects caused by multiple factors. Therefore, it is recognised that evaluating the impact of primary-secondary transitions on outcomes from that of other potentially influential transitions is not clear-cut.

As part of MMT theory, research into what makes successful educational and life transitions experiences has been summarised into XII pillars of successful MMT (Jindal-Snape, 2023). These include identified qualities, character traits and ecological factors that research has shown can promote successful experiences for individuals experiencing transitions. Although these pillars are presented as being distinct, it is recognised that they are interconnected and that they interact with each other.

The XII pillars of successful MMT are (taken from Jindal-Snape, 2023, p.540):

1. Multiple and Multi-dimensional Transitions Habits of Mind (MMT-HOM)
2. Multiple and Multi-dimensional Transitions Habits of Heart (MMT-HOH)
3. Attitudes and beliefs about transitions (e.g., MMT Growth Mindset)
4. Perception of ability and skills to navigate transitions
5. Experience and outcomes of other multiple and concurrent transitions
6. Discourse about transitions at home, school, workplace, in the wider community, media
7. Social Capital (social connections/networks/relationships)
8. Significant others' ability to support transitions (e.g., family, professionals, peers)
9. Significant others' experiences and outcomes of their own transitions
10. Opportunities to discuss transitions in everyday life
11. Experience of diverse pedagogical/andragogical approaches/work practices
12. Organizational, familial and community culture

It is emphasised that these XII pillars are not fixed, but that they can be actively created and maintained (Jindal-Snape, 2023). It is also explained that not all pillars have to be present or be present equitably for successful transitions to be realised (Jindal-Snape, 2023). This model provides a helpful framework for developing individual educational transitions support for those who need it. This framework also introduces new concepts, that is MMT Habits of Mind (MMT-HOM) and MMT Habits of Heart (MMT-HOH). MMT-HOM are defined as 'thinking dispositions' (Jindal-Snape, 2023, p. 540) related to the ability to consider transitions experiences skilfully. MMT-HOH relate to social-emotional aspects when faced with challenges as part of the transitions process, for example self-compassion. Self-compassion is defined as: "an adaptive way of relating to the self when considering personal inadequacies or difficult life circumstances." (Neff and McGehee, 2010, p.225). Self-compassion has been found to be predictive of positive mental health outcomes for adolescents (Neff and McGehee, 2010) and is understood to promote resilience and moderate the connection between struggling academically and depression (Lahtinen et al., 2020).

MMT-HOM and MMT-HOH interact reciprocally and that these can be cultivated and developed with individuals. They also impact upon other pillars, in particular, an individual's attitudes and beliefs about transitions and their perceptions of their own ability and skills to navigate transitions (Jindal-Snape, 2023). For example, having an MMT-Growth Mindset (MMT-GM) is noted as one significant attitude or belief about transitions that can make a positive impact. A growth mindset, defined as: "the belief that intellectual ability can be developed." (Yeager and Dweck, 2020, p.1269). It is understood that these beliefs can be supportive for developing increased resilience and academic attainment when faced with challenging situations or circumstances (Yeager and Dweck, 2020).

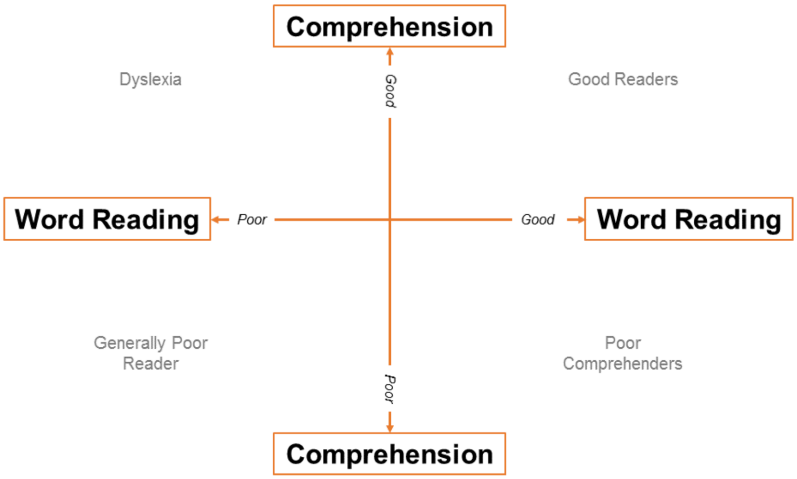
This study adopts the MMT theoretical perspective including the XII pillars of successful MMT framework, as a lens. This theory supports this research as it aligns with the conceptualisation of transitions adopted in that it does not present transitions as one off events but instead focuses upon the adaptation in response to

those experiences (Cantali, 2025). MMT theory therefore presents a holistic view which is transitions specific (Cantali, 2025) and that captures the complexities and ongoing and multiple nature of primary-secondary school transitions (Jindal-Snape, 2023; Hodgkin et al., 2025). Through the XII pillars this theoretical framework also emphasises multiple influential factors on a young person's individual experiences that contributes to the success of their adaptation to their new school environment. Crucially, it highlights the interconnectedness of these pillars, which is particularly helpful when exploring relationships between multiple factors and their impact upon unique lived experiences without oversimplifying individual realities. Moreover, the XII pillars also offer practical applicability, which is key when working towards transformation in practice.

2.4 Reading Development and Primary-Secondary Transitions

Literacy encompasses both reading and writing domains, which are connected processes (Taylor and Clarke, 2021) that can be considered at both the word and text level. Breadmore et al. (2019) highlight that the development of reading and writing skills are underpinned by both proximal and distal factors. In relation to reading specifically, proximal factors are those that are directly involved in the reading process for example knowledge of letters and language. Distal factors are indirect influences that underly reading skills, including psychological impacts or 'affective factors' (Breadmore et al., 2019), such as motivation and psychological wellbeing aspects. The Simple View of Reading (SVR, Gough and Tunmer, 1986) explains how the processes of language comprehension and word recognition can lead to main goal of reading, that is, reading comprehension. This model predicts how strengths or weaknesses in the different processes can broadly represent different types of reading difficulties (e.g.Bishop and Snowling, 2004) and this can be represented in a diagram, as presented in Figure 2.1 (Breadmore et al., 2019).

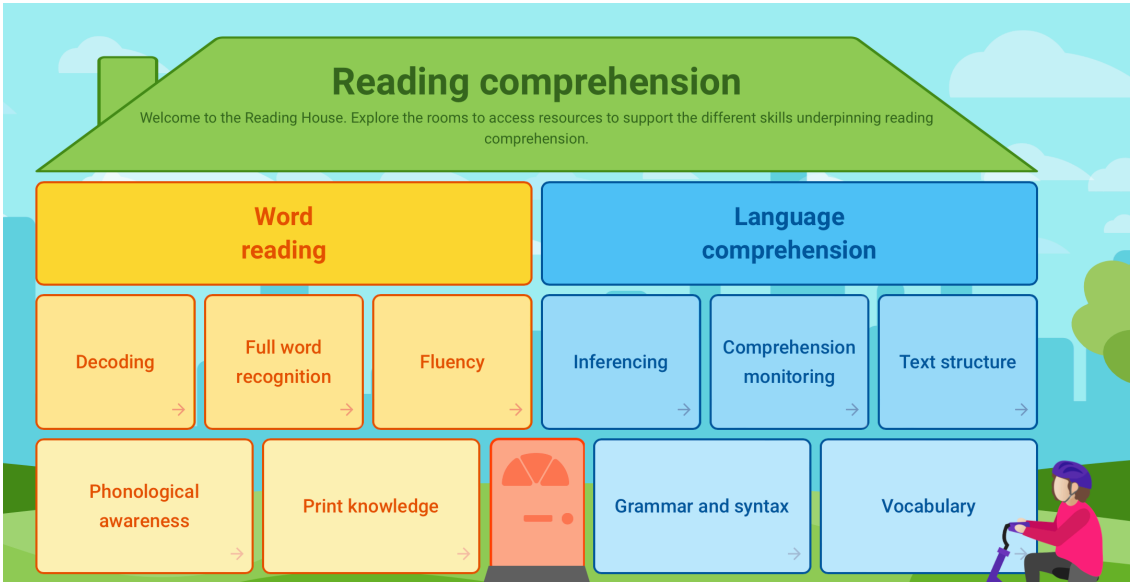
Figure 2.1 The Simple View of Reading (Breadmore et al., 2019, p.14)



The rationale for including the SVR is to firstly contextualise the present study within theoretical understanding around reading development more broadly. The SVR was chosen since it is accessible (Snow, 2018), has a robust evidence base (Kirby and Savage, 2008; Snow, 2018; Wyse and Hacking, 2024) and because it is a well-known model (Kim, 2023) that is utilised by teachers in practice. For example, the SVR was introduced as a foundational element of the Rose Report (Rose, 2006), which provides guidance for teachers around developing early reading practice and continues to be reflected within National Curriculum programmes of study related to reading (Department for Education, 2023).

The SVR is directly connected to The Reading House which is an interactive tool developed for practitioners (Education Endowment Foundation, 2021) based upon the SVR, adapted from Hogan et al. (2011), as shown in Figure 2.2. This resource extends the SVR and shows the underlying components of both word reading and language comprehension as well as relevant cognitive processes.

Figure 2.2 The Reading House (Education Endowment Foundation, 2021)



Although it is noteworthy, that the SVR was not originally intended to be a foundation for reading instruction (Gough and Tunmer, 1986; Wyse and Hacking, 2024), models such as these are supportive as a starting point for practitioners when assessing and unpicking which components of reading pupils are finding difficult, so that effective support and intervention can be put in place (Quigley and Coleman, 2019). It is recognised that the SVR does not account for the impact of motivation (Cartwright et al., 2016) and other distal and child-based affective factors (Breadmore et al., 2019).

Although the Department for Education (2023) emphasises that all educators have responsibility for teaching children to read, it is widely understood that teaching children fundamental reading skills falls within the remit of primary schools (Collins, 2019). However, in 2024, 26% of pupils did not meet the 'expected' standard for reading (Department for Education, 2024c) at the end of primary school, which is broadly in line with previous years.

These pupils therefore made the transfer from primary-secondary school below the 'expected' threshold. Based on previous trends only 1 in 10 of this group will achieve passes and both English and Maths GCSE examinations at the end of

secondary school (Quigley and Coleman, 2019). In the longer term, the National Literacy Trust (2024) report that based on the most recent national statistics available from the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PiAAC) adult skills survey carried out in 2023 (Department for Education, 2024d) that 18% of adults in England have 'very poor literacy skills', this represents approximately 6.6 million adults (National Literacy Trust, 2024). This is significant as reading skills are integral to nearly all aspects of life and therefore this is a major societal issue (Toste et al., 2020).

In this study, 'struggling readers' is used as an umbrella term for pupils who are thought of as being on a spectrum of reading difficulties (Snowling and Hulme, 2012), which is likely to encapsulate the 26% of pupils who did not meet the 'expected' threshold in reading at end of Year 6 in England in 2024 (Department for Education, 2024c). It is recognised that if this group were to be considered in a categorical way that they would be very heterogeneous, with a wide range of reading difficulties and environmental contexts, and indeed there are overlapping and blurred boundaries throughout. Very little is known about the transitions experiences of struggling readers as a distinct group or about reading development generally for pupils of this age (van der Kleij et al., 2023) nor how secondary schools assess pupils to identify those struggling with reading, unpick their reading difficulties and how assessment information is used to plan targeted support (OFSTED, 2022).

What is known is that during primary-secondary transitions pupils experience multiple academic adjustments (Harris and Nowland, 2021) including changes in pedagogy (Evans et al., 2018) and that the academic challenges they face are often underestimated (Quigley and Coleman, 2019). In terms of reading specifically, struggling readers navigate the transfer into the secondary school environment where demands on literacy skills increase sharply (Bark and Brooks, 2016), where there is more requirement to 'read to learn' (Clarke et al., 2013), and where more complex vocabulary is used throughout the curriculum (Deignan et al., 2023). Hopwood et al. (2017) found that reading attainment declined significantly during

primary-secondary transitions. In contrast, van der Kleij et al., (2023) examined longitudinal reading development over this time, and found that growth in reading comprehension skills remained relatively stable. Even so, the overall research landscape remains uncertain and precarious for pupils that have not secured functional reading skills prior to the move to secondary school (Mays, 2018).

As literacy skills are both general and subject specific, this is compounded in the secondary school context as functional reading skills are key to successful experiences across the curriculum. Therefore, reading difficulties impact upon struggling readers' access to all curriculum areas (Guthrie and Coddington, 2009). They will for example, face different text types specific to different subject areas, that can often be more technical and place distinct demands on reading skills depending on the curriculum area (Quigley and Coleman 2019). This is magnified further, since it has been found that secondary teachers are not typically as well equipped as primary teachers to provide support for pupils with literacy difficulties (Mac Mahon, 2014; Collins, 2019).

Adding to the complexity, there is also currently very little research evidence in terms of interventions that are supportive for developing reading skills for pupils in secondary schools (See and Gorard, 2014). Clarke et al., (2017) found that it is difficult to achieve gains in reading skills through traditional approaches to intervention once pupils are at this age and stage in their education. These challenges also extend beyond school in the longer term, as unless remediated, being a struggling reader increases vulnerability to negative life outcomes (Hulme and Snowling, 2011). Given that conventional approaches to reading intervention are not as impactful for pupils at this age (Clarke et al., 2017) and acknowledging that proximal factors alone are insufficient to completely understand reading development (Breadmore et al., 2019) for adolescents (Cockroft and Atkinson, 2017a), it is important to specifically consider the influence of distal affective factors, in this case psychological wellbeing and motivation.

2.5 Reading, Psychological Wellbeing and Primary-Secondary School Transitions

Mental health and emotional wellbeing are among the primary concerns facing schools today (Georgiou et al., 2024). Schools can influence social-emotional wellbeing (Bonell et al., 2013) which can potentially impact upon mental health patterns for young people, either positively or negatively, across their lives (Donaldson et al., 2023). Social-emotional development can be defined as: "the extent to which an individual's understanding, expression and regulation of emotions in both intrapersonal and interpersonal contexts is age-appropriate." (Beatson et al., 2023, p.2).

It is accepted that primary-secondary school transitions can disrupt the social and emotional development of young people who then need to adjust to these changes, amongst other changes that are occurring simultaneously (Harris and Nowland, 2021). Most existing transitions research focuses upon attainment (Donaldson et al., 2023) which is unfortunate since the pupils themselves prioritise social-emotional factors (Topping, 2011). Establishing these social-emotional skills can contribute to resilience to the environmental challenges experienced (Beatson et al., 2023) and therefore transitions can conversely be viewed as opportunities to support development of psychological wellbeing to enhance wellbeing trajectories for young people (Donaldson et al., 2023). Nevertheless, it is well recognised that psychological wellbeing can be challenged during primary-secondary transitions (e.g.Poorthuis et al., 2014; Harris and Nowland, 2021), that pupils identified as having SEND are more vulnerable to negative psychological outcomes over this time (Hughes et al., 2013; Neal et al., 2016) and that for some these impacts are long-term (West et al., 2010).

Struggling readers are identified as a group who are at increased risk of experiencing both internalising emotional problems, such as anxiety and depression and externalising mental health difficulties and disorders (Maughan and Carroll, 2006; Boyes et al., 2016; Boyes et al., 2018; Wilmot et al., 2023). Indeed, the

National Literacy Trust (2019) found that young people who have reading skills above the expected standard are three times more likely to have positive mental health than their peers who are struggling readers.

Whilst the association between reading difficulties and externalising behaviours is thought to be mediated by attentional difficulties, the link between poor reading and internalising problems, particularly anxiety, is not (Maughan and Carroll, 2006; Francis et al., 2019). More recently, consensus has been reached regarding the connection between reading difficulties and anxiety more specifically (McArthur et al., 2020; Francis et al., 2022; McArthur, 2022). It has been estimated that one quarter of struggling readers have elevated anxiety and those who experience comorbid inattention or hyperactivity are four times more likely to experience increased anxiety than those who are struggling with reading alone (McArthur et al., 2024). It has also been established that the difficulties with reading precede the anxiety experienced by struggling readers. McArthur et al. (2022) found that emotional health at age five was not related to reading at age seven, but that reading attainment at seven years of age did predict emotional health at age nine or eleven. This is reinforced by Robidoux et al. (2024) who found that poor attention pre-school, predicted early reading difficulties which led to elevated anxiety by the age of nine.

It is suggested that self-esteem can play a moderating role in the relationship between reading difficulties and anxiety (Terras et al., 2009; Boyes et al., 2018) and that self-esteem declines over the school years (Wigfield and Eccles, 1994). As well as this, pupils identified as experiencing low self-esteem have been found to be more vulnerable to negative transitions experiences more broadly (Jindal-Snape and Miller, 2008; West et al., 2010; Topping, 2011). However, the issue of whether self-esteem is negatively impacted during transitions currently remains unresolved (Jindal-Snape et al., 2020). This emphasises the importance of affective factors, such as self-esteem in understanding reading development at this time, as young people with more positive attitudes towards their difficulties typically experience higher self-esteem (Terras et al., 2009) which would then be protective and reduce risk of

developing anxiety disorders. Leitão et al. (2017) took a qualitative approach and highlighted the experiences of young people with dyslexia and their parents, who emphasised the impact of the social stigma they experienced of living with difference or difficulty, that also needs to be considered.

It has been hypothesised that it is reading self-concept more specifically that explains the relationship between poor reading and anxiety (McArthur et al., 2020; Francis et al., 2022; McArthur, 2022). Self-concept is defined as: "a person's perceptions of him – or herself formed through experience with and perceptions of one's environment." (Marsh and Shavelson, 1985, p.107). It is emphasised that self-concept is both multi-faceted and hierarchical (Marsh and Shavelson, 1985; Marsh, 1989), which means that people have various domain specific self-concepts, for example a reading self-concept or a maths self- concept, as well as broader academic self-concept and more global overarching self-esteem (McArthur et al., 2016). Self-concept is hierarchical in that broader self-concept, such as academic self-concept more widely, are understood to be more stable and more specific self-concepts, such as reading self-concept, are more adaptable in response to certain situations (Marsh and Shavelson, 1985). It is important to make this distinction, as it is the more specific domain self-concepts that have been most associated with academic attainment (Marsh and Martin, 2011; McArthur et al., 2016).

Of particular interest to this study, is that it has been found that during adolescence it is negative self-concept and internalising problems, rather than difficulties with academic skills, that predict emotional problems in early adulthood (Torppa et al., 2024). This is important as negative self-concept and anxiety influence reading reciprocally, resulting in a cycle where the problem continues to progressively worsen through increased anxiety, inattention and negative self-concept, leading to further disengagement from reading (McArthur, 2022; Robidoux et al., 2024). Therefore, the gap between struggling readers and their peers continues to widen as young people grow up. To add to the complexity, it is generally agreed upon in the transitions' literature that young people's academic self-concept, in the wider context, is particularly vulnerable during this time (Jindal-Snape and Miller, 2008;

Hanewald, 2013; Symonds and Galton, 2014). Notably, Lord et al. (1994) found that positive academic and social self-concepts were protective across the transfer to junior high school in contrast to self-consciousness which increased the risk of negative transitions experiences.

This emphasises the importance of early intervention in practice, and it is recommended that focus needs to be on developing protective coping or resilience mechanisms with young people in schools to try and break or prevent this cycle between reading and mental health (Georgiou et al., 2024; Robidoux et al., 2024). Recent research has shown that developing a sense of school belonging is a promising approach for mediating the association between reading difficulties and anxiety, depression and conduct problems (Wilmot et al., 2024). Self-determination theory (SDT, Ryan and Deci, 2000; Ryan and Deci, 2020; Ryan and Deci, 2024), traditionally considered a theory of motivation, has more recently been applied to psychological wellbeing and highlights the importance of developing autonomy, competence and relatedness to promote wellbeing and recommend developing environments that are 'autonomy supportive' (Lord et al., 1994; Soenens et al., 2015; Ryan and Deci, 2020) to nurture a sense of belonging (Ryan and Deci, 2024). Interestingly, it has been found that supporting autonomy and relatedness specifically has the most impact for enhancing quality of life for young people, after the transfer to secondary school (Gillison et al., 2008).

For struggling readers navigating the transfer from primary-secondary school, developing these supportive environments is particularly pertinent as they are likely to already be experiencing negative self-concept and anxiety in association with their reading difficulties at a time when they are faced with multiple academic, social and emotional adjustments. It adds another layer of complexity that all of this takes place in the larger and more complex environment of the secondary school, where reading skills and academic self-concept are particularly challenged, and where it is known that reading engagement and mental health start to decline more broadly (National Literacy Trust, 2019). To understand the influence of affective

factors on struggling readers' experiences of primary-secondary transitions more fully, the next section explores the influence of motivation factors.

2.6 Motivation Theories

Motivation more broadly is multidimensional (Wigfield, 1997) and therefore it is recommended that multiple theoretical perspectives are employed to understand it (Guthrie and Coddington, 2009). Consideration of how motivation is understood in different ways is important to understanding the role it plays in literacy development (Breadmore et al., 2019). This plurality also adds to the complexity of the field, with research originating from different traditions and often key terms being used interchangeably (Toste et al., 2020; Webber et al., 2023) which can make it more challenging to progress the field (Murnan et al., 2023). Understanding motivation during adolescence is particularly pertinent as motivational beliefs tend to decline during this time (Martin and Steinbeck, 2017).

Self-determination theory (SDT) focuses upon the nature of the motivation itself depending on the different goals that prompt individuals to take actions (Ryan and Deci, 2000). This theory distinguishes between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation which are both applicable in school settings (Ryan and Deci, 2020). On a basic level intrinsic motivation: "refers to doing something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable." (Ryan and Deci, 2000, p.55) for example, curiosity or involvement (Wigfield and Guthrie, 1997). Extrinsic motivation: "refers to doing something because it leads to separable outcome." (Ryan and Deci, 2000, p.55) such as a reward or responding to an environmental demand (Breadmore et al., 2019). It is intrinsic motivation that has been of most interest to educational research since it leads to learning and positive school achievement outcomes for young people (Ryan and Deci, 2020). Interestingly, it is proposed that the more internalised intrinsic motivation becomes for a particular activity or subject, the more it becomes a positive part of a learner's identity (Skinner et al., 2017) for example, their identity as a reader.

It has also been acknowledged that extrinsic motivation is a heterogeneous category that is best understood as being on a continuum depending on how internalised and autonomous the reasons for the instrumental motivation are. This ranges from external regulation to identified regulation. External regulation is highly controlled and externally imposed rewards or sanctions, which can ultimately negatively impact progress. In contrast, identified regulation is more autonomously enacted, and values based where individuals find the task worthwhile even if they do not enjoy it, which can also predict positive outcomes (Ryan and Deci, 2020).

It is understood that intrinsic motivation influences behaviours as it is a drive to satisfy the basic psychological needs and motivational constructs (Wigfield and Guthrie, 1997) of autonomy, competency and relatedness (Ryan and Deci, 2000). Despite how it is well recognised that intrinsic motivation contributes to academic achievement and is particularly important for secondary school pupils (Taylor et al., 2014) it has been found that intrinsic motivation declines as pupils progress through their school lives (Ryan and Deci, 2020) Indeed, it is widely recognised in the educational transitions literature that engagement and motivation both dip in the secondary school context (Jindal-Snape et al., 2020) and that SDT is a helpful framework to support understanding of how pupils' psychological needs can be impacted over transitions, and how these should be supported to lead to positive wellbeing and educational outcomes (Jindal-Snape et al., 2021).

Research indicates that competency beliefs are challenged during educational transitions (Jindal-Snape and Miller, 2008; Hanewald, 2013; Symonds and Galton, 2014). This relates specifically to perceptions of self, including the psychological concept of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is a person's belief that they are capable of carrying out a task or achieving a set goal (Bandura, 1993) and is a key component of social-cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986). Self-efficacy is inherent to motivation (Eccles et al., 1993; Bandura, 1997), agency (Bandura, 1982; Code, 2020) and is closely related to the construct of competency from SDT (Sweet et al., 2012) in that it is an affirming aspect of motivation (van der Sande et al., 2023) that is predictive of skill or ability (Bandura, 1997; Wigfield and Eccles, 2000). This is because people

are more likely to have interest in and persevere with a task where they feel efficacious and less likely to be affected in the face of difficulties or failure (Bandura, 1997), indeed: “It is difficult to achieve much while fighting self-doubt.” (Bandura, 1993, p.118).

However, it is important to note that it is not a panacea and that without the necessary skills or knowledge, increased self-efficacy can lead to reduced engagement (Bandura, 1986; Carroll and Fox, 2017). Self-efficacy is also considered to be a malleable construct (Unrau et al., 2018), which has important implications for support and intervention. It is recognised that academic self-concept and self-efficacy beliefs are very closely related (Hughes et al., 2011), with self-efficacy acting as a precursor to self-concept (Bong and Skaalvik, 2003). This is relevant considering how academic self-concept can be particularly vulnerable during primary-secondary transitions and so critical in moderating the connection between reading and mental health difficulties (McArthur, 2022).

Self-efficacy is also interconnected to the expectancy component of the expectancy-value theory of motivation (Wigfield and Eccles, 2000) This theory views motivation as the product of value and expectancy (Breadmore et al., 2019). Expectancies for success are defined as: “children’s beliefs about how well they will do on upcoming tasks, either in the immediate or longer-term futures.” (Wigfield, and Eccles, 2000, p. 70). Subjective task values are about the value individuals place on succeeding (Wigfield, 1994) and this is broken down into distinct parts: attainment value, intrinsic-enjoyment value, utility value and relative costs (Eccles and Wigfield, 2020). This theory explains behaviour and task choice, as pupils are more motivated by and more likely to participate in tasks that they consider valuable and that they expect they can succeed at. More recently this theory has been updated to situated expectancy-value theory to emphasise the importance of a young person’s immediate situation throughout all aspects of the model (Eccles and Wigfield, 2020). This is relevant to this study, since it emphasises that pupil’s expectancies and values are shaped by situational factors such as their school environment (Raufelder et al., 2022).

2.7 Reading Motivation and Engagement

Theories of motivation are applied specifically in the field of reading motivation (van der Sande et al., 2023). Reading motivation can be defined as: “the drive to read resulting from a comprehensive set of an individual’s beliefs about, attitudes toward, and goals for reading.” (Conradi et al., 2014, p.154). Similar to intrinsic motivation, reading motivation and engagement decline once young people reach adolescence (Webber et al., 2023) as does regular reading for pleasure (Maynard et al., 2008). Indeed, current levels of adolescent reading enjoyment and engagement are considered to be at a historic low (Webber et al., 2023).

It is necessary to highlight the distinction between reading motivation and reading engagement, which often overlap (Conradi Smith et al., 2024) and can lead to confusion (Nagy et al., 2022). Nagy et al., (2022) clarify this and distinguish between reading motivation as the intent to read and reading engagement as the action itself. McGeown and Conradi Smith (2024) emphasise the multi-dimensional nature of reading engagement and point to four specific areas of engagement that is: behavioural, cognitive, affective and social. This provides a helpful framework for practitioners aiming to support reading engagement as needed within the specific areas. Reading engagement is connected to reading for pleasure, that is the: “volitional reading in which we choose to engage” (Kucirkova and Cremin, 2020, p.2) and intrinsic motivation for reading. It is proposed that reading motivation is a precursor to reading engagement and therefore to foster engagement it is crucial to support reading motivation with young people (McGeown and Conradi Smith, 2024).

Reading motivation is associated with reading attainment more generally (McGeown, 2013; Stutz et al., 2016) and with reading attainment with adolescents specifically (McGeown et al., 2015; Duncan et al., 2016; Toste et al., 2020; Murnan et al., 2023). Reading motivation in adolescents has been particularly linked to reading comprehension (McGeown et al., 2015; Troyer et al., 2019), summarisation skills and fluency (McGeown et al., 2015). It is understood that it is intrinsic

motivation distinctly that is associated with positive reading outcomes (Schiefele et al., 2012; Breadmore et al., 2019). In that, the more intrinsically motivated the young person, the more deeply they engaged with text which led to improved understanding (Conradi Smith et al., 2024). In their meta-analytic review, Toste et al. (2020) found that the relationship between motivation and reading was bidirectional (Morgan and Fuchs, 2007) and that early reading predicted later motivation more strongly than motivation predicted reading success.

Reading motivation contributes to successful reading outcomes to a certain extent because of how reading motivation leads to increased print exposure or reading amount (Breadmore et al., 2019). This is often explained as being a 'Matthew effect' (Stanovich, 1986; Mol and Bus, 2011) or an 'upward spiral of causality' (Breadmore et al., 2019, p.69). This means that confident readers, tend to read more and therefore their reading skills continue to develop and improve. For struggling readers this is reversed, and this negative motivational impact can be considered to be a 'negative Matthew effect' (Stanovich, 1986; Chapman and Tunmer, 1997). This means that lowered motivation can lead to accumulated disadvantage in terms of lowered expectations, less practice and resultant difficulties developing reading skills (Spear-Swerling and Sternberg, 1994).

However, the relationship between reading motivation and reading achievement is not fully explained by reading amount (Schiefele et al., 2012; Troyer et al., 2019). The quality of text engaged with is also considered to be important (Schiefele et al., 2012; Troyer et al., 2019) as well as background factors such as socio-economic status (Troyer et al., 2019). It is intrinsic motivation specifically that is associated with increased reading quality as well as quantity, in contrast to extrinsic motivation which can increase reading amount but not the quality of the engagement which can have a negative impact (Schiefele et al., 2012). In terms of which aspects of motivation are most important for adolescents, Conradi Smith et al. (2024) refer to situated expectancy-value theory (Eccles and Wigfield, 2020) and highlight whether young people have the self-belief or self-efficacy to engage with a text and whether the reading task is interesting or relevant to them as being paramount.

Struggling readers often rely more on extrinsic motivation for reading, and so they tend to read because they have been told to, or when there is an extrinsic reward (Quirk et al., 2010; Breadmore et al., 2019). It is emphasised that the motivational attributes of struggling readers need to be focused upon to increase reading achievement, as well as cognitive factors. Guthrie and Coddington (2009, p.521) explain that: "Although teaching reading strategies is the most popular approach to improving reading achievement in secondary schools, this approach is futile for students who will not open a book, do not believe they can read successfully, and possess social values that conflict with reading." There is currently a lack of research into the effectiveness of reading interventions that target affective factors more broadly with adolescents (Cockroft and Atkinson, 2017a), although initial qualitative data has shown positive impacts on self-efficacy (Cockroft and Atkinson, 2017b).

It is important to note that Murnan et al. (2023) found that the relationship between reading achievement and reading motivation was not as strong for struggling readers and therefore they recommend targeted reading skills support, as well as focus on aspects of reading motivation. Troyer at al., (2019) conclude that since the relationship between reading motivation and reading comprehension was not fully moderated by the amount read, focus should be upon developing pupils' intrinsic motivation, rather than just increasing the amount pupils read as this is unlikely to increase reading comprehension on its own. One way that this can be done is through strengthening components of motivation such as young people's reading self-efficacy (RSE) and reading task value (RTV, McBreen and Savage, 2021).

RSE, is defined as a reader's perceptions of competence in reading, in particular their beliefs about their own ability to complete reading specific tasks with success (Chapman and Tunmer, 1995; Guthrie and Coddington, 2009; Unrau et al., 2018) which has been found to respond positively to intervention (Aro et al., 2018). The 'self-system' specifically, that is, self-efficacy, self-concept and causal attributions (Chapman and Tunmer, 2003) is understood to impact upon reading success. This is thought to be because of how it would impact upon how often reading opportunities would be taken, as well as how much effort and persistence people

put into reading and understanding text (Henk and Melnick, 1992). Thus, pupils with high RSE are more likely to engage in reading and put in effort persistently if they believe they can read and understand what they have read (Solheim, 2011). In addition, it is put forward that RSE is particularly important for developing reading skills because of the 'self-teaching' nature of the reading process (Carroll and Fox, 2017). This idea is based on the 'self -teaching hypothesis' of reading, which explains that when a reader successfully decodes a word, this process helps words to become stored in the child's orthographic lexicon independently; this means that the word can then be recognised automatically in the future (Share, 1995).

It is well established that feelings of RSE are associated with reading achievement, including word reading and fluency regardless of cognitive abilities (Carroll and Fox, 2017) and reading comprehension (Schunk and Rice, 1993; Solheim, 2011; Cho et al., 2015). Chapman and Tunmer (1997) found that reading performance was causally predominant to reading self-concept during the first three years of schooling. They predict that at the age when young people reach secondary school, it is academic self-concept becomes that influences achievement. This means that for pupils navigating primary-secondary transitions, low RSE could be potentially causal in terms of contributing to negative reading outcomes. As well as this, RSE has been found to decline between the ages of 8 and 12 years in typically developing children (Smith et al., 2012).

Different elements of motivation have been found to predict different reading skills. For example, McGeown et al. (2015) found that expectancy for success, which is closely related to RSE, was associated with reading comprehension and summarisation skills, but that it was RTV that was linked to the actual engagement. RTV: "refers to the extent to which students' perceive reading as an important, enjoyable and useful activity." (McGeown et al., 2015, p.547). Although RTV has been linked to reading comprehension attainment (Anmarkrud and Bråten, 2009), it is generally considered to be more strongly related to behaviours or academic choices (Wigfield and Cambria, 2010; Schiefele et al., 2012; McGeown et al., 2015). Both RSE and RTV are precursors of intrinsic motivation (Schiefele et al., 2012)

which declines during adolescence (Maynard et al., 2008), and both RSE and RTV are also considered to be important predictors of self-regulated learning (Lee et al., 2020). It is interesting to also consider the value that young people place on reading as it can be assumed that they inherently understand that it is important (Merga and Mat Roni, 2018).

It is therefore relevant to explore both pupils' RSE and RTV, particularly during transitions, when competency beliefs are vulnerable and motivation and reading skills both decline at an age where it has been demonstrated that reading skill development with struggling readers is challenging. Another distal factor that can influence reading engagement and therefore reading development are perceptions of self for reading or reader identities (Breadmore et al., 2019). The next section provides an overview of identity development in adolescents more broadly before consideration of the significance of individual reader identities.

2.8 Conceptualisations of Identity and Identity Development in Adolescence

In the conceptualisation of transitions adopted (Jindal-Snape, 2018), changes in identity during transitions are identified as one of the triggers for the ongoing psychological, social and educational adaptations that take place. Ecclestone et al., (2009, p.9) define identity as: "the ways in which the self is represented and understood in dynamic, multidimensional and evolving ways." It is recognised that this is a broad definition, that the conceptualisation of identity is complex (Ecclestone et al., 2009) and that there are numerous definitions from different disciplines (Jindal-Snape, 2016).

Transitions can be understood as a change from one identity or 'way of being' to another (Lam and Pollard, 2006). Ecclestone et al. (2009) explain that transitions can initiate a process of 'becoming' in response to change. Likewise, young people who have problematic transitions experiences can experience 'unbecoming'. The 'unbecoming' occurs when there is discontinuity between the identity socially

constructed in one context that does not transfer to the next (Lam and Pollard, 2006; Ecclestone et al., 2009). This perspective echoes the conceptualisation of transitions taken in this research, in that the ongoing nature of 'becoming' and 'unbecoming' in relation to identity formation is considered a fluid and iterative 'permanent state' (Ecclestone et al., 2009, p.8). Indeed, in line with the MMT theory (Jindal-Snape, 2016), the changes in identity that occur during transitions can be regarded as other transitions themselves (Jindal-Snape, 2016).

Erikson (1968) takes a sequential approach to identity development over the lifespan where significant changes are noted particularly during adolescence and therefore simultaneously as part of the primary-secondary transitions process. Critically, this process is characterised by self-evaluation among peers as positions in the social hierarchy and social categorisations are established (Neff and McGehee, 2010). Negative self-assessment during this time has been linked to adverse wellbeing and mental health outcomes (Hards et al., 2020) and a stable identity development is associated with resilience in adolescence (Motti-Stefanidi and Masten, 2017).

Verhoeven et al., (2019) point to the multiple distinct theoretical perspectives in which research into adolescent identity development can be grounded. For example, the psychosocial perspective focuses upon the internal process of identity development focusing upon the individuality of identities as part of the dynamic and continuous process of identity development and adaptation that occurs (Archer, 2007). This research emphasises two key stages of identity development during adolescence, that is exploration and commitment (Verhoeven et al., 2019) as young people progress towards identity achievement (Waterman, 1993). Nevertheless, it is noted that not all young people reach identity achievement by the end of adolescence, and this can be very dependent on whether environmental factors support the process of identity development or not (Kroger et al., 2010). The psychosocial perspective takes into account 'self' factors and connections between self-concept, self-efficacy and the value individuals place on certain roles and identity development have been made (Brenner et al., 2018).

Alternatively, the sociocultural perspective explains that identities are formed through participation in sociocultural contexts (Verhoeven et al., 2019) whereby social, personal and cultural factors interact (Pollard and Filer, 1999; Ecclestone et al., 2009; Schwartz et al., 2015; Jindal-Snape, 2016). This perspective tends to recognise that identities can vary between different social groups (Schwartz et al., 2015) and that identity development interacts with significant others in the individuals' lives (Erikson, 1968). This viewpoint generally takes a multidimensional approach and puts forward that individuals would develop a range of domain specific identities, for instance as a reader (Verhoeven et al., 2019).

Verhoeven et al. (2019) highlight the need for perspectives on identity development to be combined to increase the impact that can be achieved by schools in supporting the process. It is therefore important that research considers both psychosocial factors and sociocultural perspectives when exploring the impact on identity development in the ongoing adaptations that take place during primary-secondary transitions. Literacy and identity are closely intertwined (Moje and Luke, 2009), and it is of particular interest to this study to consider reader identities specifically, taking into account the multiliteracies perspective.

2.9 Multiliteracies and Reader Identities

The multiliteracies pedagogical framework aims to remedy inequalities in literacy learning to enable all learners to participate in meaning making that contributes to more equitable educational, economic and social outcomes or social justice (Cope and Kalantzis, 2023). It aims to establish 'new basics', alongside recognition of what still matters from the traditional 'basics' within the contemporary context of rapid change particularly in digital media communications (Kalantzis et al., 2016).

The framework emphasises the 'multis' of meaning making, these are, 'multimodality' and the 'multicontextual' (Kalantzis et al., 2016). Multimodality is when traditional written or linguistic communication is integrated with other modes, such as visuals, audio and spatial to communicate meaning (Kalantzis et al.,

2016). The ‘multicontextual’ emphasises social diversity and how the ability to negotiate social language differences to be able to navigate different social spaces (Kalantzis et al., 2016) has become an important part of literacy learning. Based on these two key concepts they have sought to redefine literacy pedagogy or: “The word we use more commonly now is literacies, in the plural, to refer to the distinct discourses and multiple modes of communication of various disciplines.” (Cope et al., 2018, p.7) and therefore, it supports epistemological pluralism (Serafini and Gee, 2017).

Kalantzis et al., (2016) emphasise that this pedagogy champions students who are socially and economically disadvantaged, as it strives to improve employment prospects within the contemporary context. Considering the links between both RSE and RTV and reading engagement and attainment (e.g. Anmarkrud and Bråten, 2009; Schiefele et al., 2012; Stutz et al., 2016; Carroll and Fox, 2017) it is likely that pupils with low RSE and RTV would be a group that are more vulnerable to negative life outcomes. Research has illustrated that use of a more multimodal approach through media participation can increase participation and inclusion for marginalised young people (Bloustien, 2007; Barden, 2012; Broderick, 2014; Pienimäki, 2019). Pienimäki (2019), who utilised the multiliteracies lens, concluded that use of media participation increased self-efficacy and wellbeing in ‘at risk’ youths. Interestingly, in the reading motivation literature it is engagement with print reading that is associated with skill (Breadmore et al., 2019), however, in the UK young people are regularly now engaging with digital reading materials (Kucirkova and Flewitt, 2022). Indeed, digital media is now considered to be the dominant literacy (Cope and Kalantzis, 2023).

The multiliteracies perspective is also linked to improving outcomes for young people who are considered more vulnerable, in terms of how it supports epistemological pluralism and emphasises the social diversity of literacy practices (Barden, 2012; Broderick, 2014; Cope and Kalantzis, 2023). That is it: “resists dominant discourses, which insist that there is a single, correct way to ‘do’ literacy and failure to master the relevant rules and conventions is a problem attributable to

the individual for failing to learn appropriately." (Barden, 2012, p.124). Multiplicity and social diversity in literacy are integral to reader identity construction within the social context.

Reader identities are important (Kucirkova and Cremin, 2020), although they are often overlooked (McCarthey and Moje, 2002), as they are closely related to self-concept (Breadmore et al., 2019; Verhoeven et al., 2019) and intrinsic motivation for reading (Skinner et al., 2017). Reader identity development draws upon both psychosocial and sociocultural perspectives of identity formation, in that a reader identity is constructed both by an individual's internal perceptions of themselves and their experiences, and their experiences within their social environment (Breadmore et al., 2019). Reader identities are therefore dynamic in response to changing contexts (Kucirkova and Cremin, 2020).

Gee (2014) explains that there are primary Discourses, with a capital 'D', to describe socially significant language that allows the expression of identities (Gee, 2015) that relate to ways of being that originate from the home, including shared values related to literacy. This highlights the importance of exploring young people's RTV, as schools may assume that pupils' perceptions and values related to reading align with those of their school (Merga and Mat Roni, 2018). This also relates to the idea that children 'carry around toolkits' (Pahl and Rowsell, 2005, p.5) that their literate identities are central to, or 'funds of knowledge' (González et al., 2006) that they bring to school with them from home and their communities. This connects to 'lifeworld diversity' which is a central concept in the multiliteracies approach, and the learner differences that this can lead to that can either privilege or disadvantage young people in school, and which are integral to their broader identities (Cope and Kalantzis, 2023).

Gee (2014) also highlights secondary Discourses, which connect to socially constructed identities, such as those developed within the social context of the school. How a school defines the norms of what it means to be a 'good' reader is considered more significant to the development of reader identities than home

influences (Kolb, 2014). So, how teachers construct norms that define being a 'good' reader in classrooms impacts upon their pupils' senses of self, or their reader identities (Kucirkova and Cremin, 2020).

Wagner (2021) highlights that for new learning to occur an identity shift needs to take place and emphasises that learning to read goes beyond reading skills in that it requires the individual who is learning these skills to adapt their identities. Therefore, when pupils are asked to engage with texts, they are also being asked to shift their identities in line with the educational norms of what makes a 'good' reader, these norms are not necessarily negative, but they are not often subject to any scrutiny (Hall, 2012). Notably, Levy, (2011) found that reception aged children began to lose their confidence in reading when they felt that their perceptions of reading needed to conform to the school definition, which focused more narrowly on decoding rather than the more broader definitions found in children of nursery age. Levy (2009) also links the use of reading schemes in schools as discouraging and negatively impacting upon the reading judgements and RSE of struggling readers.

Whether young people identify as being a 'good' or a 'struggling' reader is a vital part of teaching reading pedagogy for struggling readers in particular (Hall, 2009). This is because a young person's perceptions of their own reader identity and on how they would like to be perceived by others, impacts their decision making when they encounter reading tasks in their classrooms (Moje and Dillon, 2006; Hall, 2009) and therefore influences their engagement. For instance, a 'struggling' reader may work quietly by themselves if their main objective is to avoid drawing attention to their difficulties (Hall, 2009). Kucirkova and Cremin (2020) recommend that to develop more positive reader identities children should be supported to bridge the gap between their home and school reading lives.

Discursive identies are those that are constructed publically through discourse (Bamberg et al., 2011) in social contexts (Flowerdew and Wang, 2015), such as schools. Kucirkova and Cremin (2020) highlight the importance of teachers being

aware of how discursive reader identities are formed both within school and at home, because of how they impact upon individual reader identities in different contexts, due to how they position young people as being certain types of readers. Teacher conceptualisations of what it means to be a 'good' or 'struggling' reader have been found to be restricted in the main to technical skills, which can lead to classroom hierarchies (Hempel-Jorgensen et al., 2018). This was found in schools with an awareness of reading for pleasure pedagogy, which emphasises children's volition and social interaction with text (Hempel-Jorgensen et al., 2018) which is supportive of reader identity exploration (Rothbauer, 2004). The judgements made by teachers in these cases were informed by high-stakes attainment testing in school (Hempel-Jorgensen et al., 2018), which is viewed as a barrier to reading for pleasure (Cremin and Scholes, 2024), and can focus upon where young people have difficulties rather than their 'assets' (Mottram and Hall, 2009, p.110) or 'funds on knowledge' (González et al., 2006) from their home literacies. The reader identity categorisations held by teachers are significant as they are so influential in shaping individual pupils' own self-concept for reading (Kucirkova and Cremin, 2020) and because they can unintentionally privilege those perceived as 'good' readers and marginalise those who are labelled as 'struggling' (Hall, 2009; Moje and Luke, 2009).

The idea of one discourse being privileged above others within school contexts links to Lambirth (2016) in his exploration of children's discourses about writing. He highlights how pressures on teachers to adopt certain pedagogy can impact upon the children's perceptions. This again, links to the emphasis on high-stakes testing within schools which can be seen as a barrier to the multiliteracies pedagogy more widely (Cope et al., 2018). This is directly relevant to pupils prior to their primary-secondary transitions after experiencing a curriculum that may have been driven by reading SATs, and potentially post-transfer when faced with similar demands in their secondary contexts.

Research into the pupil perspective of what constitues 'successful' reading or 'good' readers is particularly limited (Smith et al., 2023). This is unfortunate since it is the pupil perspective that provides insight into what young people are working towards

as readers in schools (Moses, 2015) and because their perceptions of 'successful' reading impact upon their own reading behaviours (Henk and Melnick, 1998). In the main, earlier research found that children and young people's perceptions of 'good' readers focused upon fluent and accurate word recognition and there was little emphasis placed on comprehension (e.g. Johns and Ellis, 1976; Henk and Melnick, 1998). Pearson (2003) explored young people's perceptions of both 'good' and 'poor' readers over primary-secondary transitions and found that the pupil perspective was predominantly focused upon performance factors. Interestingly, O'Sullivan and Joy (1994) found that pupils aged between 7 and 13 considered effort to be the major cause and remedy for fictitious children who were experiencing reading difficulties. It has been highlighted that the pupil perspective is influenced by their classroom experiences (Cobb, 2012; Moses, 2015); for example, younger pupils prioritise phonics and decoding and older pupils refer to comprehension, in line with their school experiences. More recently, Smith et al. (2023) took a quantitative approach with pupils across elementary and middle school and found that on average pupils thought that understanding was most important to be a 'good' reader.

These perspectives view learning to read as a dynamic process that is context dependent (Levy, 2011). This is potentially concerning for pupils whose reader identities do not fit within the school's definition of being a 'good' reader. It is therefore important to initiate the discussion with young people and explore their perceptions of 'good' and 'struggling' discursive reader identities and what they think is most important to be 'successful' at reading. This is particularly salient over primary-secondary transitions where identity formation is so relevant in their educational and developmental lives and reading skills so pivotal for their future aspirations and life outcomes.

These ideas surrounding children's perceptions of reader identities in terms of what makes a 'good' or 'struggling' reader, and what they think is most important to be 'successful' at reading, are also directly relevant to their feelings of school belonging. For example, if a pupil feels that they belong in their school environment

this implies that the school context is accepting of, or aligned with, their literate identities and that they feel included. On the other hand, for pupils who are experiencing difficulties that are resistant to intervention, it could be that their literate identities do not fit with the school definition of 'good' reading. This can then impact negatively upon their reading achievement and wellbeing. The importance of school belonging specifically is discussed in the next section.

2.10 The Importance of School Belonging

A sense of school belonging (SB) is: "the extent to which students feel personally accepted, respected, included and supported by others in the school social environment." (Goodenow, 1993, p.80). SB is often referred to by other terms in the literature (Libbey, 2004), most commonly 'school connectedness' and 'school membership'. Although it is acknowledged that there are some discrepancies between definitions (Hebron, 2018), it is understood that there are many consistent themes between them, and that the terms are often used interchangeably (Libbey, 2004).

The connection between inclusion and SB is well established (Warnock et al., 2010; Prince and Hadwin, 2013; Adderley et al., 2015). SB is known to contribute towards successful transitions experiences (Lester and Cross, 2015; Jindal-Snape et al., 2020; Spernes, 2022; Holt et al., 2023) in terms of their social and emotional wellbeing, which are particularly promoted through the development of positive relationships (Holt et al., 2023). Feelings of SB are important for young people since they are linked to increased self-esteem (Furlong et al., 2003) and academic motivation (Osterman, 2000). Ryan and Deci (2020) explicitly connect their key construct of relatedness to having a sense of belonging to support intrinsic motivation and psychological wellbeing. Relatedness specifically has also been identified as being particularly supportive for pupils navigating primary-secondary transitions alongside promoting autonomy (Gillison et al., 2008).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, it understood that feelings of SB decline following the initial disruption of the transfer from primary to secondary school (Witherspoon and Ennett, 2011; Uvaas and McKevitt, 2013). It is more concerning that this negative impact has been found up to two years later (Lester et al., 2013). This disruption in feelings of SB is especially concerning during this time of adolescence, which is a critical period of identity formation, when young people have an increased need for peer connection (Meeus et al., 2005). Verhoeven et al. (2019) emphasise the importance of a supportive classroom climate where adolescents feel respected and secure for positive identity development to take place. In this respect a secure sense of SB could be viewed as a pre-condition for effective identity development within the school context for young people of this age.

In their recent systematic review, Beatson et al. (2023) point to the impact that can be achieved through intervention that targets belonging for pupils who are more vulnerable to negative primary-secondary transitions experiences, and note that these approaches can mitigate declines in a range of types of school engagement, including academic and social engagement. One particularly promising approach is supporting pupils to develop a belonging mindset, which develops their awareness that difficulties with belonging over transitions are common and that they can be overcome with time and effort (Borman et al., 2019).

Developing a confident sense of SB is also associated with positive academic outcomes (Allen et al., 2018), including a positive effect on reading skills specifically (Tan et al., 2022). As well as this, Wilmot et al. (2024) found that SB had a mediating effect on the relationship betweeen dyslexia, anxiety and depression. Although most of the research related to SB focuses upon social factors within the school context, it has been connected to academic competency beliefs (Marshall et al., 2012; Prince and Hadwin, 2013) or ‘academic belonging’ (Holmström et al., 2014; Beatson et al., 2023) over primary-secondary transitions. Prince and Hadwin (2013) found that students who reported a secure sense of SB, scored more highly on measures of academic self-efficacy. This begins to link the key concepts of SB and self-efficacy or competency beliefs. They conclude, based on their review of the

literature that links between school belonging and academic self-concept should be investigated further to shed light on the effectiveness of inclusion. This begins to link together some of the key concepts in this study, as it emphasises the importance of researching the relationship between SB and self-efficacy further.

SB is a pivotal underlying element that unites multiple strands of this research, including competency beliefs, motivation, identity development and psychological wellbeing. It is important to explore how these components interlink at this critical time of primary-secondary school transitions where SB is disrupted alongside the onset of adolescence. In addition, since SB is foundational for developing inclusive environments exploring SB further within this context contributes to the wider aim of this study to contribute to the development of inclusive education.

To conclude this chapter, the existing research in the fields of primary-secondary school transitions and adolescent reading development have been outlined, whilst drawing upon key influential theories. In sum, more longitudinal primary-secondary transitions research across a range of pupils to support those at particular risk of negative transitions experiences is needed (Hughes et al., 2013; Jindal-Snape et al., 2020). As well as this, the fact that very little is known about the transitions experiences of struggling readers specifically or about adolescent reading development (van der Kleij et al., 2023) is problematic since conventional approaches to reading intervention are less impactful for pupils of this age (Clarke et al., 2017) and because reading motivation and engagement decline in adolescence (Webber et al., 2023). Based on this, the importance of reading motivation factors, such as RSE and RTV are emphasised.

Furthermore, identity development is identified as a crucial part of both the transitions (Jindal-Snape, 2018) and adolescence (Erikson, 1968; Branje et al., 2021) processes, and the close connection between literacy and identity has been established (Moje and Luke, 2009). Despite this, research into pupil perspectives of what constitues ‘successful’ reading or ‘good’ reader identities is scarce (Smith et al., 2023). To add to the complexity, it is noted that feelings of SB are disrupted over

primary-secondary transitions (Witherspoon and Ennett, 2011; Uvaas and McKevitt, 2013), which is particularly concerning since SB is understood to support competency beliefs (Marshall et al., 2012; Prince and Hadwin, 2013), identity development (Verhoeven et al., 2019), motivation and psychological wellbeing (Ryan and Deci, 2020).

It is therefore important to open up the dialogue with young people to explore their perceptions of 'good' and 'struggling' discursive reader identities and of what they think is most important to be a 'successful' reader, together with the development of their RSE, RTV and SB during their primary-secondary school transitions. This is particularly significant in practice so that steps can be taken towards improving transitions, wellbeing and reading outcomes for young people.

To build on the insights gained and gaps identified in this literature review, the next chapter presents the research questions, methodological approach taken and the study design.

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter presents the research aims and research questions and explains the methodological approaches, context, design, methods and analysis applied to address them in this research. It is important that the rationale for the methodological approach taken is outlined before the research aims and questions are presented, so that the influence of my worldview and the resulting methodological approach on the formation of the research aims and questions is clear.

3.2 Methodological Approach, Worldview, Research Aims and Questions

To clarify my worldview, this study takes a participatory approach, based upon the principles of inclusive approaches to research that are epistemologically rooted in both constructivism (Schwandt, 1994) and the transformative paradigm (Mertens, 2007). Constructivists aim to understand the world based upon lived experiences and understand that knowledge and reality are constructed based upon these individual perspectives (Schwandt, 1994). Transformative approaches assume that knowledge is viewed through multiple perspectives whilst acknowledging the importance of inequalities in power, with the main purpose of initiating action to reduce inequities (Mertens, 2017). Inclusive approaches to research have: "respect for different ways of knowing and different knowers with an explicit purpose of social transformation." (Nind, 2014b, p.527). The next section makes clear how inclusive and participatory approaches to research can be applied and specifically how they are interpreted and applied in this study.

3.2.1 Inclusive and Participatory Approaches

Inclusive approaches to research are still in the relatively early stages of development (Nind, 2017) which have been most prominently applied in the context of adults with learning disabilities (Walmsley and Johnson, 2003). The principles of maximising participation through opening a dialogue that is accessible to all and striving towards impact is inherent to the inclusive approach (Walmsley and Johnson, 2003) which aims to be transformative, emancipatory and empowering (Walmsley and Johnson, 2003; Mason and Danby, 2011; Nind, 2014a).

'Inclusive research' is an umbrella term (Nind, 2014a) used to encompass a wide range of approaches, including participatory (Aldridge, 2016; Nind, 2017; Carrisoza et al., 2019) collaborative (Messiou, 2017) and child-led research (Kellett, 2011). Inclusive research can be used as a generic term to describe: "a whole family of approaches, all of which reflect a particular turn towards democratization of the

research process." (Nind, 2014a, p.1). A key attribute uniting these approaches is the intention to facilitate research with participants rather than doing research to them (Baum et al., 2006). It is recognised that the inclusive research approach is evolving and that there are multiple ways in which it can be applied in practice and therefore the phrase: "doing research inclusively" (Nind and Vinha, 2014, p.108) is recommended as being less prescriptive than 'inclusive research' as it allows for more flexibility and reflexivity. It is this understanding of the inclusive research approach that is adopted in this study.

While it has been argued that inclusive approaches to research should prioritise the outcomes over the process itself (Fyson and Fox, 2014; Nind, 2016), others argue that it is the process that contributes a unique 'added value' to the research outcomes (Walmsley et al., 2018) including the importance of creating shared spaces for collaboration to take place (Walmsley et al., 2018; García Iriarte et al., 2023). Examples of the process can then serve as models of what can be achieved in terms of effective relationships and power dynamics more widely.

The importance of linking inclusive approaches to research to inclusive education is emphasised (Pearson, 2016) and it is recommended that inclusive research should be utilised as a vehicle to further inclusive education (Nind, 2014b). It is also crucial that inclusive research is critically examined (Walmsley and Johnson, 2003; Nind, 2014a). This resonates with the overarching aim for this project to be transformative. The impact that can be achieved on inclusive education through the use of an inclusive approach to methodology is critically examined in section 6.7 of the discussion chapter.

In terms of doing research inclusively with children, the approach considers the child as a 'social actor' (Christensen and Prout, 2002), is supportive of children's rights to engage in dialogue about the processes that affect them (United Nations Convention on the Rights Child, 1989) and promotes insights into what it means to be a child in a rapidly changing social context (Kellett, 2010). The importance of authentic collaboration with participants that work towards school reform when

doing research inclusively is emphasised (Messiou, 2017) and some researchers argue for an ideal that: “From the outset of a project that seriously seeks to be inclusive and participatory, all the mechanisms and structures have to be thrown open to all participants.” (Carrisoza et al., 2019, p.2). Kellett (2011, p.208) advocates research ‘by’ children and emphasises that traditionally children are excluded from the design phase and aims to: “minimise adult filters by repositioning the balance to supporting rather than managing children’s research.” This is referred to as ‘child-led’ research whereby all stages of the research process are owned and conducted by child researchers.

However, this is not considered to be feasible in all contexts (Pinter and Zandian, 2015) and some researchers argue for a more flexible approach (Stedman, 2019) which takes into account the evolving nature of the methodology and does not assume: “an epistemological and ethical panacea.” (Gallacher and Gallagher, 2008, p.12). It has been found that participants do not always agree that full participation throughout the research process is preferable (Bourke, 2009) and MacLeod et al. (2014) emphasise the importance of balancing the right level of commitment for the participants with that of the research agenda and the researcher’s hopes for the study. Holland et al. (2008, p.25) argue for a more flexible approach where the participatory process can evolve, rather than focusing upon the amount of participation and that: “Ticking participatory boxes…does not necessarily mean that participants experience the process as participatory.” Nind (2014b, p.56) summarises that: “Academics sometimes need to launch a project and allow this organic development for participation to grow.”

Taking these factors into account some argue that for research with young people to be considered participatory it needs to involve participants in some aspects of the research process that is not just limited to providing data through various methods (Holland et al., 2008). In practice there is a whole spectrum of child research models which ranges from research ‘about’ children, to research ‘with’ children and then finally research ‘by’ children (Kellett, 2010; Casas et al., 2013). Nind et al. (2017, p.351) clarify that different roles can be taken when researching inclusively and

collaboratively with participants, in that: “Theoretical work does not have to be the domain of the academic researcher, but it is often what academics can bring to the dialogic table. Similarly, knowledge of life on the ground living with disability is not the exclusive domain of the marginalized groups but it is critical in inclusive research contexts.”

It is argued that doing research inclusively can lead to ‘rich’ (Holland et al., 2008) and ‘authentic’ findings that can be considered more complete because it emphasises epistemic diversity in that the collaborative approach respects and includes different ways of knowing (Nind, 2014b). This echoes the epistemological pluralism of literacy practices in the multiliteracies theoretical perspective (Barden, 2012; Broderick, 2014) and supports the importance of exploring children’s perceptions around ‘successful’ reading and of ‘good’ and ‘struggling’ discursive reader identities. This recognises the multiplicity and social diversity of ‘literacies’ and respects the ‘insider knowledge’ (Nind, 2014b) brought by children as “experts in their own lives” (Mason and Danby, 2011, p.185). Adopting a participatory approach can be challenging (Byrne et al., 2009) particularly in terms of balancing power dynamics (Bourke, 2009) and in facilitating some authentic ownership of the process for the participants. This can be particularly challenging within the academic confines of doctoral research, in fact Björnsdóttir and Svensdóttir (2008) concluded that doctoral research is not likely to ever be ‘fully inclusive’.

Indeed, I recognise that this project is ‘academic-led’ which some argue cannot be termed as authentic inclusive research (Nind, 2014a), as the research questions and design were predetermined (Thomas and O’Kane, 1998). However, there were planned opportunities for participant choice throughout to maximise participation (Thomas and O’Kane, 1998; Conolly, 2008), spaces were created for children’s voices to be heard, as well as an openness to flexibility and collaboration with participants as advisors at identified phases of the design. Therefore, the methodology comes from the overarching standpoint that children are “experts in their own lives” (Mason and Danby, 2011, p.185) who have important contributions to make to

educational debates (Pearson, 2016) that can lead to transformation of policy and practice (Ashton, 2008; Parrilla et al., 2016).

This research aimed to emphasise the 'co-production' and 'co-interpretation' of knowledge (Nind, 2014b) and accessibility and participatory techniques were employed throughout. There was an emphasis on impact (Mason and Danby, 2011; Nind, 2014b; Nind, 2017) and therefore the dissemination of the findings was planned from the start as a crucial part of the design (Christensen and Prout, 2002). In practice, this meant that participants were invited as advisors (Casa et al., 2013) to collaborate on the development of the questionnaires employed as part of the pilot study and to participate in advisory groups to 'co-interpret' (Nind, 2014a) the findings within a space created for data analysis as a reflective part of the data collection (Cahill, 2007), to ensure that their voices have been heard accurately and to collaborate on how the findings would be disseminated within their school communities. Although I acknowledge that it was not feasible to achieve authentic collaboration throughout all phases of the research process, it is reported in the literature that very little research includes young people in the data analysis or dissemination phases of the design (Christensen and Prout, 2002; Pinter and Zandian, 2015) and therefore this study developed participant involvement in these key research phases. Based on this, this project is termed as taking a 'participatory' approach with inclusive aims, rather than being an example of 'inclusive research' more holistically.

3.2.2 Research Aims and Questions

This study aims to:

- Increase understanding of reading self-efficacy (RSE), reading task value (RTV) and school belonging (SB) during primary-secondary school transitions.
- Explore pupil perceptions of 'good' or 'struggling' discursive reader identities and what pupils perceive to be most important to be a 'successful' reader during primary-secondary school transitions.

- Contribute to enhancing reading interventions and approaches to the reading curriculum around the transitions to secondary school, considering pupils' perceptions of reader identities, RSE, RTV and SB, to work towards improved reading and wellbeing outcomes for young people.
- Highlight and utilise the insights gained to contribute towards greater inclusivity throughout the primary-secondary transitions process.
- Evaluate the value added from applying a participatory approach in terms of the contributions young people can make to educational research and critically consider the extent to which authentic collaboration and balanced power dynamics were achieved.

Therefore, this study explores:

RQ1) Do primary-secondary school transitions impact upon pupils' feelings of RSE, RTV and SB?

RQ2) To what extent are RSE, RTV and SB related and does this change during primary-secondary school transitions?

RQ3) How do pupils perceive 'good' and 'struggling' readers and how does this change during primary-secondary school transitions?

RQ4) What do pupils think is most important to be a 'successful' reader and how does this change during primary-secondary transitions?

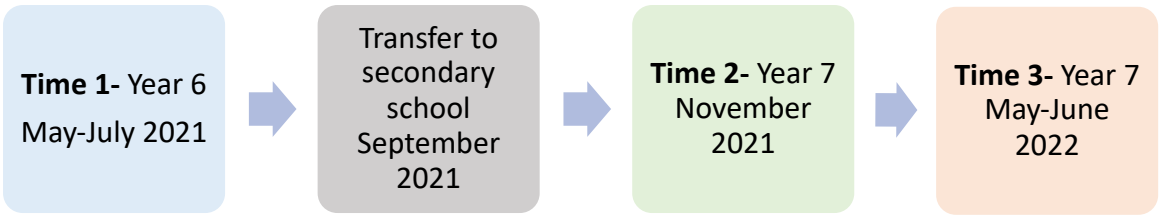
3.3 Design Overview and Context

The main study took place in a culturally diverse city in England between May 2021, when the participants were at the end of Year 6 (Y6) in primary school, and June 2022 when the participants were at the end of Year 7 (Y7) in secondary school.

3.3.1 Overview of Research Design

This research is inductive and exploratory and applied a three-stage, mixed methods design longitudinally over thirteen months (between May 2021 and June 2022) encompassing an overarching participatory approach. There were 55 participants in total who came from nine different inner-city primary schools and transferred to three different inner-city secondary schools. The timeline of the data collection is presented in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1- Timeline of Data Collection

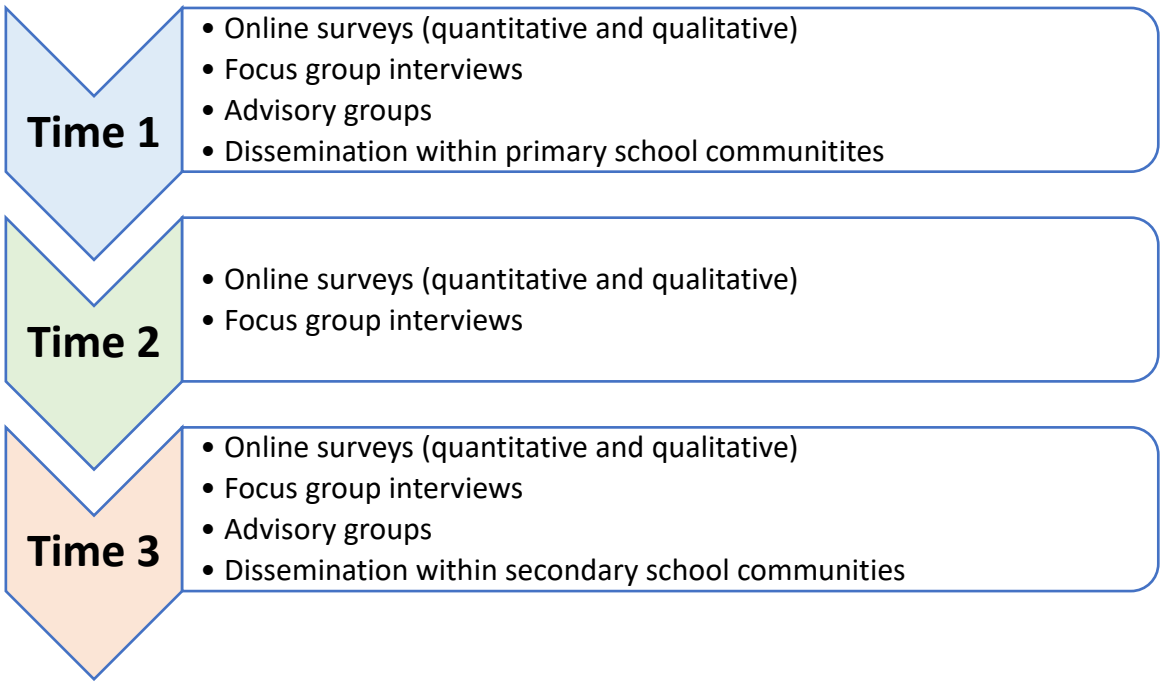


Although I recognise that adjustments to their new schools will continue (Jindal-Snape and Cantali, 2019) beyond the third data collection point, this was considered the longest timeframe that was feasible within the acadmic constraints of this being a doctoral research project.

The quantitative part of the study consisted of three online surveys that measured RSE, RTV and SB and these were carried out with all the participants at all three time points to allow for comparative analysis. There were also qualitative data collected as part of the online surveys with two open-ended questions that asked all participants to describe a 'good' and 'struggling' reader in their own words. Qualitative data were also collected as part of focus groups, this included photographs of collaborative activities completed by the participants and recorded audio of their discussions, which were then transcribed to allow for thematic analysis. The focus groups took place with participants at all three time points.

Advisory groups took place at Time 1 (T1) and Time 3 (T3). These were open to all participants at T3, and all those who were in primary schools who were participating on a face-to-face basis at T1. Although the dialogue that took place during the advisory groups were recorded these were shared spaces for preliminary data analysis of the online survey data (quantitative and qualitative), co-interpretation of the findings and collaborative work on how the findings should be disseminated within their schools. These discussions have not been treated as data. An overview of the different aspects of the project, over the three time points is presented in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2- Overview of the Design



3.3.2 Semi-structured Interviews

There were also ten participants who took part in semi-structured interviews as case studies at all three time points. The data collected was rich and insightful, however, due to feasibility within the time constraints, it was decided that data collected from the online surveys and the focus groups should be prioritised since it contributed more specifically and meaningfully to answering the research questions. As such, the semi-structured interviews data is not included in this

project. The intention is that this data will be analysed and reported on as part of a follow up piece of work.

All participants who took part in the semi-structured interviews also completed the online surveys. The semi-structured interviews took place with volunteer participants identified to be across a range of reading attainment, RSE, RTV and SB levels. These levels were determined based upon teacher assessment at the end of primary school (T1) and the participants' scores on the quantitative survey measures carried out at T1. I intentionally included some outliers as I was particularly interested in what these participants were trying to communicate through their responses to the online surveys. The interviews enabled more in-depth discussion and exploration of the participants' perceptions of reading during their primary-secondary transitions and insights into their experiences across all three time points from their unique perspectives and lived experiences.

A phenomenological approach to the interviews was taken, and the three-part structure put forward by Bevan (2014) was applied. The three parts being contextualisation, followed by apprehending the phenomenon and then clarification, including the use of imaginative variation to deepen understanding (Bevan, 2014). This approach regards the phenomenon being investigated, as having multiple 'modes of appearing' from different perspectives which constitutes its reality (Bevan, 2014). This echoes the pluralistic and complex view of reading put forward in the multiliteracies perspective. The phenomenon explored in this case was reading in terms of how the participants' perceptions and experiences of reading evolved during their ongoing adaptations over primary-secondary transitions. An informal interview schedule, incorporating the three-part structure, was designed for each of the three time points and this was used flexibly as a loose guide. For clarity, the interview schedule used at T3 is provided in Appendix A. The audio of the interviews was recorded and was mostly transcribed during the data collection period, with some preliminary analysis conducted concurrently.

Even though this data is not included in the present study, it is important to recognise the influence of carrying out these interviews and the initial insights gained through the transcription process and the preliminary analysis on my perspective. Through the semi-structured interviews, I gained insight into the lifeworld diversity (Cope and Kalantzis, 2023) of the participants who took part in the interviews that I returned to when analysing and interpreting the findings from the online surveys and focus group discussions. For example, where one participant in an interview discussed how they read at home in their home language this influenced my thinking in relation to the impact of home literacies on feelings of RTV and on the development of discursive reader identity labels. Notably, some of the young people who participated in a semi-structured interview also chose to participate in a focus group. Sometimes there was overlap between areas that were discussed and identified themes during both the semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions which triangulated the findings. In essence, an informal, iterative process of analysis took place throughout the data collection process that shaped my perspective and interpretations. It is recognised that these early insights are likely to have influenced my interpretations of the data even after the decision was made not to include the interview data in this study.

3.3.3 Positionality Statement

It is important to recognise the value position that I bring to the research (Scharp and Thomas, 2019) so that my own position can be considered alongside my interpretations of the participants' experiences and when understanding the arguments put forward.

As well as being a postgraduate researcher, I am also an experienced practitioner who has worked in mainstream schools for the last 22 years, with particular expertise in literacy and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). I am an experienced primary school teacher and Special Education Needs and Disabilities Coordinator (SENDCo) who has historically taught in Key Stage Two, including four years in Year 6 (Y6), the final year of primary school. For the last ten years I have

worked as a specialist teacher for cognition and learning to support the identification of cognition and learning needs and the development of inclusive policy and practice across a local authority in both mainstream primary and secondary schools.

I carried out this research project in primary and secondary schools that are all within the same local authority that I work in. This meant that in some cases I had worked as an outside professional in some of the schools that participated in this study. It is therefore recognised that boundaries are blurred with regards to whether I am an 'insider' or 'outsider' to the social group with whom I facilitated the research (Ritchie et al., 2009; Moore, 2012). Although to all the participants and most of the staff within the schools I was an 'outsider', it is recognised that I had established professional relationships with some staff and have carried out direct work previously in some of the participating schools. To mitigate this, I reflected upon my positionality through keeping a reflexive fieldwork log throughout to promote my own awareness (Dever et al., 2021).

I recognise the importance of considering my position and the impact of this critically and reflexively throughout the research process (Ritchie et al., 2009) particularly in terms of balancing my dual role to position myself effectively (Pechurina, 2014). This is particularly important as I aimed to balance power dynamics and facilitate collaboration with participants at identified parts of the design within the school context, where this has been found to be more challenging (Vasalou et al., 2021). Therefore, critical assessment of the power balance that was realised was crucial.

3.3.4 COVID-19 Pandemic

This project took place within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, which impacted particularly upon the participants' experiences at the end of Year 6 in primary school and on the transitions' support available to them (Saville et al., 2024) at T1 where there were many restrictions in place for schools in the UK

(Department for Education, 2021). For example, at T1 the participants were kept within consistent bubbles within their primary schools and they had experienced lockdowns and partial school closures within the academic year and in the previous academic year. The participants did not sit Key Stage 2 Statutory Assessment Tests (SATs) at the end of Year 6 and there were no physical visits to their secondary schools before leaving primary school, as these events were moved to take place online.

This reduction in support, changes to their environment and absence of events that the participants expected to take place could have potentially impacted negatively upon their mental health and adaptations to their new secondary school environment (Bagnall et al., 2022). The pandemic exacerbated the uncertainty of the transitions further, for example the threat of potential further school closures (Jindal-Snape, 2022). From an MMT theory perspective (Jindal-Snape, 2023), this would be particularly challenging for some individuals who are not comfortable with uncertainty as part of MMT-Habits of Mind (MMT-HOM) such as young people with a high need for cognitive closure (Webster and Kruglanski, 1997; Jindal-Snape, 2022). Therefore, it is important that the findings from this study are considered in light of these circumstances.

This context also impacted upon the project on a practical level. Schools were offered the option of participating in a face-to-face or remote way and they had the flexibility to change their participation as needed in response to their evolving situation. When in schools I followed appropriate safety measures in line with government guidelines and legislation and provided schools and parents with a clear overview of how I would do this (Appendix B). To ensure I followed school specific policies all schools who participated provided me with a copy of their COVID-19 policy for visitors so I could take these into account.

As well as this, the fact that the participants were in bubbles at T1 meant that the recruitment for both the pilot and main studies had to be within bubbles. This meant that information and engagement sessions for pupils were repeated for

different bubbles within the same schools as well as face-to-face involvement, as required. This also had some impact upon the main data collection where for example on one occasion a class bubble 'burst' which meant the group had to isolate, and face-to-face work had to be rearranged.

3.4 Ethical Considerations and Recruitment

All participants and their parents gave informed consent, and conditional ethical approval was gained from the University of Leeds on 20th July 2020 (Appendix C). All required responses related to the conditions of approval were submitted on the 23rd July 2020. There were five ethical amendments also approved by the ethics committee at the University of Leeds, as the project evolved.

The first amendment (approved 4th January 2021) requested three changes. Firstly, in response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, this allowed me to offer schools the option to participate in the project on either a face-to-face or remote basis (or moving between remote or face-to-face flexibly as needed in response to the pandemic). As well as this, the first amendment also allowed me to enhance the contribution of the research by including a reading task value questionnaire (as well as a measure of reading self-efficacy and school belonging) and an additional qualitative survey question as part of the online surveys (asking the participants if they could describe a 'struggling' reader as well as a 'good' reader in their own words).

The second amendment (approved on 25th February 2021) confirmed that as part of the pilot study that the focus groups as well as the online surveys were able to be trialled. The third amendment (approved 4th March 2021) was clarification that should schools have asked to participate on a remote basis that the audio of any discussions would be recorded. The fourth amendment (approved 29th March 2021) granted approval for data collected as part of the pilot study to be published if required. Finally, the fifth amendment (approved 11th May 2022) was to allow me to give a small thank you gift to the participants at the end of the project. The

confirmation emails received from the ethics committee at the University of Leeds for all five ethical amendments are available in Appendix D.

3.4.1 Working with Vulnerable Groups

This study contributes to the development of knowledge around children's RSE, RTV and SB, young people's perceptions of 'good' and 'struggling' reader identities and what it means to them to be a 'successful' reader during primary-secondary school transitions. This is important to work towards improved wellbeing and attainment outcomes for young people at what can be a challenging time. To achieve this, it was crucial to consult with the young people directly. However, it is recognised that when working with vulnerable populations, such as children, that special safeguards are put in place (British Psychological Society [BPS], 2021).

As an experienced primary school teacher and specialist teacher, at the time of the data collection, I had between 19 and 20 years of experience of working with young people in schools. In my role as a specialist teacher, this focuses on developing inclusive practice and working with pupils with cognition and learning difficulties in both primary and secondary school contexts. I held a current and valid enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate throughout all my time in schools facilitating the research project. As part of my practitioner role, I also participate in regular safeguarding and child protection training.

Despite this, it is understood that there are significant ethical challenges particularly in terms of the power imbalance that exists between adults and children (Morrow and Richards, 1996). This research regards children as "experts in their own lives" (Mason and Danby, 2011, p.185) and therefore the overall approach and methods respect children's competencies and aimed to allow young people to participate meaningfully and encouraged ownership of the research process. It is argued that ethical challenges can be overcome through adopting a participatory approach which works towards redressing the power imbalance (Thomas and O'Kane, 1998; Bodén, 2021).

3.4.2 The Recruitment Process

The recruitment took a phased approach whereby schools, within the local area (including within the local authority where I work), were contacted through emailing a letter to known contacts, where possible, and more widely to headteachers. With consent from the Head of Service where I work it was agreed that I was able to use my work email address to make initial contact where appropriate. It was important to ensure that the letter shared with schools was clear in terms of the purpose of the research, ethical implications and any perceived potential benefits to the school and participants. The design was made clear to schools and the different phases of the data collection were explained. There needed to be several versions of the letter, depending on whether it was a primary or a secondary school that was being contacted and to make clear which other schools that some of their pupils were transferring to were already part of the project. An example of a letter to a primary school headteacher is included in Appendix E.

It is recognised that employing a longitudinal design carried risks in terms of participant attrition (Boys et al., 2003) and therefore efforts were taken to minimise this risk, by recruiting secondary schools first to maximise the number of participants who were able to participate throughout the whole project to allow for comparative analysis to take place. The intention was to also 'over recruit' participants, however, given the context of COVID-19 and challenges of accessing schools within the restrictions in place at the time this was not possible. Once potential secondary schools were identified I then contacted primary schools that 'feed' into the secondary schools to try and match primary schools that pupils were transferring from. The recruitment phase for both the pilot and main study started following the re-opening of schools in England on the 8th March 2021 (Education Hub, 2021) and continued throughout the pilot study and main data collection until the end of the data collection at T1 in July 2021.

3.4.3 Providing Informed Consent and Anonymity

It is important that processes are in place to ensure that there is valid and active, informed consent from both the participants and their parents or carers in schools that have agreed to participate. Once a primary school had agreed to participate in the project then information and engagement sessions took place with all the young people in that school who were moving to a participating secondary school. These sessions took around an hour and included ice breaker games, introductions to both me and the project including background and methodological approach, and focused activities related to the key concepts of anonymity, confidentiality and informed consent. Efforts were made to ensure that all activities and materials used were as accessible as possible for the young people. This meant for example that visuals were provided to support all key vocabulary, all information was read to the participants, and scaffolding was provided to support independent access to the activities, as much as possible.

At the end of each information and engagement session, I introduced and provided a question box that was left in the school for at least a week so that the young people could anonymously ask any questions that they had thought of after the information session, but before they decided if they would like to participate and give their informed consent. At the end of the sessions the pupils were provided with an accessible parental information sheet and consent form (Appendix F) that they were able to share with their parents at home. They understood that they would only be asked for their informed consent should their parents have provided their consent. I consulted with the first schools in terms of whether the parental consent form and information sheet needed to be translated into different languages for parents. However, it was explained that the schools did not translate materials for parents since this was not considered necessary or practical as there were so many different first languages spoken within the school community.

Following on from the information and engagement sessions, the next step was a follow up visit with the young people whose parents had provided their consent.

Firstly, I provided time to answer any of the young people's questions that had been posted into the question boxes and provided further time for any other questions. Before asking for consent from the young people themselves, I read aloud and discussed the accessible pupil information sheet and consent form (Appendix G) with them (BPS, 2021). It was emphasised that either they or their parents could withdraw at any time during the project without any negative impact at all (Christensen and Prout, 2002). The young people themselves were also asked again for their continued informed consent at regular intervals throughout the study, as they were asked to confirm if they were happy to take part at the start of the online surveys, they all completed at each time point.

Some of the participating primary schools only had very few pupils who were transferring to one of the participating secondary schools and who only wanted to offer online surveys to their pupils in Year 6. In these cases, information and engagement sessions did not take place, but an identified member of staff in school read and discussed the participant information sheet and consent form with individual pupils whose parents had already provided their consent.

The most up to date version, available at the time, of the University of Leeds, Research Participant Privacy Notice were also shared with school and parents to make clear that all the data collected was treated confidentially and in line with the Data Protection Act (DPA, 2018). An overview of how their data was treated was provided in an accessible format to all participants in the engagement and information session as part of the discussion and activities around confidentiality and anonymity.

To protect the participants' anonymity each participant was allocated a passcode that they used to access each individual online survey at each of the three time points to allow for their data to be tracked across the study. Therefore, although participant names were known by me during the data collection to allow for participants to be initially grouped and identified across the three data collection points by the end of the project the list of names was deleted so that only their

passcodes were attached to their data. This meant that participants were unable to withdraw their data once the data collection was completed since they would not be identifiable. During the focus group interviews participants chose pseudonyms themselves that were used throughout all recorded discussions and when interviews were transcribed. There is no record of participant names alongside their chosen pseudonyms.

It was made clear to all stakeholders at the information and consent stage that in exceptional circumstances, where there is disclosure of significant risk of harm, that anonymity would have been overridden (BPS, 2021) and the school's safeguarding policy followed. All data collected were managed and held securely in accordance with the DPA (2018) and university policy.

3.5 The Pilot Study

The pilot study took place between April and May 2021 with two participating primary schools in the same locality as where the main study took place. I decided to carry out a pilot study so that I was able to trial the methods and consult with the participants as advisors on the development of the online surveys. There were 23 Year 6 participants who contributed to the pilot phase. The recruitment for the pilot study followed the same phases as the main study and allowed for methods to be trialled and crucially for consultation to take place with the participants as advisors about the success of the methods to allow for changes to be made, before the main study.

Both the online surveys and focus groups were trialled with the participants and this improved the organisation, practicalities and design in preparation for the main study. For example, refining processes in terms of providing access to the online surveys in school and the importance of arranging access to a space in schools where the participants could hear clearly when reading aloud the survey questions to ensure accessibility. There were also some informal opportunities whilst testing the methods to take feedback from the participants to develop the methods. For

example, whilst trialling the focus groups some participants suggested that when ranking attributes for being a 'successful' reader for the diamond 9 activity that motivation and enjoyment were too closely related to place in a meaningful way. It was also put forward that it would be better if a diamond related to 'reading amount' were provided. This meant that for the main study only 'enjoyment' was included to encompass enjoyment and intrinsic motivation and that a new diamond to represent 'reading a lot' was given.

There were four advisory groups of participants altogether who were consulted with as part of the pilot study. The focus of these advisory groups was an open group discussion to answer the question: 'Do the online surveys work well for young people of your age?' To support their discussions, they were also able to share what they thought went well (WWW.) and what could be improved (Even better if…) on large sheets of sugar paper with post it notes and felt tip pens. All dialogue was recorded. Their recommendations were related to the format and organisation of the online surveys, for example, making them feel more welcoming and using more colour and pictures. Based on their initial feedback I was able to act upon their recommendations and meet with one of the advisory groups again to share with them the revised online surveys to check that I had understood their recommendations and interpreted them accurately to improve the surveys. This was very insightful, and the group agreed that the surveys were more welcoming and motivating for young people of their age, after I had acted upon their recommendations.

The actual data collected from the participants as part of the pilot was not used in the main study. However, to ensure some impact that could benefit the participants themselves could potentially be realised, preliminary analyses of their data took place simultaneously and both participating primary schools were provided with informal and accessible feedback that could be shared and utilised within their school communities by the first week in June 2021. The schools found this accessible feedback helpful, and it was noted by one of the schools that this would be a key document for reading and school improvement that had been shared with

the ‘reading lead’ and Senior Leadership Team. An example of one of the feedback forms from the pilot study is provided in Appendix H.

3.6 Main Study - Participants and Methods

The main study took place between May 2021 (final term of Y6 in primary school) and June 2022 (final term of Y7 in secondary school) and tracked 55 participants at three time points during their primary-secondary school transitions. As part of the three data collection time points there were spaces created to consult with the participants (at Time 1 and Time 3) as advisors over this time. The study took place in a culturally diverse city in England, and the participants transferred from nine different inner-city primary schools to three different inner-city secondary schools.

3.6.1 Participant Characteristics

There were 55 participants who took part in the main study. It is important to emphasise that this study is exploratory. Therefore, this research aims to increase understanding rather than draw definitive or generalisable conclusions. Background data regarding the characteristics of the participants were collected for context, as presented in Table 3.1. All background data were collected from Y6 teachers at Time 1 (T1).

Table 3.1 Participant Characteristics over Three Time Points

Participant Characteristics		Time 1 (n=55)
Gender	Male	15 (27.3%)
	Female	40 (72.7%)
Reading Attainment	Below	21 (38.2%)
	Meeting	22 (40%)
	Above	12 (21.8%)
EAL	New to English	4 (7.3%)
	Bi/Multilingual	50 (90.1%)
	English Only	1 (1.8%)

It is noteworthy that sample attrition led to a change in sample size from 55 to 54 at Time 3 (T3). First, the majority of the participants were female (72.7%). Although it is important to consider this imbalance when interpreting the findings, there were likely to be more females than males in this study since one of the three participating secondary schools was a girls' school.

Reading attainment data collected were based upon teacher assessment at the end of Key Stage 2. As mentioned previously, these participants did not sit Key Stage 2 SATs due to the COVID-19 pandemic. 61.8% of the participants were meeting or above the national standard for reading for their age and 38.2% were below the expected threshold. This group of participants would be considered below the national average, and although there is no national data available for this particular year, it is higher than usual national trends, whereby those working below the expected standard for reading in England is around 26% (Department for Education, 2024c). Despite this, it is important to note that participants came from the full range of reading attainment levels.

Language data were also collected and represent 'school ascribed' (Rutgers et al., 2021) English as an Additional Language (EAL) status. It is noteworthy to consider that that EAL status is not on its own an indicator of English language competence (Department for Education, 2020). EAL is defined by the Department for Education (2020) as children who are: "exposed to a language at home that is known or believed to be other than English." This definition is broad (Chalmers and Bennett, 2022) and so it was therefore necessary to distinguish between those who school defined as being 'New to English' (exposure to English for less than two years) and those who were bi/multilingual, having exposure to languages other than English at home, but nevertheless proficient in English. Although teachers felt that all pupils who participated would be able to understand the online surveys and be able to fully access the project, there was a small number of participants (4 participants, 7.3%) who were considered 'New to English' and who required some additional adjustments. In line with their everyday normal classroom practice this included

some additional focus on the language and content as required and some peer support.

I recognise that there is a much higher percentage of EAL pupils overall participating in this study (97.4% considering school ascribed EAL status, including 'New to English') compared to 19% nationally (Department for Education, 2020). Although this is distinct, it is also typical of many multicultural and urban areas in the UK at least and therefore relatable within these contexts. It is important that this context is reflected upon when interpreting the findings, in terms of any potential additional challenges that this group of participants may have faced. It is also key to highlight the perspective of EAL pupils who can often be overlooked in transitions research (Corcoran and Kaneva, 2023).

3.6.2 Schools Characteristics

There were nine different primary and three different secondary schools who participated in the main study. All the participating schools were in the same locality and city in England. For context it is important to provide some wider pupils characteristics for each school, that is the percentage of pupils who were eligible for free school meals (FSM) and the percentage of pupils whose first language is not English, in the wider school. Similarly, for clarity, I have provided a breakdown of how many participants came from each participating school and to what level they participated in the project. This information is presented in Table 3.2. All wider school data presented is for the academic year 2022-2023 (National Statistics, 2022).

All participants completed the online surveys, but only some participants chose to contribute to a focus group. Where schools have participated in focus groups how the groups were configured is shown in brackets, for example at Primary School 3 there was one focus group that was made up of four participants.

Table 3.2 Participants by School and School Wider Characteristics

Schools	Participants in this Study		Wider School Characteristics (2022/2023)	
	Total	Focus Groups	% FSM*	% First language not English
Primary 1	20	11 (1 group of 5 and 1 group of 6)	43.7%	86.2%
Primary 2	9	8 (1 group of 3 and 1 group of 5)	34.2%	79%
Primary 3	7	4 (1 group of 4)	30.3%	87.6%
Primary 4	6		26.5%	70.6%
Primary 5	5		42.4%	97.3%
Primary 6	4		38%	85.5%
Primary 7	2		24.6%	43.1%
Primary 8	1		34.7%	57.8%
Primary 9	1		32.2%	19.8%
Secondary 1	22	11 (1 group of 5 and 1 group of 6)	44.3%	73.9%
Secondary 2	18	3 (1 group of 3)	30.1%	30.1%
Secondary 3	15	9 (1 group of 5 and 1 group of 4)	45.2%	66.7%

*Eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) within the last 6 years.

There was face-to-face involvement in Primary Schools 1 to 5 and in all three participating secondary schools. Primary schools 6 to 9 only had a small number of pupils who were transferring to the participating secondary schools and these participants completed online surveys facilitated and supported by an identified member of staff in school.

All the participating schools were in the same community and although there are variations between the percentages of pupils in the participating schools who were eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) over the previous six years (ranging between 24.6%-45.2%) it is noteworthy that these are mostly in line with or higher than the

27.2% average nationally reported by National Statistics (2022) for this academic year. Eligibility for FSM, is considered to be a reliable indicator of socioeconomic status (Taylor, 2018) and therefore suggests that the participating schools were mostly in areas that have higher than average levels of economic deprivation.

There is more variability when considering the percentages reported for pupils who do not speak English as their first language. It is possible that this is partly a result of uncertainty in relation to classification of pupils as 'EAL' (Arnot et al., 2014) taking into account the broad definition, that encompasses a heterogeneous group of pupils (The Bell Foundation, 2024).

3.6.3 Online Surveys

All participants completed the online surveys at all three time points. This included three quantitative surveys that measured RSE, RTV and SB. There were also two additional qualitative, open-ended survey questions that asked the participants to describe a 'good' and 'struggling' reader in their own words. 'JISC Online Surveys' (formerly Bristol Online Survey- BOS) as recommended by the University of Leeds (University of Leeds, 2019) was used as the platform for all surveys. All online surveys were trialed and developed with young people as part of the pilot study which therefore ensured that they presented in an accessible and 'child friendly' way in the main study. Every time the groups met to complete online surveys the sessions began with a game, these were 'two truths and a lie' and 'Who am I?'

The data collected from the three quantitative measures were used to answer RQs 1 and 2:

RQ1) Do primary-secondary school transitions impact upon pupils' feelings of RSE, RTV and SB?

RQ2) To what extent are RSE, RTV and SB related and does this change during primary-secondary school transitions?

The data collected from the two open-ended questions asked as part of the online surveys, also at all three time points (asking all participants to describe both a 'good' and 'struggling' reader in their own words) were used to contribute towards answering RQ3:

RQ3) How do pupils perceive 'good' and 'struggling' readers and how does this change during primary-secondary school transitions?

For clarity, it is important to outline further details of the quantitative measures used to measure RSE, RTV and SB.

3.6.3.1 The Reading Self-Efficacy Questionnaire (Carroll and Fox, 2017)

The Reading Self-Efficacy Questionnaire (RSEQ) developed by Carroll and Fox (2017) was identified as the most comprehensive available measure of RSE that was used to give an indication of levels of RSE in the participants at all three time points. This judgement was made using the Reading Self-Efficacy Measurement Index developed by Unrau et al., (2018, p.178) based on recommendations made by Bandura (2006). The index differentiates between measures of self-efficacy using three items. These are: a) Is RSE only measured and no other areas of literacy? b) Does the measurement only address self-efficacy? c) Is the measure RSE reading task-specific without text, reading task-specific with text, or oriented to reading but not task specific? They explain: "The highest level of quality would be reading only for the first item, self-efficacy for the second item, and reading task-specific with text for level of specificity." (Unrau et al., 2018, p.179) The RSEQ (Carroll and Fox, 2017) is reading only, self-efficacy only and reading task specific with no text- which was the highest score of all of the measures that were considered. As well as this, the original questionnaire had good internal reliability ($\alpha = 0.912$, Carroll and Fox, 2017, p.4).

However, Carroll and Fox (2017, p.7), who found that RSE predicted word reading but not reading comprehension, reflect that: "the questions in the self-efficacy

measure mentioned reading in general terms and activities such as working out unknown words, but did not focus on understanding what the child had read. It may well be that these children placed less emphasis on these skills." as one factor that may account for their findings. Based on this the original RSEQ (Carroll and Fox, 2017) was modified to include some items that address reading comprehension tasks more specifically with the aim of increasing the measures validity. The reliability of the measure with the additional items at all three time points are presented in the quantitative findings chapter.

Additional items that were reading comprehension specific were therefore considered from other available RSE measures and three new items were identified and modified to fit in with the style of the RSEQ and to be relevant participants in the English context.

Two of the new items used were based on those used by (Anmarkrud and Bråten, 2009, p.5). These are (original items in bold):

1) **I will not have problems understanding even the most difficult texts that we read in ninth grade.** Modified to: Understand what I read in text books at school.
2) **It is easy for me to understand the content of a book.** Modified to: Understand the content of a book.

The third new item was based upon an item used by (Solheim, 2011, p.27). That is (original item in bold):

3) **I know that I'll do well on the reading comprehension tests in sixth grade.** Modified to: Do well on reading comprehension tests.

To clarify, the RSEQ (Carroll and Fox, 2017) with 18 items and the new three items added in bold that were used in the online surveys are presented in Appendix I.

3.6.3.2 The Reading Task Value Questionnaire

All participants also completed a measure of RTV at all three time points through Online Surveys. At the time of data collection there was no appropriate RTV Questionnaire available and therefore items were adapted and included from existing measures of RTV within established reading motivation scales. The items used were adapted from the value scales in the Motivations for Reading Information Books- School Questionnaire (MRIB-S, Wigfield et al., 2012, Cronbach's Alpha = 0.83, p.69) and the Motivation for Reading Information Books Nonschool Questionnaire (MRIB-NS, Wigfield et al., 2012, Cronbach's Alpha =0.85, p.71) using the same four-point scale and scale descriptors. Value was defined in the MRIB-S as: "belief in the importance and usefulness of school reading." (Wigfield et al., 2012, p.69) and in the MRIB-NS as: "belief in the importance and usefulness of reading outside of school." (Wigfield et al., 2012, p.71).

All seven items that were included in the RTV online survey were modified slightly to be relevant to reading more generally instead of being specific to information books. For example, the original item from the MRIB-S (Wigfield et al., 2012, p.69):

1. **I usually learn something from the information books that I read for school.** Modified to: I usually learn something from what I read.

The wording given in the introduction and practice items and the four-point scale, are based upon the Motivation for Reading Questionnaire (MRQ, Wigfield and Guthrie, 1997). Although the Cronbach Alpha coefficients for both measures above the recommended .7 (DeVellis, 2012). The reliability of the measure at all three time points are presented in the quantitative findings chapter. For transparency the wording provided in the instructions and all modified items used are provided in Appendix J.

3.6.3.3 The Psychological Sense of School Membership Questionnaire (Goodenow, 1993)

The Psychological Sense of School Membership questionnaire (PSSM) developed by Goodenow (1993, Appendix K) is a self-report measure of students' feelings of belonging and psychological membership to their school, designed to elicit: "the extent to which students feel personally accepted, respected, included and supported by others in the school social environment." (Goodenow, 1993, p.80). This questionnaire was chosen as it is a well-established (You et al., 2011) measure of SB that encapsulates feelings of acceptance, belonging, respect and support within the school context (García-Moya et al., 2018) that is also accessible and quick to administer (Hebron, 2018). This measure has internal reliability scores that range between .77 and .88 (Goodenow, 1993, p.85). This measure was used to measure feelings of SB with participants at all three time points again through the Online Surveys platform and the reliability of this measure with this group of participants is reported in the quantitative findings chapter.

3.6.3.4 Qualitative Questions on the Online Surveys

All 55 participants at T1 and T2 and all 54 participants at T3 completed the open-ended questions at the end of the Online Surveys. There was no time limit, the text was read to all participants, and they had unlimited space for their responses that they completed on a laptop, personal computer or tablet, depending on what was available in the participating schools at the time of data collection.
Regarding the qualitative questions specifically, the participants were asked to:

Describe a 'good reader' in your own words.

Describe a 'struggling reader' in your own words.

3.6.4 Focus Group Interviews

The focus group interviews took place at three time points longitudinally from the end of the final year in primary school to the end of the first year in secondary school.

The data collected from the focus group interviews were used to answer RQs 3 and 4:

RQ3) How do pupils perceive 'good' and 'struggling' readers and how does this change during primary-secondary school transitions?

RQ4) What do pupils think is most important to be a 'successful' reader and how does this change during primary-secondary transitions?

3.6.4.1 Focus Group Participants

Focus group interviews took place with five focus groups, made up of 23 participants in total. All participants that contributed to a focus group also completed the online surveys. The focus groups were subgroups of volunteer participants formed at T1, who transferred from the same primary school to the same secondary school, so that the groups could be tracked over the entire project. They transferred from three different primary schools to three different secondary schools, the breakdown of this is shown in Table 3.2. Therefore, since the members of the focus groups all came from the same primary schools and transferred to the same secondary school, they all knew each other. The focus groups ranged in size from between three and six members in total. There was some unavoidable variability in the composition of the individual focus groups where individual participants were absent from school when the focus group took place at either T2 or T3. The participants were self-selecting, from across the reading ability range, and they were not asked if they identified as 'successful', 'good' or 'struggling' readers themselves.

Broadly in line with the wider demographic of the group, most of the participants who chose to contribute to a focus group were female (87%) compared to male (13%) and 100% of the participants were 'school ascribed' (Rutgers et al., 2021) with EAL status (including two pupils who were identified as new to English). In terms of reading attainment 69.5% of the focus group participants were assessed as meeting

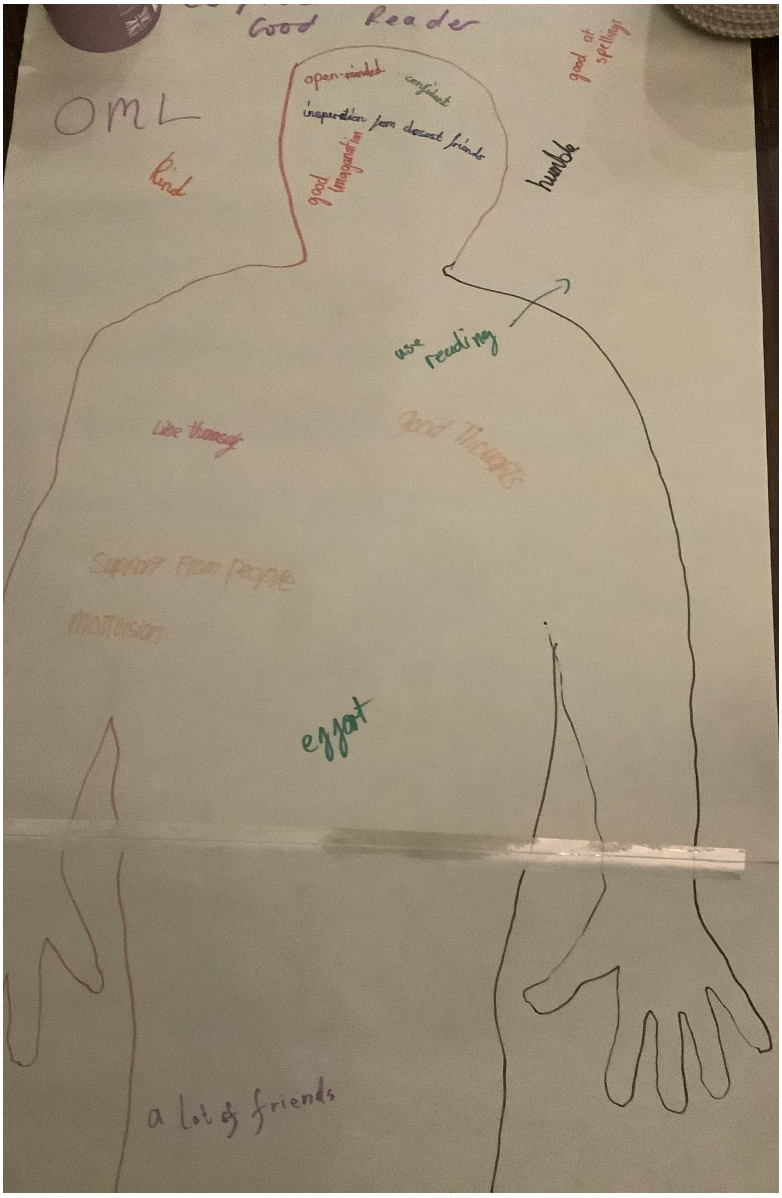
or above the expected threshold for reading for their age and 30.5% were below the national standard, which again is higher than the national average, but is mainly in line with the national picture (Department for Education, 2024c).

3.6.4.2 Focus Group Activities

My role within the group was as a 'facilitator' where I aimed to create a space for dialogue which, as highlighted by Cahill (2007, p.302), included: "actively facilitating everyone's involvement," as well as "interrupting silences" and "disrupting dominant voices," within the group. A combination of verbal and visual methods was offered and there was an emphasis on participant choice (Thomas and O'Kane, 1998; Holland et al., 2008; Clarke et al., 2011) to support the balancing of power relations and enable participants to communicate in their preferred way (Holland et al., 2008; Clarke et al., 2011). In the same way as the Online Survey groups, every focus group session started with playing a game.

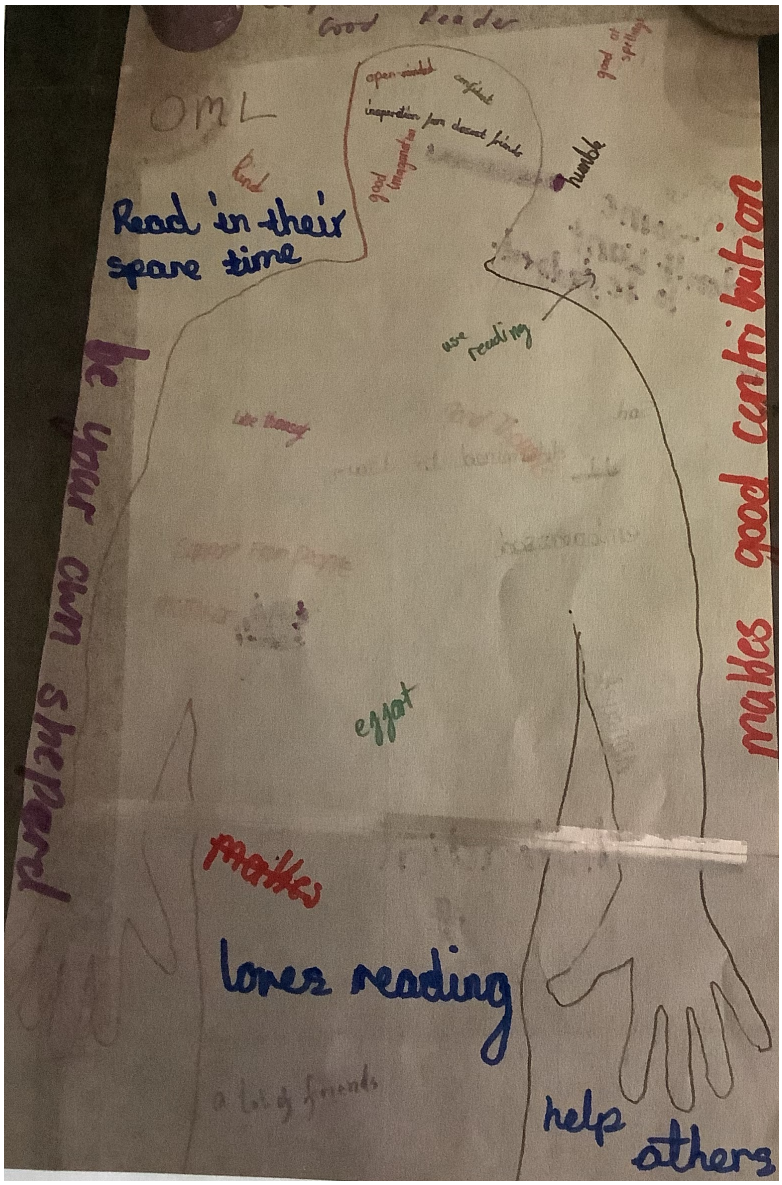
To contribute towards answering RQ3 at T1 (final term of Y6) the groups collaboratively created 'role on the wall' figures (Goode and Neelands, 2000) whereby participants drew around another member of the group on large sheets of paper and added words or phrases to describe a 'good' reader or a 'struggling' reader both internally, to represent internal attributes, such as thoughts, feelings, and motivations and externally, to show external actions and behaviours. For clarity, a photograph of the representation of a 'good' reader at T1 from Focus Group 1 is presented in Figure 3.3.

Figure 3.3- Example of Role on the Wall Representation of a 'Good' Reader at Time 1



At T2 (first term of Y7) all the focus groups were given packs that contained colour photographs of their original 'role on the wall' figures. They then reflected upon their original figures and discussed any changes that they wanted to make, which included removing, amending, or adding words or phrases by writing directly onto their pack using a different coloured felt-tip pen. An example of the development of the 'good reader' figure from Focus Group 1 at T2 is provided in Figure 3.4.

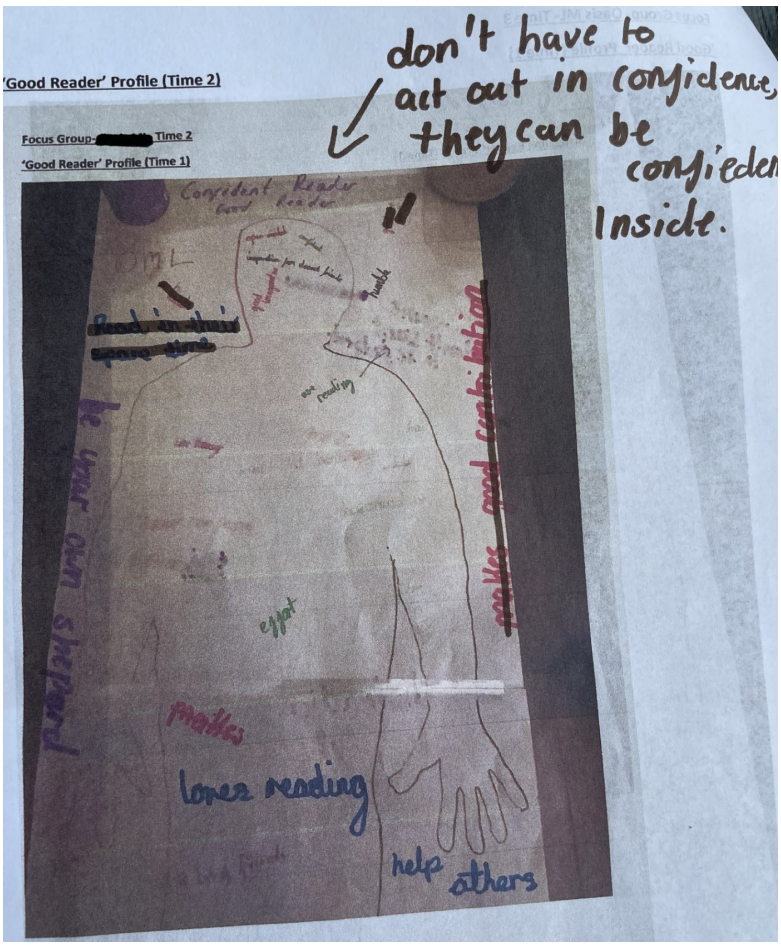
Figure 3.4- Example of the development of the Role on the Wall 'Good' Reader at Time 2



At T3 (final of Y7) the focus groups had packs that showed colour photographs of their original 'role on the wall' figures from T1 and colour photographs of their amended figures from T2. They then discussed their figures for a final time at T3 and again any changes were recorded on their T2 figures to show any development in their thinking since the last focus group. An example of a completed 'good' reader figure developed over the three time points by Focus Group 1 is presented in Figure 3.5. Any changes that were made on the photographs at any stage had to be agreed upon by the group, which did mean on some occasions, where there were

differences of opinion, that groups had to vote and so sometimes decisions were not made unanimously, but by a majority of the group.

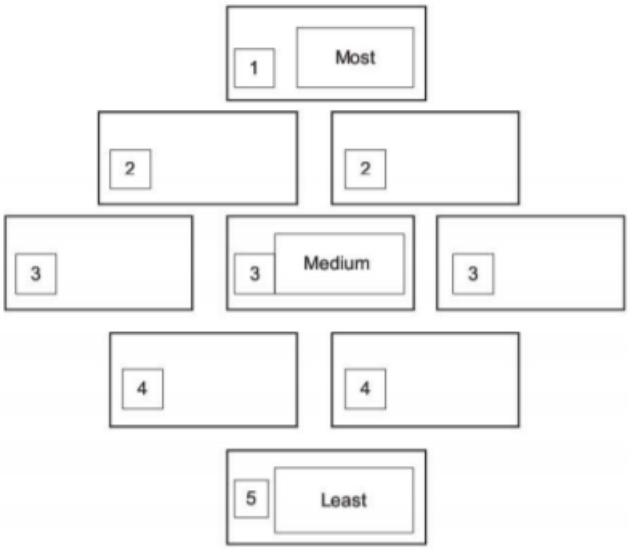
Figure 3.5- Example of completed Role on the Wall 'Good' Reader at Time 3



The audio of all dialogue at T2 and T3 was recorded so that this could be transcribed and analysed to give a fuller understanding of the reasoning behind their decisions and any changes in their thinking regarding their perceptions of 'good' and 'struggling' readers during their primary-secondary school transitions. As part of these discussions, where there were clear changes in a focus group's perceptions, they were also asked why they thought their thinking had changed. No dialogue was recorded at T1 as they worked on creating their figures collaboratively without discussing their reasoning at this point.

To answer RQ4, the participatory tool used at each time point was a diamond 9 ranking activity (Clark, 2012; Goodall and MacKenzie, 2019). Diamond 9 ranking is a widely used and established thinking skills tool (Rockett and Percival, 2002) which is 'underdeveloped' in research (Clark, 2012, p.226) and supports young people to construct and interpret information (Goodall and MacKenzie, 2019). The participants were asked to collaboratively answer the question, 'What is most important to be a successful reader?' and used the diamond 9 tool to rank attributes of 'successful' reading from most to least important at all three time points. The model used to structure the diamond 9 ranking is presented in Figure 3.6.

Figure 3.6- Diamond 9 Ranking Activity (Clark, 2012, p.224)



Each focus group were given 12 diamonds, each with an attribute of reading on them, these were: accuracy, can use reading, confidence, effort, enjoyment, feel they belong, performance, reading a lot, speed, types of material, understanding and values reading. These 12 characteristics were influenced originally by Pearson (2003) from her investigation of Year 7 pupils' perceptions of 'good' and 'poor' readers, as well as relating to key concepts being explored in the wider research project which were confidence (related to reading self-efficacy, RSE), values reading (related to reading task value, RTV) and feel they belong (related to school

belonging, SB). These characteristics were refined during the pilot study following discussion with participant advisors, where it was recommended that the amount read should also be included, which led to the inclusion of 'reading a lot' as an additional attribute in the main study. To ensure that choice was maximised for participants (Thomas and O'Kane, 1998; Conolly, 2008) and to promote flexibility, blank diamonds were also provided so that anything that the participants felt was missing from the given diamonds could also be included. Each focus group had at least 12 diamonds to rank and as only nine can fit on the diamond in total this meant that they had to prioritise which attributes of 'successful' reading needed to be on the diamond the most, in which order and which were not included at all.

At T2 (first term of Y7) all the focus groups were given packs that contained colour photographs of their original diamonds, which they then reflected upon and discussed any changes that they wanted to make. At T3 (final term of Y7) the focus groups had packs that showed colour photographs of their original diamonds from T1 and colour photographs of their amended diamonds from T2. They then discussed their ranking for a final time at T3 and again their final diamonds were photographed to show the development in their thinking since the last focus group. Even though the participants had access to the photographs at T2 and T3 they also had access to the actual diamonds each time so they could use these to support their discussions and 're-make' their diamonds as they agreed any changes that needed to be made, if this was helpful for them.

It is emphasised that it is the dialogue that takes place that is important rather than the actual ranked positions (Clark, 2012). This approach promotes discussion as when people collaboratively rank items, they need to discuss and agree on their choices which means that they make overarching connections between items whilst organising them and making their perceptions explicit (Clark, 2012). Therefore, in this case the diamond 9 ranking tool was used to elicit the participants' perspectives (Niemi et al., 2018) and facilitate discussion around the reasoning for their views to provide insight into their ways of knowing (Nind, 2014b) and lived experiences related to how to be a 'successful' reader. The dialogue that took place between the

participants when completing this activity was recorded at all three time points and then transcribed and analysed. This was particularly crucial for exploring further why the participants felt that some attributes were more important than others to be a 'successful' reader and to understand changes in their thinking that occurred during primary-secondary transitions.

As well as the two main activities the 'message in a bottle' technique (Parrilla et al., 2016) was also applied as a closing activity at the end of each focus group. The participants were asked to write a message to advise a pupil of their age who needed help with learning to read at all three time points. These have not been analysed or reported as data as part of this study, but the intention is that these will be used as part of a follow up project to produce a set of supportive materials for young people who feel that they are struggling with reading at this age and stage in their education.

Throughout the focus groups participants were also able to record any points that they felt were salient to the 'collective wall' whereby they could add words or pictures as "a point of reference and a public memory of shared knowledge production from which we could build new ideas." (Cahill, 2007, p.303). The intention was for the collective wall to be used flexibly and reflexively throughout the group sessions and as a support for collaborative data analysis. However, the participants did not choose to utilise this, as they preferred to contribute their ideas verbally instead.

3.7 Analysis of the Data

The approaches to analysis are first outlined for the quantitative data collected through the three quantitative measures, that is the modified RSEQ, the modified RTVQ and the PSSM through the platform of Online Surveys. Then, the approaches to analysing the qualitative data, including the responses to the qualitative survey questions (also collected through Online Surveys) and the data collected in the focus groups are presented.

3.7.1 Analyses of the Quantitative Data

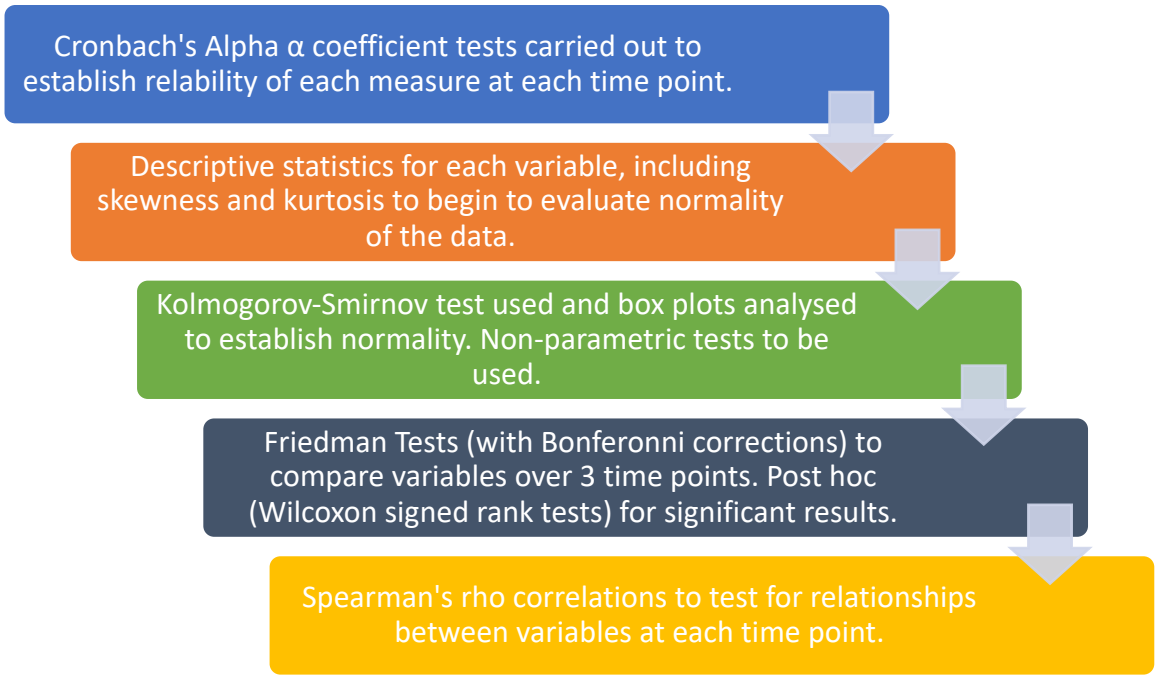
To analyse the quantitative data to answer RQs 1 and 2, between July 2022 and June 2023 I used version 28 of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to carry out statistical analyses to establish the reliability of the measures (RSEQ, RTVQ and PSSM), any changes in the three dependent variables (RSE, RTV and SB) and any relationships between them over the three time points.

First, the reliability of the modified measures was calculated using Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients for each measure at each time point. Next, the descriptive statistics for each variable were observed to start to explore the meaning and begin to evaluate the normality of the data. This initial exploration was carried out to begin to establish any patterns in the dataset and to gain insight into how the data were distributed. Further tests were then required to establish the normality of the data, including Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests and analysis of boxplots. These analyses revealed that there were some inconsistencies in the variables as well as some identified outliers. Based on this it was decided that non-parametric tests would be most appropriate to be used for further exploratory analysis.

Therefore, to answer RQ1 it was necessary to carry out Friedman Tests, with Bonferroni corrections for multiple tests, to compare each individual dependent variable over the three time points and post hoc Wilcoxon signed rank tests were then carried out where statistically significant results were found. Friedman tests were selected as a non-parametric alternative to a one-way repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) that was fitting for comparing groups where there is a categorical independent variable for example, time (within the categories of the distinct time points, on this occasion) and continuous dependent variables for instance, RSE in this case (Pallant, 2020). To answer RQ2 Spearman's rho correlations were used to explore relationships between the variables at each of the three time points. Spearman's rho correlations were chosen as a suitable non-parametric alternative to Pearson's r when exploring relationships between two

continuous variables, for example, RTV and RSE in this study (Pallant, 2020). The stages of the quantitative analysis process are summarised in Figure 3.7.

Figure 3.7- Phases of Quantitative Data Analysis



It was also important to carry out preliminary data analyses throughout the data collection process at each time point, so that initial findings could be shared with the participants in the advisory groups and so that accessible summaries of the preliminary findings could be shared with schools. It was important that this happened in a timely way, so that impact could be realised in practice that could potentially benefit the participants themselves.

3.7.2 Analyses of the Qualitative Data

To answer RQs 3 and 4 data collected from the qualitative online survey questions and the focus groups were analysed. I carried out all the qualitative analysis myself, although some samples were shared with my supervisory team to verify the qualitative analysis process taken.

3.7.2.1 Analysis of the Qualitative Online Survey Questions

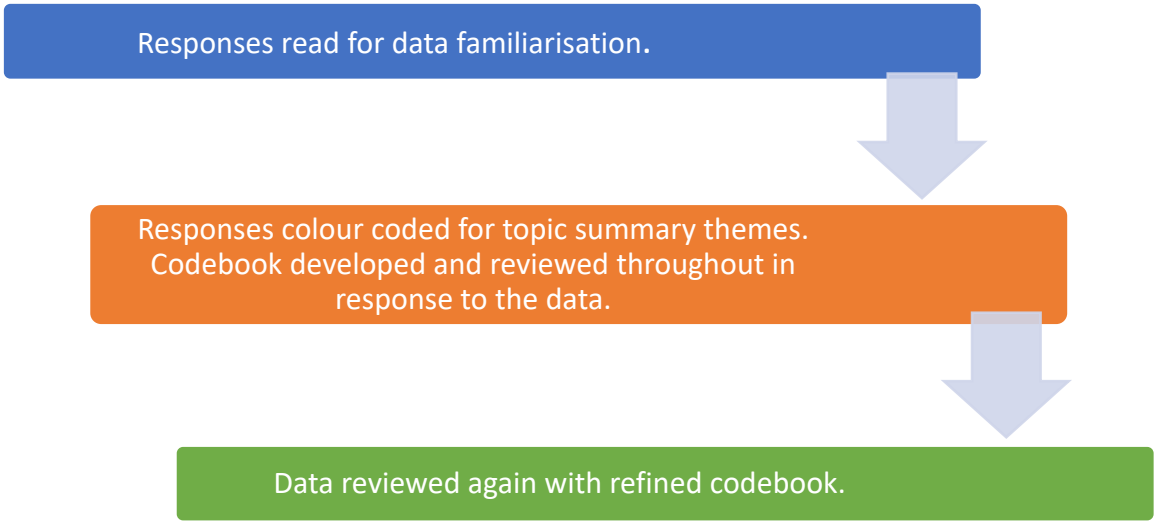
All participants completed the open-ended questions as part of the online surveys at all three time points and their responses contributed towards answering RQ3. The participants were asked to describe a 'good' and 'struggling reader' in their own words. To analyse this data a 'codebook' thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2021) approach was taken. This meant that following familiarisation with the data the participants' responses were read and then coded to identify key features of the responses which were grouped into overarching themes. These responses were colour coded in line with the corresponding themes and then the frequency of the occurrence of each theme was recorded to support understanding of the meaning of the data and to spot patterns.

The codebook was developed and reviewed over the analysis with any modifications made to the themes recorded as they were refined. This codebook was developed inductively and in response to the data, although as a starting point the categories identified by Pearson (2003) in her investigation of Year 7 pupils' perceptions of 'good' and 'poor' readers, these are: understanding, performing, type of material, decoding/strategies, using reading, personal characteristics, enjoyment and generic were considered. Over the analysis there were 12 themes identified in response to this part of the dataset, these were: speed, reading performance, ability to use reading, understanding, accuracy, enjoyment, effort, wider attainment, confidence, types of material, independence and amount read.

These themes are topic summaries (Braun and Clarke, 2021) that grouped together participants' responses that related to these aspects of reading, which was helpful to begin to summarise the different attributes of reading that the participants associated with 'good' and 'struggling' reader identities and relevant to beginning to answer RQ3. The same codebook was used for the participants' responses related to their perceptions of both 'good' and 'struggling' readers, and therefore the definitions of the codes encompass a spectrum of responses in relation to each theme. For example, regarding the theme of 'accuracy' this was focused on high

levels of reading accuracy when referring to 'good' readers and low levels of reading accuracy in descriptions of 'struggling readers.' As the codebook was developed inductively and iteratively the final version of the codebook was then used to evaluate all responses again to ensure continuity. The final codebook (used with the qualitative survey answers) with definitions is provided in Appendix L. The phases of the data analysis on the qualitative survey answers are presented in Figure 3.8.

Figure 3.8- Phases of Data Analysis- Qualitative Survey Answers



3.7.2.2 Analyses of the Focus Group Data

So that RQs 3 and 4 could be answered full transcription of the focus group discussions took place at the end of the project using the Microsoft Word Transcribe tool as a starting point, which was then thoroughly checked and amended manually by repeated listening to the recordings. This part of the process also allowed for familiarisation with the data.

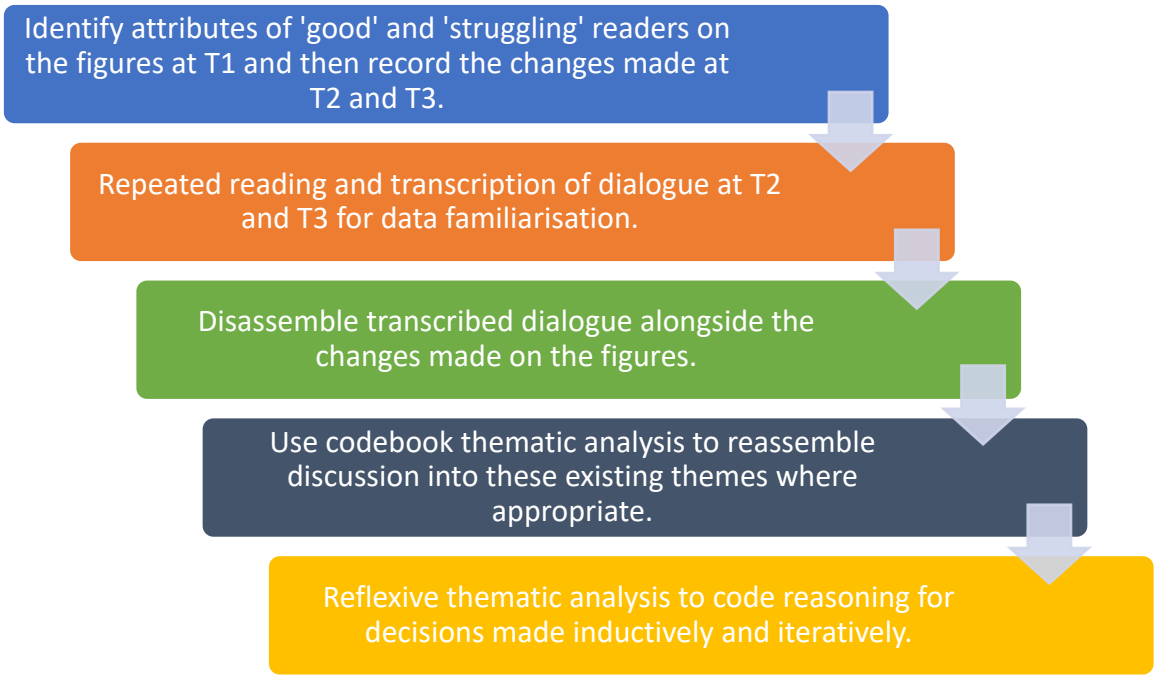
The data collected in the focus groups were firstly, the 'role on the wall' figures (Goode and Neelands, 2000), constructed collaboratively by the participants at T1 and then the transcribed dialogue of their discussions related to any changes they wanted to make to their figures at T2 and T3. All this data relates to RQ3, that is:

How do pupils perceive ‘good’ and ‘struggling’ readers and how does this change during primary-secondary school transitions?

The process for analysing these data was that the original ‘role on the wall’ figures produced at T1 were used to identify attributes of ‘good’ and ‘struggling readers. These attributes were then used as categories to ‘disassemble’ (Castleberry and Nolen, 2018) the amended photographs and transcribed dialogue from both T2 and T3, so that changes made post-transfer could be identified. In practice this meant that, the dialogue that related to aspects of reading specifically (speed, reading performance, ability to use reading, understanding, accuracy, enjoyment, effort, wider attainment, confidence, types of material, independence and amount read) were ‘reassembled’ (Castleberry and Nolen, 2018) systematically into categories using the codebook identified in response to the qualitative survey answers (Appendix L) and colour coding.

The dialogue surrounding the changes the groups decided to make, relating to why their perceptions of ‘good’ and ‘struggling’ reader identities had changed, was analysed inductively using reflexive thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2021) whereby themes were generated from the data to capture shared meaning. These themes were developed, reviewed and then refined iteratively throughout the analysis process. The themes identified in this way were basic emotions (Tracy and Robins, 2004) and personal attributes; public self-consciousness; belonging; identity formation and new environment. This qualitative analysis process was iterative and explicitly reflexive (Srivastava and Hopwood, 2009) as understanding of what the data was communicating developed, and the identified themes were refined throughout. To be clear, Appendix M provides an overview of these themes with definitions. The data analysis process for the ‘role on the wall’ figures and dialogue surrounding any changes made is summarised in Figure 3.9.

Figure 3.9- Phases of Data Analysis- 'Role on the Wall' Activity



In relation to RQ4, specifically: What do pupils think is most important to be a 'successful' reader and how does this change during primary-secondary transitions? This is answered by the ranked positions of the different attributes of 'successful' reading from the diamond 9 ranking activity and the participants' dialogue which provides the reasoning for their decisions at all three time points.

The ranked positions of each attribute were identified and scored to summarise the overall positions of each attribute of 'successful' reading across all the focus groups. Then all dialogue was disassembled and then reassembled using the codebook developed in response to the wider data set (Appendices L and M) into the identified topic summaries. For example, all the discussion around where to place the diamond 'enjoyment' was grouped together under the heading 'enjoyment' for each focus group at each of the three time points. Next the dialogue within each section was analysed again using the same codebook and a colour coding approach to establish which other themes were evident in their discussions about a particular attribute of 'successful' reading. There was overlap between the themes identified and the names of the attributes that were ranked using the diamond 9 activity. Often the themes within the dialogue are related to the attribute itself, for example

when discussing enjoyment much of the reasoning related to the theme of enjoyment as defined in the code book, whilst at other times the discussion related to other attributes of 'successful' reading and their corresponding themes (e.g., when discussing enjoyment, this was also related to other attributes of reading, such as wider attainment).

Following this, a reflexive thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2021) approach was again taken to the analysis to ensure that the participants' reasoning was explored fully. This led to one additional theme being developed from the dialogue surrounding the diamond 9 ranking decisions, that is 'reading imaginatively' (defined in Appendix N). Although having a 'good imagination' as a skill had been identified in other parts of the data set (mainly related to understanding the text), the meaning in the dialogue related to diamond 9 decisions made at T1 was different, in that it went beyond standard comprehension of the text, which meant it was important to construct a distinct theme that captured this. The stages of the data analysis process applied to the diamond 9 ranking activity and the analysis of the dialogue surrounding their ranking decisions is presented in Figure 3.10. Illustrative examples of the data analysis process in relation to this part of the data set is provided in Appendix O.

Figure 3.10- Phases of Data Analysis- Diamond 9 Ranking Activity



3.8 The Advisory Groups, Dissemination and Impact

The advisory groups were offered to participants in two participating primary schools at the end of Y6 (T1) and then again to all participants at the end of Y7 (T3). Advisory groups were planned as part of the design to provide a shared space for participants to work collaboratively (Walmsley et al., 2018) with me as advisors on the data analysis, co-interpretation (Nind, 2014a) and dissemination of the findings within their school communities. The advisory groups were pivotal in terms of the potential impact that could be realised to develop the inclusivity of the transitions process and direct impact that would potentially benefit the participants themselves.

The planned approach to the advisory groups was influenced by Pinter and Zandian (2015) who advocate for providing opportunities for participants to reflect on whether their voices had been heard accurately and to review and refine understanding, which can then impact on the interpretation of the findings. It has been found that providing this space for dialogue around the data analysis with

child participants means that the children's own interpretations impacted upon the final conclusions that were drawn (Thomas and O'Kane, 1998).

3.8.1 Advisory Groups

At T1 (end of Y6 in primary) two advisory groups took place from two participating primary schools. Five participants joined one advisory group, and nine participants joined in the other. At T1, one of the advisory groups met once and the other met twice, this variation was a result of school availability. At T3, advisory groups took place in two of the participating secondary schools. Advisory groups were offered in all three participating secondary schools, however, none of the participants in one of the secondary schools wanted to contribute. At T3 (end of Y7 in secondary) there were three different advisory groups. There was one advisory group in one of the schools and two advisory groups in the other, and each advisory group met twice. There were 28 participants who contributed to an advisory group at T3, this was made up of one group of 8, one group of 6 and one group of 14. For clarity this breakdown of the construction of the advisory groups is summarised in Table 3.3

Table 3.3 Breakdown of Advisory Groups at each Time Point

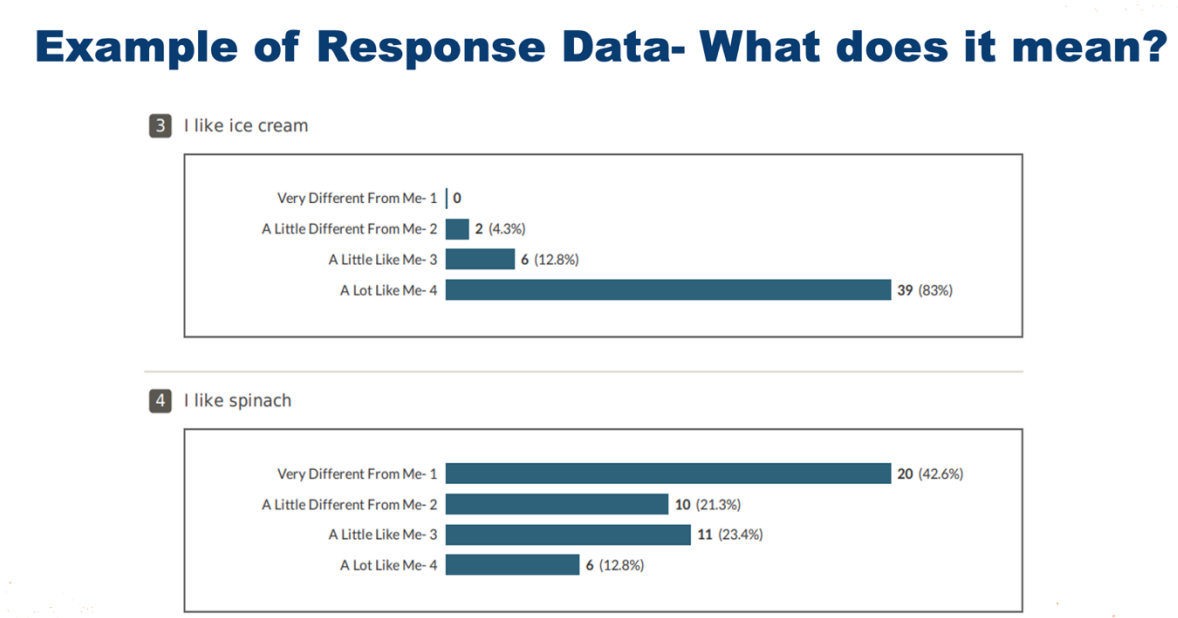
Breakdown of Advisory Groups	Time point	
	Time 1 (Primary)	Time 3 (Secondary)
Total Number of Advisory Groups	2	3
Total Number of Schools with an Advisory Group	2	2
Total Number of Participants who Contributed as Advisors	14	28

PowerPoint presentations were used to structure the advisory groups at T1 and at T3. In the same way as the online survey and focus groups, the advisory group sessions always started with playing a game. Following on from this, there was a briefing where it was emphasised to the participants that they were contributing as advisors or "experts in their own lives" (Mason and Danby, 2011, p.185) and the overview of the design was recapped. At each advisory group meeting the young

people were provided with updates on the project, for example how many participants had completed each survey at that point in time.

The aims of the advisory groups were to make sense of the data we had collected, to decide what needed to be shared in their school communities, and how they wanted to disseminate this information. These aims were shared with the advisors. At both time points, the main part of the session started with an opportunity for the advisors to explore the raw data that had been collected through the online surveys. This was presented to them as summary responses to each of the individual items from each of the quantitative measures and all the responses from the qualitative survey questions. At both T1 and T3 advisors received training on how to understand the response data before they explored it for themselves. An example of how the response data were presented is provided in Figure 3.11.

Figure 3.11- Example of Response Data Format



There was an emphasis on choice and flexibility throughout. The advisors were given time to reflect on the responses and chose to focus upon which part of the data they were most interested in. They worked mostly in pairs and were provided with felt tip pens, sticky notes and large sheets of sugar paper to record anything that they found interesting or wanted to discuss further. They also had access to

computers, laptops and/or tablets at T3. Following their exploration of the data, there was a recorded discussion which I facilitated, where they discussed their reflections on the data, in terms of what they thought was important or interesting and why.

At T3, this was followed up with some headline findings that I shared based on preliminary quantitative analyses of the data from all three time points, and from my first listen to the focus group discussions from T3. This was to share my thinking, at that point in time, regarding what the findings meant to me. There was then a discussion about these headline findings, in terms of what was important to them about the findings so far and how they understood them from their perspectives.

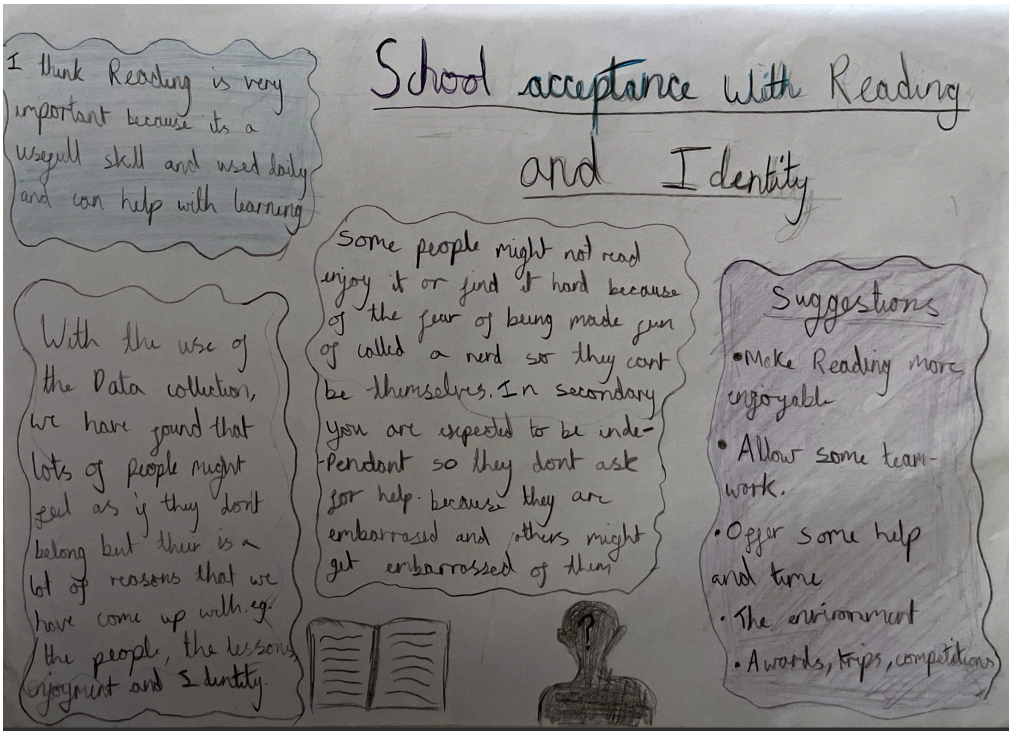
At both time points the advisory groups ended with a focus on what they felt was most important about the findings at that point, to be disseminated in their school communities. There was then time provided for the advisors to communicate what they wanted to share with other pupils and senior leaders in their schools. This phase was consciously left more open to allow for more flexibility and freedom in terms of how they decided the information should best be presented as "experts in their own lives" (Mason and Danby, 2011, p.185).

3.8.2 Dissemination and Perceived Benefits to Participants

As this study aimed to be transformative, it regards the dissemination stage as a crucial phase of the research (Christensen and Prout, 2002). This relates to 'ethics of fairness' (Bodén, 2021) in how it strives for future gains for both the participants themselves (Walmsley and Johnson, 2003) and more widely (Walmsley et al., 2018). The advisory groups were critical for this in that they provided space for the participants as advisors to take the lead on the dissemination in terms of what they wanted to communicate about the preliminary findings within their schools. The participants chose to communicate their key messages through posters or PowerPoint presentations. These were all shared with senior leaders in school, so

that impact could be realised in practice. An example of a poster produced by an advisor as part of the dissemination phase is provided in Figure 3.12.

Figure 3.12- Example Poster for Dissemination at Time 3



As well as the resources produced by the young people themselves, accessible summaries of the key findings were provided to each of the participating primary and secondary schools. These were based on preliminary analyses and provided in a timely way to ensure that they were available for schools to act upon within time to benefit the participants directly. An example of one of the accessible summaries that was provided to one of the participating secondary schools (following the advisory groups that took place at T3) is provided in Appendix P. It is known that these accessible summaries were shared and discussed at Senior Leadership Team meetings in both secondary schools where advisory groups took place.

It is also hoped that participation in the project itself had some potential benefits for the participants in that, the way the project was structured meant that participants from different primary schools were brought together with participants from other primaries in their new secondary schools. For example, as well as

working on the planned data collection, it was a valuable part of the process that each session started with a game that meant that the participants got to know each other as part of the process. As well as this, for any participants interested in research it is hoped that the training they received, and experience of the project provided them with an enjoyable and insightful research experience.

I also gave the participants a small thank you gift for their participation at the very end of the project. These were small 'goody bags' including for example University of Leeds branded stationery. This was not an incentive for participating, as the participants were not aware of these before consenting to participate and did not receive them until the project was complete.

To conclude this chapter, the methodological approaches and design applied to answer the research questions and the wider context in which the project took place have been outlined. The next two chapters present the research findings, starting with the quantitative data that was collected.

Chapter 4 Findings- Quantitative Data

4.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter outlines the findings from the quantitative data collected over the three time points of the data collection during the participants' primary-secondary transitions. For clarity, the findings are presented by data set and with reference to the research questions that they answer.

4.2 Quantitative Data- Online Surveys

The effect of the independent variable of time, which has three levels:

1) Time point 1 (T1, pre-transfer, final term of Year 6)
2) Time point 2 (T2, post-transfer, first term of Year 7)
3) Time point 3 (T3, post-transfer, final term of Year 7)

Was explored in relation to the dependent variables, which are the participants' feelings of:

- Reading self-efficacy RSE)
- Reading task value (RTV)
- School belonging (SB)

The dependent variables were measured using three online surveys:

- The Reading self-efficacy questionnaire (RSEQ)
- The Reading task value questionnaire (RTVQ)
- Psychological Sense of School Membership (PSSM)

To answer research questions (RQs) 1 and 2:

RQ1) Do primary-secondary school transitions impact upon pupils' feelings of RSE, RTV and SB?

RQ2) To what extent are RSE, RTV and SB related and does this change during primary-secondary school transitions?

For consistency, throughout this section values are reported to 2 decimal places, the only exceptions to this are when a higher level of precision is required (Field, 2018) when reporting p values that are <.01 or when referring to values from other research as required.

4.2.1 Reliability of the Measures

Since I modified both the RSEQ and the RTVQ it is particularly important to consider the reliability of the items so that the consistency by which they measure the underlying constructs can be evaluated. It is also important to check the reliability of the PSSM utilised to provide a measure of feelings of SB with this group of participants, to ensure that it measures in a consistent way with the demographic of

this particular group (Pickett et al., 2020). Ideally, the Cronbach Alpha coefficient should be above .7 (DeVellis, 2012). The internal reliability scores for all three measures across the three time points are displayed in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1- Reliability of the Measures at Three Time Points

Measure	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha α		
		T1	T2	T3
Modified Reading Self-Efficacy Questionnaire (RSEQ)	21	0.92	0.94	0.93
Modified Reading Task Value Questionnaire (RTVQ)	7	0.86	0.89	0.89
Psychological Sense of School Membership (PSSM)	18	0.88	0.87	0.84

The original RSEQ has good internal reliability (α = 0.912, Carroll and Fox, 2017). The modified version used in this study also has good internal reliability across the three time points (α = 0.92; α =0.94; α =0.93) with the additional items that tap into reading comprehension tasks included.

The RTVQ consists of 7 items that are adapted from the value scales in the Motivations for Reading Information Books- School Questionnaire (MRIB-S,Wigfield, Allan et al., 2012, α =0.83) and the Motivation for Reading Information Books Nonschool Questionnaire (MRIB-NSWigfield, Allan et al., 2012, α =0.85) both of which have good internal reliability. As highlighted in Table 4.1, the adapted survey has good internal reliability throughout with this group of participants (α = 0.86; α = 0.89; α = 0.89).

The PSSM has internal reliability scores that range between .77 and .88 (Goodenow, 1993, p.85). As can be seen in Table 4.1, in this case this fits in at the higher end of this range overall across the three time points (α =0.88; α =0.87; α =0.84).

4.2.2 Descriptive Statistics

To summarise the data set in the first instance and begin to answer RQ1, the data were analysed using descriptive statistics. These are presented for each dependent variable over the three time points as follows: RSE, Table 4.2; RTV, Table 4.3 and SB, Table 4.4. First, the skewness of the data for all three variables shows that the data are negatively skewed at all three time points. This means that there were more scores at the higher end which is common in educational research (Ho and Yu, 2015; Cohen et al., 2018) and provides an initial indication that the distribution of the scores may not conform to a normal distribution. As a result of this, both the mean (M) and the median (Md) were considered and have been reported.

First considering Table 4.2 and the impact of the transitions on RSE, the distribution of the data is negatively skewed at all three time points. Both the mean (M) and median (Md) scores for RSE over the three time points shows that on average RSE gradually declined over transitions, although it is important to note that the standard deviation (SD) is high across all three time points, which suggests that the data is widely spread. Nevertheless, the interquartile range (IQR) is higher than the SD, indicating that the data remain spread out within the middle section of the dataset and therefore suggests that the spread may not be caused by outliers.

Table 4.2- Descriptive Statistics- Reading Self-Efficacyover Three Time Points

Time	N	Mean	Median	SD	IQR	Skewness (SE)	Kurtosis (SE)
1	55	115.87	119	21.33	29	-.89 (.32)	.50 (.63)
2	55	113	116	24.39	28	-1.17 (.32)	1.57 (.63)
3	54	110.43	112	22.65	34.75	-.37 (.33)	-.84 (.64)

Next focusing upon Table 4.3 and the impact of the transitions on RTV. In this case both the M and Md show similar trends in that RTV remains at around the same level on average at T1 and T2 but then begins to decline at T3. As can be seen from the SD and IQR the scores are not as widely spread in this case.

Table 4.3- Descriptive Statistics- Reading Task Value over Three Time Points

Time	N	Mean	Median	SD	IQR	Skewness (SE)	Kurtosis (SE)
1	55	21.16	22	4.69	6	-.67 (.32)	.63 (.63)
2	55	21.4	22	4.70	7	-.40 (.32)	-1.08 (.63)
3	54	19.76	20	5.12	6.25	-.45 (.33)	-.23 (.64)

Finally, considering Table 4.4 and the impact of the transitions on SB. The distribution of the scores is again negatively skewed at all three time points. The M and Md both demonstrate a gradual decline on average in feelings of SB over the transitions, although the scores are again widely spread.

Table 4.4- Descriptive Statistics- School Belonging over Three Time Points

Time	N	Mean	Median	SD	IQR	Skewness (SE)	Kurtosis (SE)
1	55	68.53	69	11.98	18	-.57 (.32)	.26 (.63)
2	55	66.76	66	11.33	17	-1.01 (.32)	2.21 (.63)
3	54	62.22	64	10.63	13.5	-.28 (.33)	-.14 (.64)

4.2.3 Normality of the Variables

Although it is recognised that it is common for scales in educational research to be skewed one way or another (Ho and Yu, 2015; Cohen et al., 2018) and therefore the distribution being identified as negatively skewed is not necessarily an issue. However, this combined with identified widely dispersed data meant that it was pertinent to further explore the normality of the data in preparation for further statistical analyses to answer RQ1 and 2. In order to do this, the skewness was further investigated, to establish whether levels were acceptable to be able to assume normality. A stringent criterion for making this judgement is by ensuring that skewness or kurtosis do not exceed twice the standard error (SE) in each case (Cohen et al., 2018). This analysis revealed that the distribution of data for RSE was abnormally skewed at both T1 and T2 and had an unacceptable level of kurtosis, at T2. The skewness and kurtosis for RTV were all within acceptable levels at all three

time points. The data for SB was within acceptable levels at T1 and T3 but was abnormally skewed and had kurtosis that was too high at T2.

To explore this further, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of normality was carried out. This statistical test also identifies any outliers that are potentially impacting upon variability in the data. The findings are summarised in Table 4.5. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test suggests that RSE scores at T1 do not follow a normal distribution, D (55) =.14, p=.01 and that RTV scores at T2, D (55) =.16, p <.01 and T3, D (54) = .13, p=.03 also do not follow a normal distribution.

Table 4.5- Tests of Normality for Reading Self-Efficacy, Reading Task Value and School Belonging at Three Time Points

		Reading Self-efficacy		Reading Task Value		School Belonging	
Time	Df	Statistic	Sig.	Statistic	Sig.	Statistic	Sig.
1	55	.14	.01	.10	.20	.07	.20
2	55	.11	.20	.16	<.01	.10	.20
3	54	.09	.20	.13	.03	.10	.20

Since the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test is known to be sensitive to outliers (Drezner et al., 2010) a boxplot for each variable at each time point was inspected to look for extreme values. A small number of outliers were identified, where outliers have been identified boxplots are presented in Appendix Q (T1, 1 outlier identified for RSE and SB and 2 outliers for RTV; at T2, 4 outliers for RSE and 1 outlier for SB and at T3 1 outlier for RTV). As these outliers were not a result of errors, they are therefore considered to be a legitimate part of the dataset (Osborne and Overbay, 2004) and were not excluded in the first instance. The potential impact of these outliers was carefully considered when applying further statistical procedures and interpreting the outcomes. As there are inconsistencies within the same variables with regards to whether the distribution can be reliably considered normal and there are some identified outliers (Field, 2018) it was decided that non-parametric analyses would be applied when carrying out further statistical analyse to understand the data further and answer RQ1 and 2.

4.2.4 Comparisons of Participants' Scores during Primary-Secondary Transitions

To explore the data more specifically with relevance to:

RQ1) Do primary-secondary school transitions impact upon pupils' feelings of RSE, RTV and SB?

A Friedman Test was carried out for each of the variables to compare the participants' scores over the three time points. The outcomes of this are summarised below in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6- Comparisons Between Variables over the Primary to Secondary Transitions

	Friedman Test			
Variable	N	Test statistic	df	Asymp.sig.
Reading Self-Efficacy	54	4.78	2	.09
Reading Task Value	54	6.68	2	.04*
School Belonging	54	11.36	2	.003**

*P<.05

** P<.01

4.2.4.1 Reading Self Efficacy during Primary-Secondary Transitions

Although the M and Md RSE scores presented in Table 4.2 both showed that RSE declined gradually over the project, the outcome of the Friedman Test c2 (2, n=54) =4.78, p=.09, showed non-significant differences in RSE scores over the three time points during their primary-secondary transitions. For clarity this analysis compared levels of RSE at T1 to T2 to T3. No post-hoc tests were carried out in this case as the results were not statistically significant. This means that although there was a non-significant decline in RSE, there were no meaningful differences in RSE scores over the three time points, which is likely to have been impacted by the variability in the data set.

4.2.4.2 Reading Task Value during Primary-Secondary Transitions

The M and Md scores presented in Table 4.3 for RTV also showed a decline over the three time points and the Friedman Test revealed a statistically significant difference in RTV, c2 (2, n=54) =6.68, p=.04. Post-hoc tests (with Bonferroni correction for multiple tests) indicated that the significant difference occurred between T2 (Md, 22) and T3 (Md, 20), p=.02, where scores declined significantly over this time. A Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test revealed a statistically significant reduction in RTV between T2 and T3, z= -2.45, n=54, p=.01, with a small effect size (r=0.24, Cohen, 1988). This means that there was a meaningful reduction in feelings of RTV during primary-secondary transitions that occurred between the beginning and end of Y7.

4.2.4.3 School Belonging during Primary-Secondary Transitions

The M and Md scores presented in Table 4.4 for SB also showed decline over the three time points, the Friedman Test revealed a statistically significant difference in SB, c2 (2, n=54) =11.36, p=.003. Post-hoc tests (with Bonferroni correction for multiple tests) also indicated that significant differences between T1 (Md, 69) and T3 (Md, 64), p=.02 and T2 (Md, 66) and T3 (Md, 64) p=.006, where feelings of SB again declined significantly by T3 in comparison to both T1 and T2. A Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test also revealed a statistically significant reduction in SB between T1 and T3, z= -2.46, n=54, p=.01 with a small effect size (r=0.24, Cohen, 1988) and a statistically significant reduction in SB between T2 and T3, z= 3.23, n=54, p=.001 with a medium effect size (r=0.31, Cohen, 1988). Therefore, SB declined significantly during primary-secondary transitions by the end of Y7 in comparison to the end of Y6 and the beginning of Y7.

4.2.5 The Relationships Between the Variables during Primary-Secondary Transitions

To specifically consider:

RQ2) To what extent are RSE, RTV and SB related and does this change during primary-secondary school transitions?

Spearman's Rho correlation coefficients were carried out on the whole quantitative data set to evaluate the links between the variables over the three time points, these are summarised in Table 4.7. To ensure that any relationships found were not caused by identified outliers, the correlations were also carried out with outliers excluded, these are presented in Table 4.8.

Table 4.7- Correlation between Variables with all Data Collected

	Total RSE and Total RTV			Total RSE and Total SB			Total RTV and Total SB		
Correlation	T1	T2	T3	T1	T2	T3	T1	T2	T3
Spearman's Rho	.55**	.29*	.56**	.44**	.27*	.02	.40**	.08	.13
N	55	55	54	55	55	54	55	55	54

*P< .05 (2-tailed).

**P<.01 (2-tailed)

Table 4.8- Correlation between Variables with Outliers Excluded

	Total RSE and Total RTV			Total RSE and Total SB			Total RTV and Total SB		
Correlation	T1	T2	T3	T1	T2	T3	T1	T2	T3
Spearman's Rho	.63**	.33**	.54**	.43**	.24	.02	.37**	.11	.09
N	52	51	53	51	50	54	52	54	53

*P< .05 (2-tailed).

**P<.01 (2-tailed)

4.2.5.1 The Relationship between Reading Self-Efficacy and Reading Task Value

First considering, the relationship between RSE (as measured by the RSEQ) and RTV (as measured by the RTVQ). At T1, a Spearman's Rho correlation coefficient showed a strong and positive relationship between RSE and RTV that was statistically significant, rs =.55, N=55, p<.001. This relationship became stronger when identified outliers were removed. At T2, a Spearman's Rho correlation found a small and positive relationship between RSE and RTV that was statistically significant, rs =.29, N=55, p=.03. When the extreme values were excluded at T2, this relationship again became stronger, in that a Spearman's Rho correlation found a moderate and positive relationship between RSE and RTV, rs =.33, N=51, p<.001. At T3, a Spearman's Rho correlation coefficient again found a relationship between RSE and RTV that was strong and positive, rs =.56, n=54, p<.001. Comparable relationships were found when the outliers were excluded. Therefore, high levels of RSE were associated with high levels of RTV. This means that participants with higher levels of RSE also tended to place higher task value on reading. Although there was a decline in the strength of this relationship at T2, the relationship between these variables were evident across all three time points during primary-secondary transitions.

4.2.5.2 The Relationship between Reading Self-Efficacy and School Belonging

Next, the relationship between RSE (as measured by the RSEQ and SB (as measured by the PSSM) was explored. At T1, a Spearman's Rho correlation coefficient, identified a moderate and positive relationship between RSE and SB, rs =.44, N=55, p<.001. A comparable relationship was found when identified outliers were removed. At T2, a Spearman's Rho correlation also found this relationship between RSE and SB to be a significant but at this time point this was a smaller positive relationship, rs =.27, n=55, p=.048. However, when the extreme values were excluded, this relationship became weaker and non-significant, in that a Spearman's Rho correlation indicated that, rs =.24, N=50, p=.10. This suggests that at T2 the relationship between these factors may have been influenced by the identified outliers. At T3, a Spearman's Rho correlation coefficient found very little relationship between RSE and SB, rs =.02, N=54, p=.88 and there were no outliers in the data for

either variable at this time point. Therefore, at the end of Y6 (T1) high levels of RSE were associated with high levels of SB, however, as feelings of SB declined this relationship dissipated over primary-secondary transitions and the first year at secondary school.

4.2.5.3 The Relationship between Reading Task Value and School Belonging

Finally, considering the relationship between RTV (as measured by the RTVQ and SB (as measured by the PSSM). At T1, a Spearman's Rho coefficient shows a moderate and positive correlation between the two variables, which was statistically significant, rs =.40, N=55, p=.002. Comparable relationships were found when outliers were removed. At T2, a Spearman's Rho correlation showed very little relationship between RTV and SB that was non-significant, rs =.08, N=55, p=.54. When the extreme values were excluded, this relationship increased slightly but remained non-significant. At T3, a Spearman's Rho correlation coefficient found very little relationship between RTV and SB which was non-significant, rs =.13, N=54, p=.34. Comparable relationships were found when the identified outlier was excluded. Therefore, at the end of Y6, T1 high levels of RTV were associated with high levels of SB, however, as feelings of SB and RTV declined during primary-secondary transitions this relationship decreased.

4.3 Section Summary

This section sought to present the quantitative findings that answer RQs 1 and 2. It was found that both RTV and SB declined significantly during primary-secondary transitions. In relation to RTV this means that the value the participants placed on reading declined meaningfully between T2 and T3 of Y7. Regarding SB this means that participants felt less like they belonged in their secondary schools by the end of Y7 compared to the end of Y6 and the beginning of Y7. RSE did also decline on average during primary-secondary transitions, but this change was non-significant.

It was found that RSE and RTV are positively correlated during primary-secondary school transitions. There was a large positive correlation between RSE and RTV at both T1 and T3. This relationship was found to be moderate at T2 when extreme values were removed. This means that participants with high RSE were also more likely to place higher value on reading and that this relationship remained across transitions with a decline in the strength of the relationship at T2.

There were also positive moderate and significant relationships found between RSE and SB and RTV and SB at the end of Y6. Therefore, at the end of Y6 participants with higher RSE and RTV were likely to have higher levels of SB. These relationships were not consistent across the transitions. The relationship between RSE and SB and RTV and SB gradually weakened over the transitions as SB and RTV declined significantly. The next chapter presents the findings from the qualitative data that were collected.

Chapter 5 Findings- Qualitative Data

5.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter presents the findings from the qualitative data collected over the three time points, considering both the open-ended questions as part of the online surveys and the data collected from the focus groups. These data answer RQ3 and 4:

RQ3) How do pupils perceive 'good' and 'struggling' readers and how does this change during primary-secondary school transitions?

RQ4) What do pupils think is most important to be a 'successful' reader and how does this change during primary-secondary transitions?

Since this research comes from an inclusive standpoint that respects different ways of knowing (Nind, 2014b) and seeks to work towards impact in practice (Walmsley and Johnson, 2003; Nind, 2014b), a flexible and pragmatic (Kaushik and Walsh,

2019) approach was taken to the analysis of the qualitative data. Based on this assumption, a manual thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) approach was carried out to explore, organise and increase understanding of pupil perspectives of 'good' and 'struggling' readers, and of what it means to them to be a 'successful' reader by identifying patterns in the data and then generating themes (Cohen et al., 2018). Since the data collected is longitudinal over primary-secondary transitions these patterns and themes were then compared across the three data collection time points. Throughout, an inductive and responsive approach was taken to coding and then identifying and reviewing themes. I recognise that as the researcher I have taken an active role (Clarke and Braun, 2017) in this process and therefore my perspective and positionality has influenced my interpretation of the data. As well as this, contributions and recommendations made by the participant advisors as part of the advisory groups have also influenced my perspective in a co-reflexive way throughout.

5.2 Pupil Perceptions of Good and Struggling Readers during Primary-Secondary Transitions

This section presents the findings that contribute towards answering RQ3:

RQ3) How do pupils perceive 'good' and 'struggling' readers and how does this change during primary-secondary school transitions?

This section firstly explores the qualitative responses that were collected from all participants from the open-ended questions in the online surveys. Following this, the visual representations of 'good' and 'struggling' readers created during the focus group interviews at T1 and the dialogue around the participants' perceptions of 'good' and 'struggling' readers at T2 and 3 are presented and reflected upon. Both the online surveys and focus groups interviews took place at all three time points and so any changes in perceptions during primary-secondary transitions are identified and considered.

5.2.1 RQ3 - Online Surveys

All 55 participants at T1 and T2 and all 54 participants at T3 completed the open-ended questions as part of the Online Surveys. The participants were asked to:

> Describe a 'good reader' in your own words.
>
> Describe a 'struggling reader' in your own words.

The participants' responses were read and coded for identified themes. The code book developed in response to this part of the data set is provided in Appendix L.

5.2.1.1 Findings from Analysis of Qualitative Online Survey Questions

Although I recognise that the frequency of references to key themes does not necessarily equate to their importance (Anderson and Arsenault, 1998) to begin to identify categories and patterns in the data (Cohen et al., 2018) the number of times a theme occurred within the participants' descriptions was recorded at each time point. The frequency of those themes in relation to the descriptions of both 'good' and 'struggling' readers over the three time points are presented in Table 5.1.

For complete clarity regarding the meanings of the themes and to ensure fidelity to the participants' voices (Blignault and Ritchie, 2009), sample quotes are also provided to illustrate each theme. Regarding perceptions of 'good' readers, these are presented in Table 5.2 and for 'struggling' readers these are shown in Table 5.3. In both tables the themes are presented in order of frequency from highest to lowest, and one representative sample quote is provided for each time point unless no relevant responses were recorded. Where participants' responses reworded the question, for example saying that a good reader was 'good at reading' or a struggling reader 'struggled with reading' it was not clear what the participant's meaning was, and therefore these responses were not counted as being representative of any of the identified themes.

Accuracy was the most commonly occurring theme in the participant's descriptions at all three time points. In relation to 'good' readers (88 total occurrences) this was in terms of competent levels of word decoding and text reading accuracy. In contrast regarding 'struggling' readers (103 total occurrences) this related to their perceived inaccuracy. Comments related to accuracy were therefore mentioned more in descriptions of 'struggling' readers compared to descriptions of 'good' readers and this was consistent over the time points. In relation to perceptions of 'good' readers, even though accuracy had the highest frequency overall, references to this increased sharply post-transfer at T2 and continued this trajectory at T3.

Accuracy is followed by understanding in terms of frequency over all three time points in both descriptions of 'good' (80 total occurrences) and 'struggling' (65 total occurrences) readers. Regarding perceptions of 'good' readers, this was in terms of their capable skills at understanding text, being able to answer reading comprehension questions and good vocabulary. In reference to 'struggling' readers, the descriptions highlighted their perceived lack of understanding and more limited vocabulary. Aspects of understanding were referred to more frequently in reference to 'good' readers compared to that of 'struggling' readers, and there is much wider disparity between the frequency of responses related to accuracy and understanding in perceptions of 'struggling' readers. In relation to descriptions of 'good' readers at T1 the theme of understanding was included the most overall in descriptions of 'good' readers and overall responses related to this theme then declined sharply post-transfer at T2 and before increasing slightly again by T3.

Table 5.1- Frequency of Themes- Descriptions of 'Good' and 'Struggling' Readers.

	Frequency in Descriptions of 'Good' Readers				Frequency in Descriptions of 'Struggling' Readers			
Theme	T1	T2	T3	Total	T1	T2	T3	Total
Accuracy	19	31	38	88	37	31	35	103
Understanding	36	20	23	79	27	15	23	65
Reading Performance	15	15	13	42	7	8	12	27
Speed	12	13	15	40	14	6	9	29
Enjoyment	17	9	7	33	12	4	5	21
Ability to use reading	12	9	5	26	0	4	1	5
Wider attainment	12	4	8	24	6	4	4	14
Confidence	3	4	7	14	4	1	1	6
Amount read	8	3	3	14	9	3	5	17
Effort	4	6	3	13	11	7	3	21
Types of material	1	6	0	7	1	7	3	11
Independence	2	1	0	3	5	6	3	14

Table 5.2- Sample Quotes from Descriptions of 'Good' Readers

Theme	Sample Quotes across Time Points- 'Good' Readers		
	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3
Accuracy	Does not mix the words up.	Know how to read a book correctly.	Can make out the words without struggling.
Understanding	Can understand the text and answer questions.	Understand difficult words.	Understands the characters.
Reading Performance	When you read aloud and people like your reading and understand your reading.	They express it and can change their voice.	A good reader wouldn't stutter.
Speed	A person who can read fluently.	Wizz through some books.	Someone who can read quickly and fast.
Enjoyment	They would be excited to be reading.	Reads in their spare time.	They have a real passion for books.
Ability to use reading	Uses or learns more vocabulary.	Able to work out what words mean from sentences.	Use things they have read in the book for things in real life.

Wider attainment	Knows how to make a good story and knows history, science and more.	Smart.	A clever person.
Confidence	Someone who can read confidently.	Is confident to read.	Someone who is confident.
Amount read	Reads most of the time.	Someone who actually reads.	Having your head constantly in a book.
Effort	They will challenge themselves.	Is when you always try your best.	Continue reading even if the words are hard.
Types of material	Like read hard books.	Can read at any stages.	No responses.
Independence	A good reader can read alone without an adult.	I think a good reader can read independently without a teacher by their side.	No responses.

Table 5.3 -Sample Quotes from Descriptions of 'Struggling' Readers

Theme	Sample Quotes across Time Points- 'Struggling' Readers		
	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3
Accuracy	Someone who can't read long words.	Struggles to sound out words and makes many mistakes.	Can't read properly.
Understanding	Someone who does not understand what the contexts in the book mean.	Someone who cannot understand the words they read.	They have no clue about the story.
Speed	A person who is very slow at reading.	Cannot finish a book or word in a few minutes.	Can't read as fluently as a good reader.
Reading Performance	Can't read out loud.	Don't really like reading aloud.	A person who mumbles and reads quietly.
Effort	Someone who tries very hard…but they find it hard	Gives up.	They do not want to improve.
Enjoyment	Does not enjoy reading and doesn't care about books and reading.	Doesn't like reading.	A struggling reader is someone who is not very motivated.
Amount read	Someone who doesn't read most of the time.	Hardly reads.	Only sometimes reads.

Independence	Also they might get help from teachers so they can learn to read.	A person who always needs help.	Has to read with an adult.
Wider attainment	They might also be doing bad on other subjects due to the reading.	A struggling reader is that they are only a bit clever.	A person who struggles to understand the work.
Types of material	It cannot read hard books.	They can read skinny books.	Choose books that are too easy for them.
Confidence	Not confident.	And they try to be silent.	Someone who isn't confident.
Ability to use reading	No responses.	Doesn't use knowledge from books.	They don't learn from books.

Next, in terms of overall frequency regarding perceptions of 'good' readers was references to the performance aspects of reading (42 total occurrences) which referred to confident skills when reading out loud and in front of others. References to reading performance aspects in descriptions of 'good' readers remained mainly consistent across primary-secondary transitions, with a slight dip at T3. Features of reading performance were noted more frequently in relation to 'good' readers compared to 'struggling' readers (27 total occurrences), where the 'struggling' readers perceived difficulties with reading out loud and in front of others were highlighted. References to difficulties with performance aspects of reading in descriptions of 'struggling' readers increased in frequency over the time points.

The next key theme identified was speed, which in descriptions of 'good' readers (40 total occurrences) was related to reading quickly and fluently (alongside accuracy) or reading at what was considered to be an 'appropriate' pace. References to speed increased steadily regarding 'good' readers over the project. Speed was mentioned less in relation to perceptions of 'struggling' readers (29 total occurrences) and where this was evident descriptions mostly related to reading too slowly or lacking in fluency.

Following this, is the identified theme of enjoyment, in relation to perceptions of 'good' readers (33 total occurrences) this theme highlighted positive feelings towards reading and how they would be intrinsically motivated (Ryan and Deci, 2020) to read. The frequency of references to enjoyment factors regarding 'good' readers was highest pre-transfer at T1 and then declined gradually over Y7. Enjoyment was referred to less frequently regarding descriptions of 'struggling' readers (21 total occurrences) and conversely these references noted a lack of enjoyment and motivation for reading. Despite the contrast in the content, references to enjoyment factors in relation to 'struggling' readers also declined over the time points.

In relation to descriptions of 'good' readers, next is the ability to use reading (26 total occurrences) which encompassed their ability to learn new things from reading and apply what participants have learnt to their reading comprehension or more widely into other subject areas. References to the ability to use reading regarding perceptions

of ‘good’ readers declined over the project. In contrast there were very few references to the ability to use reading in relation to perceptions of ‘struggling’ readers (5 total occurrences) which pointed to their lack of ability to apply knowledge or learn from what they had read.

The next most commonly occurring theme regarding perceptions of ‘good’ readers was reference to wider attainment factors (23 total occurrences) which highlighted perceptions of ‘good’ readers as high attaining pupils in other subjects who were achieving well generally and considered to be ‘intelligent’ more broadly. Regarding perceptions of ‘struggling’ readers, wider attainment factors were less common (14 total occurrences) and referred to ‘struggling’ readers having difficulties in school more generally and included references to them being perceived as less ‘clever.’

Following this, in relation to descriptions of ‘good’ readers is confidence (14 total occurrences) which highlighted that ‘good’ readers are perceived to feel confident in reading and more generally. References to this theme regarding perceptions of ‘good’ readers increased over the project. The theme of confidence was less prevalent within descriptions of ‘struggling’ readers (6 total occurrences) where perceptions highlighted a general lack of confidence and some indication of wanting to not be noticed by others.

The next identified theme includes factors related to the amount read, which was more prevalent within descriptions of ‘struggling’ readers (17 total occurrences) and points to ‘struggling’ readers being seen as not reading very often (if at all) and not reading very much. This contrasts with perceptions of ‘good’ readers (14 total occurrences) where it is noted in the main that they would read at least regularly and that they would read a lot when they do. References to the amount read declined regarding both perceptions of ‘struggling and ‘good’ readers over the three time points.

Also, more prevalent in relation to 'struggling' readers (21 total occurrences) is the identified theme of effort. The theme consists of both perceived lack of effort and persistence, and perceived effort in terms of trying hard and continuing to find reading difficult despite this. References to this theme overall declined in relation to perceptions of 'struggling' readers. Regarding perceptions of 'good' readers (13 total occurrences) this theme is less common and refers consistently to trying hard and persevering with reading even when they found it challenging.

The difficulty of the types of material being read was also identified as a theme that was referred to more in relation to 'struggling' readers (11 total occurrences) than 'good' readers (7 total occurrences). Regarding descriptions of 'struggling' readers this referred to being able to read or choosing to read easier, or 'thinner' books. In contrast, when referring to 'good' readers this was about being able to read more challenging books regardless of reading level and this included 'thicker' books. References to types of material peaked at T2 in descriptions of both 'struggling' and 'good' readers.

Finally, the identified theme of independence was also much more commonly referred to in relation to 'struggling' readers (14 total occurrences) compared to 'good' readers (3 total occurrences). The emphasis within perceptions of 'struggling' readers was on a lack of independence for reading and a need for support from teachers or other adults in school. Conversely, although very rarely mentioned at all in reference to 'good' readers, when it was identified this suggested a high level of independence and no need for support from adults.

5.2.1.2 Summary Perceptions of 'Good' and 'Struggling' Readers - Online Survey Questions

Based upon the descriptions of 'good' readers in the qualitative online survey questions, during primary-secondary transitions:

- Accurate and fluent readers who do not make many mistakes.
- They understand what they read and have a good vocabulary.

- High attainers across the curriculum, who can read out loud well in front of others.
- They feel confident, try hard and persist with reading even when it is difficult.
- They enjoy reading and are intrinsically motivated.
- They can read both a lot and read quickly and they can access challenging reading material without support from adults.

Based upon the descriptions of 'struggling' readers in the qualitative online survey questions, during primary-secondary transitions:

- Readers who lack accuracy in their reading, struggle to decode words, make errors or are generally perceived to be unable to read 'properly.'
- They lack fluency and understanding of what they read and have a limited vocabulary.
- They find school more challenging generally and find reading out loud in front of others very difficult.
- They do not feel confident or enjoy reading and they read slowly and not very much.
- They read easier books and need a lot of support from adults.
- Some feel that they try hard but still find it difficult and others feel that they do not try hard or want to improve.

In summary it is important to note the key discrepancies between perceptions of 'good' and 'struggling' readers and any identified changes during primary-secondary transitions. It was found that accuracy was referred to more in relation to 'struggling' readers (103 total occurrences) and in comparison, to understanding (65 total occurrences), which was associated more with 'good' readers (80 total occurrences), particularly at T1. In perceptions of 'good' readers the theme of accuracy increased in frequency of occurrence during primary-secondary school transitions. Alongside this increase, references to understanding factors in relation to perceptions of 'good' readers declined sharply immediately post-transfer at T2.

The biggest discrepancies found between the perceptions of 'good' and 'struggling' readers in terms of the total frequency of occurrences were regarding being able to use reading (difference of 21 occurrences) and performance aspects (difference of 15 occurrences) which were both referred to more in relation to perceptions of 'good' readers. Reference to enjoyment factors declined in both descriptions of 'good' and 'struggling' readers over transitions. Regarding perceptions of 'good' readers specifically references to confidence factors increased and references of being able to use reading and the amount read declined. There was a gradual increase in reference to performance aspects in relation to 'struggling' readers and references to effort decreased during primary-secondary school transitions.

In the next section, the visual representations of 'good' and 'struggling' readers created during the focus group interviews at T1 and the dialogue around the participants' perceptions of 'good' and 'struggling' readers at T2 and 3, are presented. These data also contribute towards answering RQ3.

5.2.2 RQ3 - Focus Groups

There were five focus groups all together, made up of 23 participants in total. The focus group interviews took place with each group at all three time points with the same participants (with some variability due to unavoidable participant absence). The five groups originated from three different primary schools and were formed at T1 with volunteer participants who were all transferring to the same secondary school. The size of the focus groups ranged from between three and six members in total. The focus group interviews in part focused upon participatory activities and discussion to explore perceptions of 'good' and 'struggling' reader identity labels and therefore also contribute towards exploring RQ3.

To do this, at T1 the focus groups collaboratively created 'role on the wall' figures (Goode and Neelands, 2000). This meant that participants drew around another member of their group and added words or phrases to describe their perceptions of

'good' and 'struggling' readers both internally (thoughts, feelings and motivations) and externally (actions and behaviours). At T2 the focus groups were then given packs that contained colour photographs of their original figures. They discussed any changes they wanted to make which included removing, amending, or adding words or phrases, by writing directly onto their packs using a different coloured pen. At T3 the focus groups again had packs that showed colour photographs of their original figures from T1 and their amended figures from T2. They then reflected upon and discussed their figures for the last time and recorded any changes on their packs to show developments in their thinking.

The audio of all dialogue at T2 and T3 were recorded and transcribed. The dialogue that took place surrounding these decisions by the participants were systematically categorised alongside the changes made before being coded firstly using a codebook thematic analysis approach (Braun and Clarke, 2021) using the codebook developed in response to the qualitative survey answers as an initial organising framework (Appendix L). For ease of reference, these topics were: ability to use reading, accuracy, amount read, confidence, types of material, effort, enjoyment, independence, reading performance, speed, understanding and wider attainment. As part of these discussions, where there were clear changes in a focus group's perceptions, they were also asked why they thought their thinking had changed. To give a fuller understanding of the reasoning behind their decisions and any changes in their thinking regarding their perceptions of 'good' and 'struggling' readers during primary-secondary school transitions a reflexive thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2021) then took place iteratively and inductively to construct new themes related to RQ3 specifically. These were: basic emotions (Tracy and Robins, 2004) and personal attributes, public self-consciousness; identity formation; belonging and new environment (fully defined in Appendix M).

5.2.2.1 Perceptions of 'Good' and 'Struggling' Readers - Focus Groups 'Role on the Wall' at Time 1

It is important to firstly consider the frequency of the attributes that participants perceived to be related to 'good' and 'struggling' readers on their 'role on the wall'

figures at T1. To be clear, regarding both the existing themes within this context and the newly identified themes in response to this part of the dataset, two sample quotes are provided for each theme related to both ‘good’ and ‘struggling’ readers (where there are at least two responses). This is to illustrate the meanings of the themes, to remain faithful to the voices of the participants and to ensure their views are represented reliably. The frequencies and sample quotes from the ‘role on the wall’ figures at T1 are presented for both ‘good’ and ‘struggling’ readers in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4 Attributes of 'Good' and 'Struggling' Readers at Time 1 with Sample Quotes from Role on the Wall Figures

Theme	Frequency 'good' readers	Sample quotes for 'good' readers	Frequency 'struggling' readers	Sample quotes for 'struggling' readers
Basic emotions and personal attributes	24	Happy	17	Depressed
		Good imagination		Quiet
Public self-consciousness	1	Proud	17	Feeling they're going to get laughed at
				Scared to be myself
Confidence	9	Confident	3	Feeling they're not good enough
		Good about themselves		Unconfident
Understanding	5	I understand the meanings and lessons of books	5	Can't explain
		Understanding of the text		They don't understand
Wider attainment	7	Smart	2	Struggles to spell and read
		Intelligent		Struggles with spellings
Independence	3	I don't normally need help with reading	5	Need help most of the time
		Independent		Need support
Effort	1	Effort	5	Searching on YouTube and Google 'How to read'
				Not a hard worker
Belonging	2	Feeling like they're part of something	3	Not included
		A lot of friends		Different
Enjoyment	4	I don't always understand the books but I enjoy them	1	Enjoy books but find it hard to find the lessons of books
		Motivation		

Accuracy	0		3	They cannot sound out words
				Getting something wrong
Reading Performance	1	Loves reading out loud	2	Nervous to read aloud
				Scared to read aloud
Ability to use reading	2	They use something from the book and use it in their writing	0	
		Use reading		

On some occasions an attribute was counted as occurring in more than one theme, for example: 'Enjoy books but find it hard to find the lessons of books' was counted as being relevant to both the themes of enjoyment and understanding.

At T1 the 'role on the wall' activity prompted participants to reflect on the emotional states of 'good' and 'struggling' readers which led to the identification of the basic emotions and personal attributes, and public self-consciousness themes. Basic emotions and personal attributes were commonly referred to related to both 'good' (24 total occurrences) and 'struggling' readers (17 total occurrences). Although I acknowledge that emotions are multidimensional and that it is an oversimplification to categorise them as 'positive' or 'negative' (Solomon and Stone, 2002), for the purposes of this analysis emotions and personal attributes are referred to as being broadly 'positive' or 'negative' to support the initial interpretation of the data. For 'good' readers these were in the vast majority 'positive' emotions, such as happiness and joy and 'positive' attributes such as having a 'good imagination' or being 'kind' or 'talented'. There was one isolated reference to a 'negative' state of being 'depressed' and another that explained 'reads so doesn't get depressed.' In stark contrast when referring to 'struggling' readers the emotions and personal attributes were predominantly 'negative'. For example, 'miserable', 'angry' and 'depressed.' Similarly, there were also two isolated references to happiness in relation to 'struggling' readers.

Considering the identified theme of public self-consciousness there is a stark contrast between the 'role on the wall' figures of 'good' readers where this theme only occurred once and in a positive way, that is, 'proud', compared to 'struggling' readers where there were 17 references to 'negative' and 'self-conscious' emotions at T1. Regarding perceptions of 'struggling readers', these were all related to embarrassment or fear concerned with the public judgement or perceptions of others.

The newly identified theme of belonging occurred twice in relation to perceptions of 'good' readers, where having friends and being part of the group were emphasised. In relation to perceptions of 'struggling' readers (3 total occurrences) feelings of being different or excluded were highlighted.

At T1 perceptions identified from the 'role on the wall' figures in relation to confidence, understanding, wider attainment, independence, being able to use reading, reading performance, effort and enjoyment reinforced what was found from the analysis of the qualitative online survey questions in relation to perceptions of 'good' and 'struggling' readers. In this, 'good' readers were perceived as being confident readers who feel good about themselves, understand what they read, are perceived as being 'smart' and not needing much help from others. As well as that they try hard, can use what they read, enjoy reading and feel more confident reading out loud. In contrast, and in line with the findings from the qualitative online survey questions, 'struggling' readers were perceived as lacking in confidence and not feeling like they are 'good enough'. They are mostly perceived as not understanding what they read or being 'confused,' they have difficulties in wider curriculum areas, need lots of help and fear reading out loud in front of others.

Likewise, there were fewer references to enjoyment related to 'struggling' readers (1 total occurrence) compared to 'good' readers (4 total occurrences). However, in this case, this isolated reference was not related to 'struggling' readers not enjoying reading; instead, this occurrence was related to them enjoying reading despite not being able to understand what they read. The theme of effort was again more prevalent regarding 'struggling' readers (5 total occurrences) in comparison to 'good' readers (1 total occurrence). Correspondingly, there were mixed views on whether 'struggling' readers were perceived to try hard but still find reading difficult, or whether they were considered to not put the effort in, in the first instance.

It is noteworthy that factors related to the theme of accuracy, such as being able to decode the words correctly were not referred to as much on the 'role on the wall' figures at T1 with no occurrences in relation to 'good' readers and only 3 total occurrences regarding 'struggling' readers, contrary to the findings from the qualitative survey questions where accuracy was the most prevalent theme.

5.2.2.2 Summary Perceptions of 'Good' and 'Struggling' Readers - 'Role on the Wall' Focus Groups at Time 1

At T1, the perceptions of the pupil participants, as represented by their collaborative 'role on the wall' figures, supported the findings from the qualitative online survey questions in relation to 'good' and 'struggling' readers. Although elements related to the theme of accuracy were not as evident in this part of the dataset, where reference to accuracy factors were present, they remained related to perceptions of 'struggling' readers. In addition, further factors were identified to our understanding of how pupils perceive 'good' and 'struggling' reader identity labels. These were related to the themes of basic emotions and personal attributes, public self-consciousness and belonging. For complete clarity, this new thinking has been summarised below.

New thinking added to pupil perceptions of 'good' readers, considering the 'role on the wall' figures at T1:

- They are happy and positive, have friends and feel proud and accepted at school.

New thinking added to pupil perceptions of 'struggling' readers, considering the 'role on the wall' figures at T1:

- They are sad and feel angry, embarrassed, self-conscious, and judged by others. They do not feel included at school.

The newly added attributes are only based upon the 'role on the wall' figures completed in the focus groups at T1. Therefore, although they add to the understanding of pupils' perceptions at the end of primary school, they do not reflect any changes in perceptions after the move from primary to secondary school. It is therefore imperative to explore how the participants' perceptions of 'good' and 'struggling' readers developed over the project at T2 and T3 in terms of the changes the focus groups decided to make to their 'role on the wall' figures and the reasoning they shared for making these changes in the focus group dialogue.

5.2.2.3 Perceptions of 'Good' and 'Struggling' Readers - Focus Groups Time 2 and Time 3

At T2 (first term of Y7) the focus groups were given packs with colour photographs of their original 'role on the wall' figures. They then reflected upon and discussed their original figures and agreed collectively on any changes. This included removing, amending, or adding words or phrases by writing directly onto their packs using different colours. At T3 (final term of Y7) the focus groups were again given packs containing colour photographs of both their original 'role on the wall' figures and their amended figures from T2. They then discussed their figures for the final time at T3, and any changes were again recorded on their T2 figures to illustrate the development in their perceptions of 'good' and 'struggling' reader identity labels over time.

To be able to answer RQ3 fully, it is pertinent to consider the changes the focus groups decided to make to their 'role on the wall' figures at T2 and then T3 alongside the reasoning given for these changes made in relation to the overarching identified themes (Appendix L and M). All the changes they decided to make fall into one of three categories these are: additions (agreement to add a new attribute to their 'role on the wall' figure), removals (agreement to remove an attribute from their 'role on the wall' figure), or amendments (agreement to amend existing attributes). These changes are summarised firstly for perceptions of 'good' readers in Table 5.5. Where amendments have been made the change is shown in bold. In each case the themes are presented in order of prevalence at T1, in some cases where new themes emerged later in the process, these are presented at the end. One example is given to illustrate each type of change, and a sample quote is provided to summarise the reasoning for these changes from the focus group dialogue.

Table 5.5 Changes made to 'role on the wall' figures representing 'good' readers and reasoning for those changes

Theme	Frequency T1	Changes made T2 (example change) and sample quote of reasoning.	Changes made T3 (example change) and sample quote of reasoning.
Basic emotions and personal attributes	24	Added 1 (passionate). Removed 1 (depressed) and amended 1 (feeling over the moon, became feeling over the moon **sometimes**).	Added 1 (creative). Removed 3 (kind).
		I think depressed is wrong. Because I think if you're reading, you'd be kind of happy unless you're forced to obviously but, and if you're a good reader, you wouldn't be very depressed, would you?	Like you can be a good reader, but you don't always have to be nice to people.
Confidence	9	Added 2 (believe in themselves). Amended 2 (confident became confident **within yourself).**	Added 1 (don't have to act out in confidence they can be confident inside). Removed 1 (gives more contributions to lessons).
		We should cross out the confidence on the outside because you should be confident in the inside like with yourself and out, but on the outside, you might not like to read in front of other people.	Yeah, because now because like of all the people around us we're just trying to like change ourselves to fit in. Because you're in a different environment
Wider attainment	7	Added 2 (intelligence).	Removed 1 (good at spelling)
		I also think we should add 'intelligence' on the outside.	Because like just because they can understand and read the word doesn't mean that they can like actually write it down and spell it out.
Understanding	5	Added 1 (can write a short summary to show understanding).	No change
		Yeah, because then you basically get the whole point of the book.	
Enjoyment	4	Added 1 (interested). Amended 1 (loves reading ~~**out loud**~~ became just loves reading).	No change
		…put in 'interested' on because when a good reader is reading a book, they should be interested in it, and	

		when they're interested in it, they get emotions, different kinds of emotions…	
Independence	3	Added 1 (could help others if they needed help).	Added 1 (independence)
		Could help others', so if someone needed help, they could help them.	Because in primary, you rely on like a lot on your teachers and like your peers, but in secondary school it's more of being independent and doing your own thing.
Belonging	2	No change	No change
Ability to use reading	2		
		Added 2 (use knowledge).	No change
		They can use the knowledge that they use that they get from books.	
Effort	1	No change	No change
Public self-consciousness	1	Added 1 (overcame anxiety). Amended 1 (or shy added to confident **or shy**).	No change
		…but you can just be the shy like you don't want to read in front of lots of people.	
Reading Performance	1	Amended 1 (loves reading ~~**out loud**~~ became just loves reading).	No change
		…you don't have to read out loud to be a good one.	
Identity formation	0	Added 1 (Be your own shepherd, don't be a sheep).	No change
		They might, they might, just a good reader might just continue reading, and they won't care about other	

		people's opinions. I think they'll be their own shepherd instead of following the other sheep.	

5.2.2.4 Perceptions of 'good' readers - what changed during transitions?

To get a comprehensive understanding of this part of the data and to remain faithful to the voices of the participants, it is important to consider the dialogue that surrounded the changes made more fully, alongside the summary provided in Table 5.5. To demonstrate this further example quotes from T2 and T3 are provided as needed alongside the participant's pseudonym. The pseudonyms were chosen by the participants themselves and were used throughout the focus groups at all three time points. First considering the theme of basic emotions and personal attributes, what was seen across the five focus groups over T2 and T3 was decisions made mainly around removing some references to basic emotions and personal attributes that they generally did not feel were directly relevant to being a reader categorically. Contrary to this one focus group added more personal attributes, both passionate and creative, however this was where they made links between these personal traits and being a 'good' reader specifically. At T3 Princess Peach explained:

> If you keep reading like different things, like fantasy and horror, stuff like that you'll like imaginative, like you're imagining more things, and you'll have more ideas. (Princess Peach, T3).

As well as this, in another focus group there was lots of discussion surrounding the amendment of feeling over the moon to feeling over the moon **sometimes** in relation to their perception of 'good' readers at T2. In this case, they debated at length whether emotions more generally were relevant to their perceptions of reader identities. Some argued that for 'good' readers emotions are evoked through their reading and that this would impact upon their own emotional states. This is illustrated by the sample quotes below:

> I think a good reader is like a person like gets like really into the book and they get really emotional when something happens. (Wolfie, T2).

> I really disagree because if you take, if you want to keep 'feeling over the moon' because a good reader doesn't always feel over the moon. And it's not about emotions, it sometimes is. Sometimes people might get emotional, but not all the time. (Chocolate, T2).

Despite this, the overall dominant pattern was of removing basic emotions and personal attributes that were not perceived to be directly relevant to reading.

Considering the themes of wider attainment, understanding, enjoyment and ability to use reading they all continued to be important aspects of the participants' perceptions of 'good' readers over the three time points, and any changes made reinforced the perceptions presented at T1 and did not change over time. This consistency across transitions was stable across all five focus groups, who transferred to three different secondary school contexts.

There was, however, notable change in the perceptions of 'good' readers related to the themes of confidence, public self-consciousness, reading performance, independence and identity formation. Identity formation was identified as a theme first in one focus group's discussion at T2 in relation to perceptions of 'good' readers and led to an in-depth discussion started by Bruno who felt that a 'good' reader would:

> Be your own shepherd, instead of following the other sheep. (Bruno, T2).

The reasoning behind this change is pivotal to other changes made over the project and represents a shift in the participants' perceptions of reader identities during their primary-secondary transitions. At T2 it was within the reasoning around this change when the identified theme of new environment first occurred. This was related to how the participants reported that they felt increased pressure to fit in more with their peers at secondary school and they thought that being perceived as a 'good' reader may conflict with this. At this stage they agreed that a 'good' reader would carry on reading and stay true to themselves. This is summarised, in the sample quote below:

> That they sometimes, when you go to secondary school, you'd want to like be more like your friends so a confident reader wouldn't want to stop reading just because he's going to be more like his friends. (Viking Astrid, T2).

This relates to the reasoning this focus group gave at T2 when asked more generally why they thought their perceptions of reading have developed over their transitions so far, which is exemplified below:

> I think it's changed because we're in a different environment because we're around older the people because we used to be the oldest in primary, but now we're the youngest and then more than like the older people and the younger kids try to be like the older people because they think that they're the older people are right but sometimes they're wrong. (Bruno, T2).

This perception continued to develop over their transitions and although this group did not amend their 'role on the wall' figure at T3 to remove reference to the importance of maintaining individuality for 'good' readers, there was a clear general shift, across the focus groups, to diminish public and out loud elements of reading. This started at T2 and became increasingly evident by T3. For example, within the theme of confidence related to reading the emphasis shifted from outward displays of confidence at T2 to more internal self-belief without the need to show this publicly at T3. This is illustrated below:

> I think like also with like the confident reader and I said that they don't have to be confident on the outside. XXXX saying that like because you can be judged, you don't want to show that you're confident, but you are inside, you really are confident. (Viking Astrid, T3).

This reduction in 'out loud' confidence related to reading specifically is also apparent in relation to public self-consciousness and reading performance aspects within perceptions of 'good' readers, as summarised below:

> You could be a good reader because you can you don't have to sound out words, but you can just be shy like you don't want to read in front of lots of people. (Clever Queen, T2).

The reasoning behind these changes also highlighted the increased importance placed on independence within secondary schools compared to primary school, and how this relates to identity formation within their new environment.

> Basically, it's like, and basically in primary you could...people I think it's like people don't ask for help or there might be there might be people who actually do ask… In primary they do but in secondary, they don't… I think it's just because of trying to build independence or trying to act cool. (Purple Gang, T3).

This importance of presenting as being independent in the secondary context and how pupils linked this to identity formation was further emphasised in discussion about 'good' reader identities which showed how important the participants felt it was to not ask for help in their new environment to avoid public humiliation. This relates directly to the theme of public self-consciousness and perceptions of 'struggling' readers, who are perceived as being less independent and needing more help. This is explained in the extract below:

> But I feel like it's just because you don't want to like you don't want to admit it because it might make you seem less clever than you actually are, to say in front of everybody 'I need help.'…Say in front of everybody that you need help. Yeah, humiliating. (Clever Queen, T3).

This leads on neatly to consideration of the changes made in relation to perceptions of 'struggling' readers specifically, which are summarised in table 5.6.

Table 5.6 Changes made to 'role on the wall' figures representing 'struggling' readers and reasoning for those changes

Theme	Frequency T1	Changes made T2 (example change) and sample quote of reasoning.	Changes made T3 (example change) and sample quote of reasoning.
Basic emotions and personal attributes	17	Removed 1 (hard to imagine). Added 1 (distracted).	Removed 3 (annoyed).
		I think we should take away hard to imagine. Because even though, like some people, they might not be a reader, but they can still imagine, but like readers they like, they imagine was like more like deeper detail. Like, even if you don't read and, it doesn't mean that you can't like really imagine.	They don't have to be annoyed, just because they're struggling reader, like they could be happy but still struggle. Like in this part because like, reading might not be their strongest like subject but like in other things like maths, history, geography they might be good at that instead and they might feel like they don't need reading.
Public self-consciousness	17	Added 7 (stay hidden). Removed 1 (not proud).	Added 8. (fear of being judged). Amended 1(underlined **embarrassed** several times to show that this has become more of a factor).
		And they don't want to be noticed by other people. Because you don't want to be noticed, so like nobody notices that they're struggling to read.	I think that sometimes is also gets embarrassing when you're in front of people that you don't like, you're not friendly, so when you're struggling in class they might judge you for it, like use it against you.
Effort	5	Added 1 (Practicing in their spare time).	No change.
		I think that they should practice on the words privately. So, when they do get to, if they do think that they'll feel embarrassed if they do it in front of people they can practice privately and then they'd be able to do it when they're in front of people.	
Independence	5	Added 3 (Friends might get in trouble for helping).	Added 4 (Feels guilty for wasting class time). Removed 1 (Relying on others).

		Well probably, because like...Teachers are much stricter here. Yeah, it's just about in primary schools it's about teamwork and you know helping each other is good. But like here it's more about independence because there won't always be someone there to help you.	I think that we should cross it out and we should write like 'keeping to themselves' because I don't think if they're struggling then I don't think they'd want to talk to, like somebody about it now they're in Y7.
Understanding	5	Added 1 (Struggling to understand). Amended 1 (Can't explain to Can't explain **without pictures**).	No change
		I think 'can't explain' but you should like take that out because I feel like in books there's pictures and you might be able to explain what's happening, not reading it.	
Accuracy	3	Added 3 (Might mistakes).	Amended 1 (Sounds out words to Sounds out **tricky words**).
		Because a struggling reader might be like, for the cause of the anxiety might be because you're scared that you'll make mistakes and people will like laugh at you.	Sometimes it might be the case where they find it difficult to pronounce maybe longer words. Or like words where they don't sound the same as their spelt.
Belonging	3	Added 2 (Missing class for interventions/support groups).	No change
		I think I might disagree because like they might still feel that they don't fit in because they might keep going out for support groups, support reading groups and they might keep having to ask how to sound out words in like 'accelerated reader' lessons.	
Confidence	3		
		No change	No change

Reading Performance	2	Added 1 (anxious to read aloud).	No change
		When a person is reading in front of class like I read, I get like really warm and shy like if I say something wrong yeah, they're going to laugh at me or something.	
Wider Attainment	2	No change	Added 4 (Not being able to read might be an obstacle towards their dreams and passions).
			Not following your dreams. Not being able to like I don't know achieve stuff because you can't read. Yeah, a bit stuck.
Enjoyment	1	Added 1 (Might not like reading).	Added 1 (Not passionate about reading or dislike/avoid**).**
		They were not, they were not actually like doing reading at all, but sometimes they do, so if they had any encouragement with them then they could have probably, like a lot more and they could improve their reading.	I think a struggling reader could be someone that's not very passionate about it. Maybe they are good at other things, but just not good at reading.

5.2.2.5 Perceptions of 'struggling' readers - what changed during transitions?

To fully understand the changes summarised in Table 5.6 it is helpful consider these within the context of the dialogue that took place surrounding these decisions within the focus group discussions at T2 and T3. In line with the development in the participants' perceptions of 'good' reader identities regarding the theme of basic emotions and personal attributes, perceptions of 'struggling' readers showed the same pattern of removing reference to emotions or personal attributes (1 removed T2; 3 removed T3) that were no longer perceived to be relevant to reading. For the 'struggling' reader identity label, this in the main meant removing reference to negative emotional states such as being 'mad' whereby the explanation for making these changes related to these not necessarily being caused by being a 'struggling' reader. Within the reasoning it also emerged over the time points, that recognising that being a 'struggling' reader does not necessarily mean that they cannot succeed in other areas, such as in different curriculum subjects, or experience positive emotions or personal attributes despite their difficulties. Despite this acknowledgement, at T2 there was also the implication that these skills would still not be as strong as those of a 'good' reader. As summarised below, in relation to the removal of 'hard to imagine':

> I agree with XXXX because she's right that they can still imagine stuff, but like a confident reader can like have a stronger imagination than like a struggling reader. (Heather, T2).

As well as this at T2, in one focus group the personal attribute of 'distracted' was added in place of the basic emotion 'mad', as it was perceived as being related to learning more generally.

> I think instead of mad it should be distracted because they want to learn, but they always get distracted easily by other things in the class. (Bruno, T2).

The theme of public self-consciousness continues to be a very prevalent theme in relation to perceptions of 'struggling' readers that becomes increasingly pertinent over primary-secondary transitions. This is evident in the frequency of agreed additions to 'role on the wall' figures of 'struggling' readers at both T2 (7 added) and T3 (8 added). When considering the raw data, what is very clear is that this increase in emphasis on public self-consciousness factors in relation to 'struggling' reader identities specifically, is found consistently in the changes made and reasoning given across all five focus groups, from the three different secondary school contexts. In terms of the overall changes that were made to 'role on the wall' figures these related strongly to a fear of peer judgement, feelings of embarrassment and anxiety, and wanting to stay hidden to avoid this exposure. Analysis of the reasoning from the focus group discussions revealed significant reference to their new environment related to anxiety concerned with unknown, new peers, in particular:

> Yeah being judged. Being judged…Or scared to be judged…You don't know... You don't know that many people and you might think their personalities are a little bit mean. (Hermione, T2).

> Like passing rumours. (Cotton Candy, T2).

> Like not everyone is nice. No, new people you don't know their personalities and stuff…Exactly, you don't know their thing. (Hermione, T2).

The reasoning developed, in relation to these factors, in terms of the perceived impact that this may have on the 'struggling' readers' ability to make new friends within their new setting, which motivates them to keep themselves hidden more widely or give in to peer pressure to avoid this judgement. This is illustrated below:

> I think some people try to blend in because they might see like some people messing about on the corridors and if they don't give in to peer pressure and then the all the all of the other students, they will think that

> ‘aw he's scared’ and they will do that or something. Because they might not make that much new friends. (Bruno, T2).

In addition to this broader impact on keeping hidden, it was also emphasised more concerningly that ‘struggling’ readers should keep their reading difficulties hidden from peers to avoid perceived public judgement:

> And they don't want to be noticed by other people… Because you don't want to be noticed, so like nobody notices that they’re struggling to read. (Clever Queen, T2).

These discussions surrounding public self-consciousness factors in relation to the negative impact upon friendships and wanting to remain hidden within the school environment clearly overlap with the theme of belonging, even when changes related to belonging specifically were not made to the ‘struggling’ reader ‘role on the wall’ figures. This is as well as the two additions that were distinctly relevant to the theme of belonging at T2, which highlighted the fact that one focus group noted that feelings of belonging would be impacted for ‘struggling’ readers in the secondary school context, if they were taken out of main lessons regularly to access reading intervention, or because of how their reading difficulties may make them feel like they stand out:

> They might still feel that they don’t fit in because they might keep going out for support groups, support reading groups and they might keep having to ask how to sound out words in like ‘accelerated reader’ lessons. (Anaya, T2).

It is also noteworthy that although there were no changes recorded to the ‘struggling’ reader ‘role on the wall’ figures categorically related to the theme of confidence at either T2 or T3, that the implication is that public self-consciousness factors such as anxiety and embarrassment for ‘struggling’ readers would likely impact upon their confidence and wellbeing more widely.

As well as this, the theme of public self-consciousness in relation to perceptions of 'struggling' reader identities also featured heavily throughout the reasoning given for other changes that the focus groups decided to make to their figures over the time points that were categorised within the identified themes of effort, reading performance, independence, and some elements of reading accuracy. Regarding the theme of effort, there was only one addition at T2, which related specifically to working hard to improve reading skills to avoid the embarrassment of being judged by peers for struggling to read. However, in contrast to this, public self-consciousness factors were discussed as being central to identity formation within their new environment and it was felt that this may have the opposite effect on the 'struggling' reader's efforts in terms of trying to improve their reading skills, even though this was not recorded as a change to their 'role on the wall' figure. As illustrated in the sample quote below:

> I think instead of always trying to read, they want to read but they struggle with it a lot and they think that if they if they try and people see that they're trying hard, I think they think that people will make fun of them because they might call them a 'nerd' just for trying hard in one subject or trying to improve their reading. (Bruno, T2).

Regarding independence factors, there was an evidenced increase in focus in relation to perceptions of 'struggling' readers at T2 (3 added) and T3 (4 added). Independence factors were discussed consistently across the five focus groups from the three different secondary school contexts. There was a noted shift in emphasis related to public self-consciousness to include a feeling of guilt for needing extra help within the secondary context:

> You might feel guilty because like for wasting the class's time, thinking that you were reading for too long. (Lush, T3).

Some of the reasoning surrounding these decisions also related this to the idea of 'struggling' readers wanting to remain hidden to avoid being exposed for having difficulty:

> They wouldn't want to disturb anyone and make themselves feel like they're there. So, then people like how we don't hear stay hidden they don't want like people to know that they don't understand. (Princess Peach, T3).

This is consistent with what was found in discussion around the importance of independence factors in secondary schools and not asking for help publicly, related to 'good' readers. One focus group felt that this would be a problem for 'struggling' readers in all secondary schools:

> I think it's like just the children and how like they act and stuff like. I think it's probably a problem across like all the schools and like in the country like a lot of people might feel like this from different schools, not just our school. (Princess Peach, T3).

As well as this fear of public exposure, within the context of increased importance being placed on being independent in the secondary context, there was also an increase in the value that the participants placed on independence factors at this age and wanting to be able to take ownership and solve problems for themselves.

> But maybe they wouldn't ask for help because they want to try and fix this problem like themselves…They want to be independent. (Viking Astrid, T3).

The participants reasoned that why they perceived that 'struggling' readers may be finding their new environment challenging may be because of finding it difficult to adapt to different styles of teaching or difficulties fitting in. They related this to increased pressure on the 'struggling' reader from different adults in their lives, including their parents, who may have different expectations of them that they are struggling to meet independently within their new environment.

> Because you might, people might be like under stress because their parents expect them to do really well because of what they did in primary. But they might not fit in and understand how the new teachers teach, like their style of teaching. Because they're used to their learning in primary, not like in a big class, sharing it with different people. (Bruno, T3).

The participants also reflected upon the potential challenges that 'struggling' readers may face in their new environment in terms of being put on the wrong reading level in Y7 which may impact upon their ability to succeed with independence.

> What happens if a person is struggling because they're not reading the right type of book, like they could be reading a little bit higher for their level, they should start a little bit lower and then build them up and build them up until they get to where they're comfortable. (Nova, T3).

In relation to reading performance specifically where although there was only one addition made to 'struggling' reader 'role on the wall' figures at T2, this was also discussed regularly within reasoning for other changes made related to public self-consciousness where 'out loud' elements of reading in public and the associated feelings of embarrassment in front of peers were emphasised, as summarised below:

> Speaking aloud in class, like when you get to when you get to upper years you start to read aloud more so you so you get more embarrassed if you can't read properly and the other students can. (Lush, T3).

Reading performance was also discussed as being integral to identity formation within the new school in relation to the perceived fear of being for judged in relation to 'struggling' reader identities, which also is perceived to impact upon friendships.

> Yeah, I think it's like the fear that people might not look at you like how you want them to. They might feel like they're going to think that they're not

> clever or they don't want to be their friend or stuff like that. (Princess Peach, T3).

In addition, this idea of avoiding performance aspects of reading, similar to what was found in relation to perceptions of 'good' readers over the time points, for 'struggling' readers specifically was also explained within the context of their new environment and emphasised how the participants perceived that this reduction in 'out loud' elements of reading to now be necessary. These discussions were also related to independence factors in the secondary context and how this impacts upon the support provided for those that are 'struggling'. The sample quote below, from one participant, describes how they felt the primary model allowed for a more supportive environment, in contrast to the secondary model where they felt that it was more challenging on a logistical level for school staff to know the pupils well enough to be able to make adaptations to support individuals where needed.

> I think in primary when we thought that reading out loud is good, because everybody we didn't really understand properly, like how we do now. But the teachers like they helped the children more in primary because there's like just one class and one teacher. But if you're looking in secondary, everybody's doing their own thing, there's lots of people, and there's only a few teachers. And like there's lots of people that keep going like different classes and stuff like that, so they get less time to like really look at a person and think about like how they are. (Princess Peach, T3).

There were also some key themes that continued to be important for perceptions of 'struggling' readers over T2 and T3 that strengthened but did not change in emphasis or the reasoning given, that is for understanding, enjoyment, and some elements of reading accuracy. For example, the theme of enjoyment where there were additions agreed T2 (1 added) and T3 (1 added) that supported the idea that the participants perceived 'struggling' readers as pupils who do not like reading and therefore are not motivated to read, because of the reading difficulties they experience.

Regarding the themes of understanding (T2, 1 added and 1 amended) and accuracy (T2, 3 added and T3, 1 amended) it is interesting to consider the amendments made, which in both cases acknowledged what the 'struggling' reader can do rather than just focusing upon the difficulties they are perceived to experience. For instance, considering the theme of reading accuracy whereby 'Sounds out words' was amended to 'Sounds out **tricky words'**. This was because they felt that 'struggling' readers only need to 'sound out' longer or more complex words to decode them, rather than all words. Also, when considering the reasoning behind the additions relevant to the theme of accuracy, there was further evidence of the increased impact of public self-consciousness factors. It was emphasised that there is increased anxiety and pressure associated with making reading errors in the new school environment as it is perceived that there is a risk of being laughed at.

There was also a notable change highlighted at T3 in terms of an increase in additions relevant to the theme of wider attainment (4 added) concerning 'struggling' reader identity labels. These changes reflected upon the impact for the 'struggling' reader on their future life aspirations and examination performance. The reasoning given reaffirms the increased emphasis on independence factors and high-stakes attainment in the secondary context, which accentuates further the increased anxiety experienced by 'struggling' readers and the impact that this can have on friendships and their identity formation within their new environment. This is exemplified in the exchange below:

> Should we write feeling pressured by teachers and work? (Anaya, T3).
>
> Or their friends might get embarrassed for having kind of a dumb friend. (Nova, T3).
>
> Shall I write might feel pressured by teachers? (Anaya, T3).
>
> I mean like some just people in general… (Nova, T3).
>
> And it's one step closer to GCSE so... (Anaya, T3).

At T3, there was a general feeling that their concerns around public self-consciousness and the impact of this on their perceptions around reading would decrease as they adapted to their school environment further, which emphasises that they recognised that their adjustments to their new environment were ongoing:

> When you're new in the school like everybody is older than you like from Year 7… But once you're like going up the years and like getting to Year 11 then you'll probably feel like a lot more confident reading (Princess Peach, T3).

It was explained that the feelings of anxiety related to reading had faded over Y7, but that those feelings remained at the end of this project:

> It does drop, but it's like always going to be there. Like when you're first here it's really high, it does go lower, but it's always there" (Clever Queen, T3).

It is important to summarise the key changes made to both 'good' and 'struggling' reader figures and the reasoning given for those changes, so that RQ3 can be answered comprehensively.

5.2.3 Summary of Changes to Perceptions of 'Good' and 'Struggling' Readers at Time 2 and Time 3

Changes to pupil perceptions of 'good' readers considering the focus group data at T2 and T3:

- They are not necessarily always happy and kind, but they are passionate about reading and reading a lot makes them more creative.
- At T2 it was felt that 'good' readers would carry on reading and making contributions to lessons and being true to themselves even when this conflicted with fitting in with friends or new peers.

- By T3 it was agreed that 'good' readers are confident on the inside rather than outwardly to avoid judgement from others in their new environment. They can also be shy.
- Reading performance is not important, you can still be a 'good' reader and not read aloud in front of others or make contributions to lessons.
- They do not ask for help but can help others. They are seen to be independent and do not rely on other people.

Changes to pupil perceptions of 'struggling' readers considering focus group data at T2 and T3:

- They are not necessarily always sad and angry. They only make mistakes with tricky words and would only find it hard to understand without pictures. They do not like reading, but they can be good at other subjects and enjoy other things.
- They want to remain hidden; they feel even more embarrassed, anxious, and afraid of being judged by peers in their new environment. They fear making mistakes as they do not want to be laughed at.
- They need to practice reading in private to avoid embarrassment and so they are not seen to be trying.
- They avoid asking for help and keep their difficulties hidden so they do not get others into trouble for helping them or feel guilty for wasting class time. They want to solve their own problems and be independent.
- They might not feel like they fit in if they miss class for interventions regularly.
- They avoid reading publicly so others do not think they are not clever or see them in a way they would not like to be seen.
- Their reading difficulties mean that they will not be able to follow their dreams and will be more anxious about GCSE examinations.

The biggest shift in the participants' thinking about reader identities over the three time points during their primary-secondary transitions is related to the theme of public

self-consciousness. This impacted upon perceptions of 'struggling' readers specifically and upon thinking around other key themes in relation to perceptions of both 'good' and 'struggling' reader identity labels. The theme of public-self-consciousness was evident in perceptions of 'struggling' readers at T1, but this increased markedly at T2 and then again at T3. Public self-consciousness factors impacted upon changes seen in perceptions around the themes of confidence, effort, independence, reading performance and some elements of reading accuracy. These changes were justified within the wider context of identity formation within their new school environment. It is important to note that the participants recognised their ongoing adaptation to their new environment and felt that the emphasis on public self-consciousness factors would reduce over time.

When the participants reflected upon why their thinking had changed over this time, they shared that they thought the changes in their thinking were a result of adaptations to their new environment and the impact this had on their identity formation and ability to make friends. They highlighted the challenges of being part of a new peer group made up of people they do not know and might not like. It was explained that being the youngest in school again, in contrast to in primary school and therefore being around older pupils has impacted upon their thoughts about reader identities and the resultant changes they decided to make. It was also noted that being in an environment with more pupils and different classes with different teachers means that it can be more difficult for teachers to know the pupils and how they need to be supported and that pupils may find it hard to adapt to varying teaching styles or be put on a reading level that was too challenging, which may impact on their ability to succeed. They also reflected more widely upon how they thought that wanting to hide reading difficulties from peers would be a national issue across all schools for pupils of their age and not school specific.

In the next section the focus group data to answer RQ4 is presented.

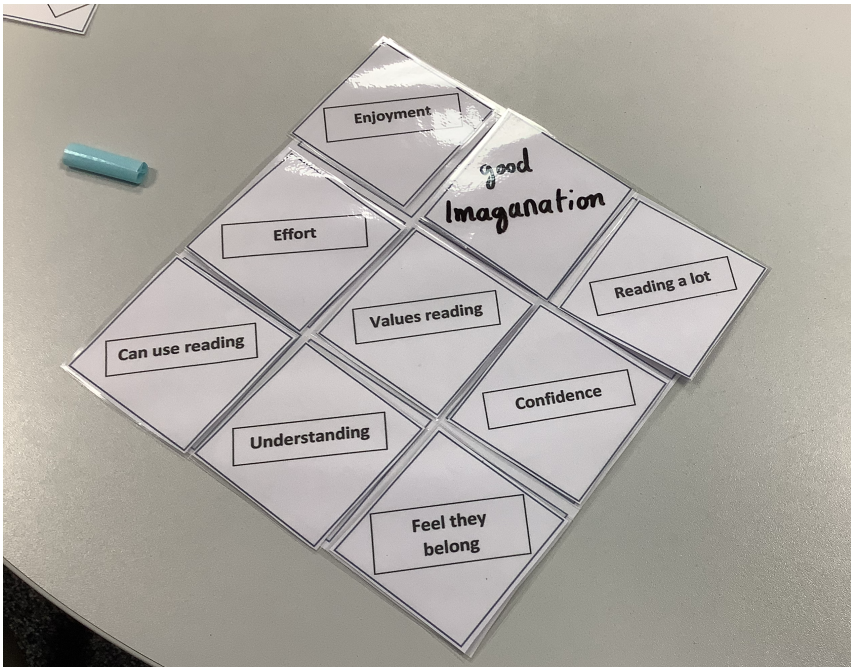
5.3 RQ4 - Focus Groups - What did pupils think was most important to be a 'successful' reader during primary-secondary transitions?

The focus group interviews also included participatory activities and discussion to explore what the participants felt was most important to be a 'successful' reader at the three time points during their primary-secondary school transitions. This was to answer RQ4, that is:

RQ4) What do pupils think is most important to be a 'successful' reader and how does this change during primary-secondary transitions?

The tool used at each time point was a diamond 9 ranking activity (Clark, 2012; Goodall and MacKenzie, 2019). The participants were asked to collaboratively answer the question, 'What is most important to be a successful reader?' and used diamond 9 to rank attributes of 'successful' reading from most to least important. The 12 attributes of 'successful' reading the participants were asked to sort from most to least important were: accuracy, can use reading, confidence, effort, enjoyment, feel they belong, performance, reading a lot, speed, types of material, understanding and values reading. Participants also had access to blank diamonds, so they had the flexibility to include anything else that they felt was important. Since only nine diamonds can fit on the completed diamond this meant that they had to prioritise which attributes of 'successful' reading needed to be on the diamond and which were not included at all. For clarity, a photograph of Focus Group One's completed diamond 9 ranking at T1 (final term of Y6) is shown in Figure 5.1. The focus group agreed collectively that 'good imagination' was also important to be a 'successful' reader and they therefore included this on their diamond. In this case, they had decided that accuracy, performance, speed, and types of material were not included on the diamond.

Figure 5.1- Example of Completed Diamond 9 Ranking at Time 1



At T2 (first term of Y7) all the focus groups were given packs that contained colour photographs of their original diamonds, which they then discussed and decided upon any changes that they wanted to make. At T3 (final term of Y7) the focus groups again had packs that showed colour photographs of their original diamonds from T1 and their amended diamonds from T2. They then reflected upon and discussed their ranking for the last time at T3, and their final diamonds were photographed to show any developments in their thinking. Participants had access to the actual diamonds at each time point to support their discussions and allow them 're-make' their diamonds as they discussed and agreed upon any changes that needed to be made.

Although it is important to note that it is emphasised that it is the dialogue that takes place surrounding the decision making that is important rather than the actual ranked positions (Clark, 2012). To gain an initial overview of this data the ranked positions of the different attributes of 'successful' reading were scored, with higher scores given to reflect how important the participants ranked them for being a 'successful' reader. A score of 5 was counted for attributes ranked in the highest position at the top of the diamond; a score of 4 was given for attributes ranked in the second row; a score of 3 for the attributes in middle/third row; a score of 2 for attributes in the fourth row and a score of 1 for attributes in the fifth row at the bottom of the diamond. The attributes

that the focus groups chose to leave off the diamond each time were given a score of 0. The overall scores for each of the attributes of 'successful' reading ranked at each time point are presented in Table 5.7. The scores are presented from highest to lowest based upon their total scores over the three time points.

Table 5.7- Total Scores for Attributes of 'Successful' Reading from Diamond 9 Ranking at Three Time Points

Attributes	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Total
Understanding	20	23	21	64
Enjoyment	22	20	21	63
Confidence	14	15	15	44
Effort	13	14	17	44
Values Reading	12	12	10	34
Can use reading	11	11	11	33
Accuracy	11	10	11	32
Performance	7	9	9	25
Feel they belong	10	6	7	23
Reads a lot	8	6	2	16
Types of material	2	5	5	12
Good imagination	4	4	4	12
Speed	1	0	3	4

Understanding and enjoyment were consistently ranked as the most important factors for being a 'successful' reader during primary-secondary transitions. Post-transfer at T2 (first term of Y7) there were some fluctuations, and the value placed on understanding increased whilst the value placed on enjoyment decreased. However, by T3 (final term of Y7) both scores had stabilised again.

Aside from the two highest ranking factors, some of the other factors were also ranked broadly consistently by the participants and therefore did not change in their overall perceived importance over the time points. These were: can use reading, accuracy and good imagination. It is important to note that the overall scores do not reflect movement between groups, for example if one group increased the value of an attribute, and another group reduced it at the same time point. Some of the attributes of being a 'successful' reader increased in their perceived importance. These were effort, performance, types of material and speed. Conversely other attributes declined in their perceived importance over the three time points. Values reading declined slightly and both feel they belong and reads a lot declined more sharply.

In this case, the diamond 9 tool was used to elicit the participants' perspectives (Niemi et al., 2018) and facilitate discussions around the reasoning for their views. Therefore, the dialogue that took place between the participants when completing this activity was recorded at all three time points and transcribed. First, the codebook developed through analysis of the qualitative online survey questions (Appendix L) was used as an organising framework. Then the themes identified from the focus group data related to RQ3 (Appendix M) were also used to support the interpretation of the focus group dialogue that took place whilst the groups were carrying out the diamond 9 ranking activity at all three time points. This was particularly crucial for exploring further why the participants felt that some attributes were more important than others to be a 'successful' reader and to understand changes in their thinking that occurred over the three time points during their primary-secondary transitions. Again, an inductive and iterative approach was taken to the analysis to ensure that the participants reasoning was explored fully and this led to one new theme being identified from the dialogue surrounding the diamond 9 ranking decisions, that is reading imaginatively (Appendix N).

To understand the reasoning behind the focus groups diamond 9 ranking across the primary-secondary transitions it is important to first understand the reasoning for their initial decisions at T1, followed by their reasoning for any changes at T2 and T3.

5.3.1 Reasoning behind Diamond 9 Ranking Decisions at Time 1

It is important to first establish the reasoning for the focus group's collaborative ranking at T1 before exploring more fully any changes in the participants' perceptions of what is most important to be a 'successful' reader over the three time points. The dialogue which provides the reasoning was all coded using the codebooks developed in response to the wider data set (Appendices L and M). As the themes (Appendix L) and the names of the attributes that were ranked using the diamond 9 activity overlap, often the codes identified within the dialogue were related to the attribute itself, for example when discussing enjoyment, the majority of the reasoning related to the topic of enjoyment as defined in the codebook. At other times the discussion related to

other attributes of ‘successful’ reading and their corresponding codes, for example when discussing enjoyment this was also related to other attributes, for instance, how enjoying reading can also positively impact upon your wider attainment.

The themes identified are presented alongside a summary of the reasoning and sample quotes from the participants to illustrate key themes and ensure fidelity to the voices of the participants for each attribute in order of the total cumulative scores (from highest to lowest) in Table 5.8. The only exception to this is in the cases of the attributes of confidence and performance, where the reasoning behind the ranking decisions for these two factors was so closely related it is clearer and more economical to present these factors together.

Table 5.8 Summary of Reasoning, Identified Themes and Sample Quotes for Diamond 9 Ranking at Time 1

Attributes	Summary of participants' reasoning for ranking at T1 **(Identified theme, frequency).**	Sample Quotes
Understanding	• The participants explained that you need to understand what you read to be a 'successful' reader as otherwise you will not know the meaning of the text and the words **(Understanding, 11)**. • They explained that understanding also positively impacts upon being able to use what you read **(Ability to use reading, 3)**, for example to make up your own stories and upon the confidence **(Confidence, 1)** needed to read out loud in front of others (**Reading performance, 1)**. • Understanding was also related to accuracy as it was explained that you need to decode the words accurately to be able to understand them **(Accuracy, 1)**. • Some felt that focusing on understanding when reading can diminish the enjoyment **(Enjoyment, 1)** that you can get from reading it with your own interpretation **(Reading imaginatively, 1).**	I think that 'understanding' should be in the top spot, because if you don't understand what you're reading, you're just seeing a bunch of words that don't make sense. But to understand it, it could make it a bit boring for people, because they want to find out different parts of the stories that are. Because if they understand it in a bit more detail, they could like go to a more boring path than the exciting one that they think is right.
Enjoyment	• Several participants explained that enjoyment is the main point of reading, and they related it to motivation to read in that they felt that if you do not enjoy it, there is no point in reading at all, and it will be boring **(Enjoyment, 7)**. • They felt that enjoying reading can lead to positive impacts on wider progress **(Wider attainment, 2),** fluency (**Speed/accuracy, 1),** ability to use reading **(Ability to use reading, 1),** persisting with reading **(Effort, 1)** and confidence **(Confidence, 1)**. • Some felt that enjoying reading and reading motivation are promoted by a positive sense of school belonging **(Belonging, 3)**. • There was much debate around whether enjoyment was the main point of reading or whether understanding was **(Understanding, 1)**.	So, I think that enjoyment will be the most important. If they enjoy it, and they're not just reading for the sake of it, just because it's there, they don't, if they don't like it, then there's no point in reading. You don't always have to enjoy your books, but like if you understand what it's saying and you know what the book is about it's like good to read it and help you practice, but you don't always have to enjoy it.

Confidence and Performance	• The participants discussed confidence and performance in the main together. • Some felt that to be a 'successful' reader you do not need to be 'out loud' with reading they can just read to themselves or be confident on the inside with no need to perform **(Confidence/ Reading performance, 8).** • In contrast other participants felt that you need to be confident enough to perform and inspire others to be defined as a 'successful' reader **(Confidence/ Reading performance, 10)**. • In terms of performance specifically it was felt that being good at reading performance was influenced by other elements of 'successful' reading **(Speed, 2; Effort, 2; Accuracy, 1 and Understanding 1).** For example, regarding speed, it was noted that if you read too slowly when reading aloud then other people would likely judge your reading negatively **(Public self-consciousness, 2).** • Related to confidence, it was explained that you need accuracy to be confident **(Accuracy, 1)** and feeling you belong at school **(Belonging, 1)** will mean you are more confident.	I think 'confidence' is important. Because if you're a successful reader, then you don't just read yourself, you read to lots of people. You don't have to be confident when you're reading because you're reading to yourself. It's not like, it's not like you have to read to everybody else, and sometimes you can, but that's their choice. You could read in like in your own time, in your own room. You don't have to be…You don't have to, like, tell everybody about it you can just say it in your head.
Effort	• The participants generally agreed that putting in the effort for reading and persisting with this was worthwhile **(Effort, 3)**. • And that putting in the effort will impact positively on improved performance **(Reading performance, 3)**, wider progress **(Wider attainment, 2)** and lead to improved understanding **(Understanding, 1).** • One participant felt that if you feel you belong you are more likely to put the effort in with reading **(Belonging, 1).**	…if you don't put effort in what you're reading, you might get it wrong or just give up, but if you put effort in it, if you can keep practicing and getting it. I think effort is also important in reading, because you have to put the effort in when you're reading just so the audience knows what you're saying.
Values reading	• Most of the discussion surrounding the importance of valuing reading to being a 'successful' reader was related to the idea that if they do not value	…because if you don't value reading and you think it's not, it's useless then you have to, then there's no point in doing it.

	reading then why would they engage in it in the first place, which is related to motivation to read **(Enjoyment, 4)**. • One participant also perceived valuing reading as a precursor to understanding **(Understanding, 1)** and another to how they felt that reading should be valued since it can be used to gain knowledge **(Ability to use reading, 1)**.	I think 'values reading' should be in the third row because you should value it because it gives you a lot of knowledge.
Can use reading	• Most of the discussion related to the importance of being able to use reading more generally was related to being able to find out more facts, learn new vocabulary or on what is learned from reading positively impacting upon aspects of everyday life **(Ability to use reading, 7)**. • Being able to use reading was also linked to understanding **(Understanding, 2)** and the perceived positive impact upon wider attainment in English or writing more generally **(Wider attainment, 2)**.	You should be able to use what you learn in your day-to-day life. …because if you don't 'use your reading' and no point to read anything, you have to use the reading to understand about.
Accuracy	• One of the focus groups did not perceive accuracy as being important for being a 'successful' reader as they reasoned that enjoyment **(Enjoyment, 1)**, understanding **(Understanding, 1)** and being able to use reading **(Ability to use reading, 1)** as more important. • Generally, the other focus groups felt that you needed to be able to read 'properly' or 'correctly' to be 'successful' **(Accuracy, 3).** Some perceived accuracy as an important precursor to 'successful' understanding **(Understanding, 2)**; performance (**Reading Performance, 2)** and feeling confident about reading **(Confidence, 1).** • One participant felt that accuracy was important on its own regardless of the impact on performance since 'shy' readers can be 'successful' too **(Public self-consciousness, 1)**.	I don't think you really need 'accuracy' because it's all about enjoying a book, not just reading words, just about enjoying what you're reading and just finding out new stuff. I think accuracy is important because when you're performing you have to say, you need accuracy to pronounce the words right and make sure you've not missed out like words or something like that, yeah.
Feel they belong	• Feeling they belong was linked to motivation for reading **(Enjoyment, 4)** feelings of happiness **(Basic emotions and personal attributes, 1)** and being able to use imagination to feel belonging with characters in books **(Reading imaginatively, 2).**	I agree with that because if you feel like you belong, you'll be like more motivated to do more and like progress a bit more. …you need to feel you can feel like you belong as one of the characters in your own story.

	• It was felt that this impact upon motivation would lead to increased effort **(Effort, 1)**, understanding **(Understanding, 1)** and progress **(Wider attainment, 1)**. • Without a feeling of belonging and this positive impact upon motivation, it was felt that reading progress generally (**Wider attainment, 2)** and ability to use reading **(Ability to use reading, 2)** would decline.	
Reads a lot	• Reading a lot was linked positively to enhancing understanding **(Understanding, 3)**, ability to use reading **(Ability to use reading, 1)**, knowing what to read **(Types of material, 1)** and on general progress **(Wider attainment,1).** • One participant felt that the amount read was not particularly important provided that the reader was enjoying **(Enjoyment, 1)** what they read and could read fluently **(Speed, 1/Accuracy, 1)**. In contrast one participant felt that reading amount was all that was important regardless of enjoyment **(Enjoyment, 1)**.	I think you need to read a lot to be a good reader. Because then you'll know how or what to read, and we know the meanings of words. I think it is good to read a lot, but you don't have to necessarily. Because as long as you enjoy it and you can read fluently, I guess and you don't have difficulty that would be fine.
Types of material	• Some participants felts that the type of material was not important, in that the size, length or challenge level did not matter **(Types of material, 2)**. • Sometimes the participants linked the type of material to trying to impress and concerns about the perceptions of others **(Public self-consciousness, 2).** • It was argued that enjoyment was more important than the type of material **(Enjoyment, 2)** even when it was a book for a younger child. • In contrast, one participant emphasised the need for being selective with the type of material you choose to read for enjoyment and motivation **(Enjoyment, 1)**.	If you want to be a good reader, you don't have to read like thick, long books. You can only read small books. Because I think they're not important, because you don't need to read a big books. And you mean if you read big books and you mainly try to impress everybody, but you can read more books and get more enjoyment from them.
Good imagination	• This attribute was individual to one focus group who wrote it on one of their blank diamonds. Every comment was related to the importance of using the imagination to engage and become engrossed in books, including having	…because you need to have an imagination to imagine how it's like and how they've like if it's like a sad story, you can imagine how they felt and try to be like in their shoes.

	empathy with characters **(Basic emotions and personal attributes, 3)** and the resultant enjoyment from this **(Enjoyment, 1).**	Because to enjoy it you need, you have to have a good imagination and you're engrossed in it.
Speed	• Speed was perceived as being important when reading out loud in front of others **(Reading performance, 5).** One participant related speed specifically to the perceptions of others in that reading very quickly can be just to impress other people **(Public self-consciousness, 1)**. • Speed was related to accuracy in terms of fluency **(Accuracy/Speed, 2)** and the general feeling was that it was this fluency that was important rather than being too fast or too slow. • It was felt that reading too fast can impact negatively upon both understanding **(Understanding, 3)** and accuracy **(Accuracy, 1).** • In contrast, one participant felt that reading quickly will mean you can understand more quickly **(Understanding, 1)**. • Some argued that speed is not important as it is only enjoyment that counts **(Enjoyment, 3),** although one participant felt that if you read too slowly then this will impact upon enjoyment as the reading will become boring **(Enjoyment, 1)**.	Whatever piece you're reading, you should be enjoying it, not just reading it fast or too slow. Just to impress. Or just do that, just for fun. Or just do like act like you're cool or something like you're clever by reading fast and things. I think in my opinion speed should be on the fourth line on the diamond, because when you're reading out to a class like in your school, then you will have to like, you can't just read like slow and then forget the words and because then nobody will know what you're talking about then.

For complete clarity, what follows is a summary of what was found from the analysis of the focus group dialogue surrounding the participants' diamond 9 ranking decisions, and what they perceived to be most important for being a 'successful' reader at T1 before exploring how their perceptions developed over time.

5.3.1.1 Summary of Focus Group Reasoning for Diamond 9 Ranking Decisions at Time 1

Pupils' perceptions that influenced their diamond 9 ranking choices at T1 regarding what they thought was most important to be a 'successful' reader. 'Successful' readers:

- Understand and get meaning from what they read. They also read for pleasure through choice and are motivated. This impacts positively on their wider academic progress, confidence, reading performance and ability to use and learn from what they have read.
- Are confident to read out loud well in front of others. Although it is recognised that some can also be quietly confident. They get the words and speed right when reading out loud, which influences whether others approve of their reading.
- Try hard and can use reading, which leads to improvements in other important areas, especially reading performance and being able to learn new facts and vocabulary from their reading.
- Value reading which means they are motivated to engage with reading in the first place.
- Read accurately which helps them understand, perform, and feel confident. Although some felt that getting the words right should not interfere with enjoyment.
- Feel like they belong at school which supports their motivation, confidence, and progress. They read imaginatively and feel they belong in books. Too much emphasis on understanding can diminish reading pleasure and take the text on a less interesting path.
- Have a good imagination which is important so that they could engage fully with text and characters to maximise enjoyment.
- Read a lot which positively impacts on their understanding and progress. However, reading a lot was not perceived to be a necessity.
- Select the right types of books to ensure their enjoyment. However, the type of material read was not considered very important to being a 'successful' reader,

as it was felt that for example choosing, 'thicker' books was more about influencing other people's perceived judgements.

As well as being the highest ranked attribute of reading at T1 there was clearly a huge emphasis on enjoyment throughout the dialogue in terms of how the participants prioritised what they perceived to be most important to be a 'successful' reader at T1. Reading for pleasure was identified as paramount throughout their discussions regarding many aspects of reading. As part of this, there was an emphasis on agency related to the motivation to read through choice for personal enjoyment.

There was also discussion around the importance of imagination at this time point. This occurred partly within the focus group who chose to include having a 'good imagination' as a skill or personal attribute that was important to being a 'successful' reader which enhanced understanding and enjoyment. As well as this, there were broader aspects of 'imagination' within the discussions of other focus groups at T1 which went beyond comprehension of the text and related to thinking about personal connection to what is being read, both of which were felt to enhance enjoyment furthermore. This led to the identification of an additional theme in this part of the data, 'reading imaginatively.'

In addition, it is noteworthy that at T1 there were some identified incidences of public self-consciousness within discussions about reading performance, types of material and speed mainly related to an awareness of impressing others. What is clear at T1, is that although elements of public self-consciousness are acknowledged by the participants, these feelings are superseded by the importance of enjoyment above all else.

5.3.2 Reasoning for Diamond 9 Ranking Decisions at Time 2 and Time 3

Following on from T1, to be able to answer RQ4 fully, it is important to consider any changes in pupils' perceptions of what is most important to be a 'successful' reader at T2 and T3 and the reasoning behind their decisions.

In terms of ranked position (see Table 5.7), it has already been established that some of the attributes of being a 'successful' reader were ranked in the main consistently by the participants over all three time points and therefore did not change significantly in their overall score. These were: understanding and enjoyment (with some fluctuation at T2), can use reading, accuracy and good imagination. Some attributes, however, did change in their ranked importance over the three time points. The following attributes all increased: effort, performance, types of material and speed. Conversely, the perceived importance of these attributes all declined over the three time points: values reading, feel they belong and reads a lot.

To explore the reasoning that surrounded these changes in ranking decisions it is important to consider the dialogue between the participants within the focus groups when these decisions were made collaboratively at T2 and then again at T3. Any new reasoning or developments in thinking that took place for each attribute of 'successful' reading has been explored whether the overall ranking changed or remained the same.

Therefore, each attribute is again considered in order of overall diamond 9 ranking score from highest to lowest. As in relation to the diamond 9 dialogue for T1, performance is considered alongside confidence as the relevant dialogues were connected again at T2 and T3. To avoid unnecessary repetition, enjoyment and understanding are also presented together, as the dialogue at T2 and T3 were connected in terms of which attribute the participants felt were most important to be a 'successful' reader and these discussions reflect how perceptions changed during their primary-secondary transitions. Since the analysis of the focus group dialogue did not reveal any new thinking or change in ranked position during primary-secondary transitions for good imagination this is not included. Therefore, any changes in thinking

or new reasoning are summarised and illustrated with sample quotes for clarity in Table 5.9.

Table 5.9 Development of Reasoning for Diamond 9 Ranking at Time Points 2 and 3

Attribute Diamond 9 scores over 3 time points.	Developments in participants' reasoning Time 2 **(Identified theme, frequency)** Sample quote	**Developments in participants' reasoning Time 3 (identified theme, frequency)** Sample quote
Understanding T1: 20. T2: 23. T3: 21. **Enjoyment** T1: 22. T2: 20. T3: 21.	• The participants continued to debate whether understanding or enjoyment was most important for being a successful reader (**Understanding/Enjoyment, 7**) and how they felt pupils were more likely to enjoy a text if they can understand it (**Understanding/Enjoyment, 3**). • Participants still felt that intrinsic motivation and reading for pleasure were paramount (**Enjoyment, 17**) as well as reading for meaning (**Understanding, 14**) and being able to use and apply what you have read (**Ability to use reading, 4**). • New thinking was identified in two focus groups (in different secondary schools) in relation to being forced to read even if you do not enjoy it to pass tests (**Enjoyment, 3**) which reduced the ranking and score for enjoyment at T2. Some participants still felt that reading for pleasure was crucial regardless of the impact on reading attainment (**Enjoyment, 2**).	• The participants continued to discuss whether enjoyment or understanding was most important for being a 'successful' reader (**Understanding/Enjoyment, 7**). One participant highlighted the importance of reading for yourself and not for others (**Enjoyment, 1**). New thinking emerged related to how some pupils could use the pictures to support understanding to increase enjoyment of the text **(Understanding/Enjoyment, 3**). • Another focus group (in a different secondary school to those identified at T2) discussed being made to read in lessons whether you enjoyed the reading or not (**Enjoyment, 2**). The participants also related this idea to understanding, in that they must demonstrate their understanding of text even if they have not enjoyed reading it (**Understanding, 2**).
	Because sometimes you don't have to enjoy, sometimes you're forced to actually read it because maybe you might do something and you have to read it. Yeah because you have to do tests and you don't even want to read it, but you have to read it.	Do you guys enjoy the class novels? Some of them. But you still have to read it, innit and understand the books and summarise the books.

Confidence T1: 14. T2: 15. T3: 15. **Performance** T1: 7. T2: 9. T3: 9.	• New reasoning linking performance to public self-consciousness was identified in that participants related a fear of being judged or feeling anxious about reading aloud in front of their peers in their new schools (**Public self-consciousness, 9**). This was noted particularly in relation to difficulties with getting the words right when reading in front of others (**Accuracy/Public self-consciousness, 3**). • Some participants felt that practicing reading out loud in front of peers would lead to increased confidence (**Confidence, 3**) and less feelings of embarrassment (**Public self-consciousness, 2**). • One participant felt that you needed confidence more generally to be a 'successful' reader as reading can lead to being judged as a 'nerd.' (**Identity formation/Public self-consciousness, 1**). • There were two occurrences where participants felt that performance was less important at T2 as they felt that being able to apply what they have learned from reading in tests should be the priority (**Ability to use reading/Wider attainment, 2**). • There was an increased emphasis on the importance of performance as it was agreed that reading performance was now required more frequently and in different ways in the secondary setting, for example the 'popcorn reading' approach referred to in the sample quote provided and in their lives beyond school (**Reading performance, 13**). • It was a combination of increased fear of peer judgment and increased frequency of reading out loud in front of others in their new secondary school	• Although the ranked score of performance remained the same at T3, there were fluctuations between groups. All focus groups, apart from one, maintained or increased the position where the performance diamond was ranked. One focus group removed it from the diamond altogether in favour of feel they belong. The participants' reasoning for this change was that whether a pupil felt they belonged would determine whether they felt they were able to perform in front of others or not (**Belonging, 1**). • General performance aspects, such as having a clear voice, using expression (**Reading performance, 3**) and an appropriate speed (**Speed, 2**) were also reinforced at T3. • One participant related reading at an appropriate speed for performance to the importance of being independent in the secondary context to avoid being negatively judged by peers (**Independence/Public self-consciousness/Speed, 1**).

	environment that led to the increased ranked score of performance at T2.	
	Like for example in English and if we were doing something like 'popcorn reading' where someone's reading out loud, then they just call on someone else randomly. They will be put on the spot, and if they can't, and if they don't know how to read it out properly or if they end up feeling embarrassed, that would be bad.	Yeah, when you do it in front of the class and you're going be like independent as well now they're in secondary... I think speed might go into performance because if you're good at reading but you read really slow and everybody's going to think you're bad at it. It's not that you're bad at it…
Effort T1: 13. T2: 14. T3: 17.	• New reasoning in relation to effort was identified in that you have to enjoy reading to put the effort in (**Enjoyment, 2**) and effort as being important for accuracy (**Accuracy, 3**), confidence (**Confidence, 1**) and being able to read more challenging books (**Types of material, 1**). • One participant argued that effort is not necessary for reading as the enjoyment gained from reading should be enough and that reading should not be about making progress in reading skills (**Enjoyment/Wider attainment, 1)**. • One focus group debated the importance of effort against reading amount in terms of the impact that would be made on reading accuracy. Most of this group felt that effort was more important than the amount read (**Amount read, 2**). Some felt that reading a lot and effort were synonymous and the result would be the same, that is increased accuracy (**Amount read/Accuracy, 2**).	• Effort increased in ranked importance at T3 this was based on reasoning already outlined, related to the importance of working hard generally (**Effort, 1**) and how this was linked to other areas important for 'successful' reading, that is performance (**Reading Performance, 1**) and understanding (**Understanding, 1**). • The connection was also made between reading a lot and effort, since it was perceived that if you do not put in effort, you may not read at all (**Amount read, 1**).
	if you don't put in 'effort' you won't really like...It won't help because if you don't put in 'effort' then you might get words wrong and lead to spelling the words wrong or using the words wrong and it'll just mix up all your vocabulary.	Because if you're a reader but you don't, put your effort into it, then you're not going to read anymore. It's not really a good reader, because you barely read. You don't like, you don't read anymore.

Values reading T1: 12. T2: 12. T3:10.	There were no changes in ranked position or in the reasoning related to values reading at T2.	• The impact of valuing reading on engagement with reading in the first place and the amount chosen to be read was reinforced at T3 (**Enjoyment/Amount read, 2**). • One participant felt that valuing reading gave the reader a better perspective when reading (**Understanding, 1**). Some felt that valuing reading was not crucial to be a 'successful' reader since they perceived understanding and confidence as being more important (**Understanding/Confidence, 2)** which impacted negatively upon the ranked score of values reading at T3.
		I agree with her, because I think what's the point of reading a book if you don't like really value it? And it would be like if you value it, you'd have a better perspective when you're reading it.
Can use reading T1: 11. T2: 11. T3: 11.	• At T2 the new reasoning was focused upon how the participants felt that it was important to be able to use reading to achieve higher grades in tests or quizzes (**Wider attainment, 4**). • Although the total scores remained the same, there were fluctuations of the ranking of this attribute between groups. One focus group decided to add can use reading to their diamond as they agreed that what they read might be related to their learning generally in specific subjects, such as science (**Wider attainment, 3**). A different focus	• Although the overall score remained the same at T3, there was movement between groups. Where the ranking position increased, this was related to how the participants felt that being able to use reading to gain information, improve their vocabulary (**Ability to use reading, 2**) and improve test performance (**Wider attainment, 2**). • New reasoning was identified linking being able to use reading to reading accuracy, in that the participants felt that accuracy is important for understanding, so that readers can use what you

	group reduced the ranked position of can use reading in favour of understanding **(Ability to use reading/Understanding, 2).**	have read in some way This meant that one focus group reduced the ranking of can use reading in favour of accuracy. (**Accuracy/Understanding, 2**).
	Can use reading because what you can use reading in like a quiz. Imagine you doing like a quiz or a test, you can use your reading skills to improve your grades.	You can just have one book but keep studying it and then you can use the information just from that one book in like tests.
Accuracy T1: 11. T2: 10. T3: 11.	• The overall ranked score for accuracy declined by one point at T2, which was decided by the participants in one focus group as they felt that enjoyment (**Enjoyment, 1**) and confidence (**Confidence, 1**) needed to take priority. • The importance of accuracy for effective performance (**Reading performance, 2**) and understanding (**Understanding, 2**) and therefore how well pupils can apply what they have read (**Ability to use reading, 1**) was reinforced. • There was a general feeling throughout the dialogue that words can be 'worked out' and therefore getting the words right is not necessary (**Accuracy, 2**). One participant felt that accuracy was not as important for performance, as readers could always read to themselves and ask for help from a teacher with reading a word if needed (**Independence, 1**). • Accuracy was considered less important than effort (**Effort, 1**) since the participants felt that effort impacts upon positively on more other areas of 'successful' reading including reading accuracy itself.	• There was not much discussion about accuracy at T3. The ranked score increased by one point, as one focus group decided to increase the ranked position based on the perceived link between accuracy and understanding (**Understanding, 2**) and how these are prerequisites for being able to then use what you have read (**Ability to use reading, 1)**.
	I think 'confidence' should move with 'accuracy' because you don't need accuracy that much and people don't always get words accurate.	To understand you need accuracy. I do agree with it because what's the point in using what you're reading, when your reading is not right.

Feel they belong T1: 10. T2: 6. T3: 7.	• The ranked position of feel they belong declined by four points at T2. This was in the main because of participants who felt that feelings of school belonging more generally were not related to 'successful' reading **(Belonging, 4).** • Conversely, some participants argued that feelings of belonging were still important for enjoyment (**Enjoyment, 2**). • There was new reasoning identified related to how participants linked performance to feelings of belonging at this stage in their transition (**Reading performance, 3**)**.** The participants explained this in terms of if readers do not feel like they belong then this would lead to a lack of confidence (**Confidence, 2**) and increased anxiety (**Public self-consciousness, 1**) for reading out loud in front of others. It was felt that not being able to read publicly would then potentially lead to a reduction in effort (**Effort, 1**) test performance (**Wider attainment, 1**) and motivation for reading (**Enjoyment, 1**). • New reasoning related to individuality in the new setting also related to the declined rank attributing to feelings of belonging. In that, it was emphasised that other people's judgements should not be relevant to being a 'successful' reader (**Public self-consciousness/Identity formation, 3**) and a shift towards internal confidence (**Confidence, 1**) rather than more out loud performance aspects.	• At T3 some participants continued to feel that feelings of school belonging did not relate to reading (**Belonging, 4**)**.** • Confidence remained linked to feelings of belonging by others, in terms of if you feel you belong you will be more confident in reading at school (**Confidence, 2**) which may lead you to try out different types of books (**Types of material, 1**). • One participant argued for leaving feel they belong off the diamond altogether as it was already covered by confidence and enjoyment (**Confidence/Enjoyment, 2**). • Dialogue around the importance of the perceptions of others developed further in relation to feelings of belonging. It was argued that although opinions of others should not matter, without a sense of belonging, negative judgements from others can impact negatively for some and can lead to shyness (**Public self-consciousness, 4**) which can impact upon reading confidence (**Confidence, 1).** • One participant summarised that a negative sense of belonging can affect everything (**Belonging, 1**).

	So if you don't feel you belong then if you don't feel you belong, then it might make things a bit hard, because if you're a really good reader, what's the point of putting in that effort and like I said before trying to learn how to read different things and the phonics and everything if you can't put it into a test, if you can't put it into other people's minds really, because if you can't perform what you're good at, then there's no point of doing it.	To some people, yes. Some people, unless you really won't care what people think, but and that's great, that's amazing. But sometimes people want to feel like they belong, want to kind of at least be with someone that thinks that.
Reads a lot T1: 8. T2: 6. T3: 2.	• At T2 some of the participants reinforced that reading a lot can improve understanding (**Understanding, 4**), being a 'better reader' more generally (**Wider attainment, 2**) and being able to then use what you have read (**Ability to use reading, 1**). • There was new discussion around the thinking that there is no need to do something 'a lot' to be good at it (**Amount read, 3**). It was this thinking that led to the decline in the ranked score at T2. • One participant argued that if you do not read a lot then this might lead to a reader stopping read altogether (**Amount read, 1**). • Reading a lot was not considered to be as important as enjoyment and it was agreed that the amount read is optional as it should depend on when you want to do it (**Enjoyment, 3**). One participant noted that if you are focusing upon the amount read it might negatively impact upon motivation (**Enjoyment, 1**). • One participant reflected upon the importance of where you read, in that at home there is no pressure	• The ranked score of reads a lot continued to decline at T3, this was because of one focus group who decided to prioritise speed over this factor. • New thinking was identified from one participant who felt that reading a lot might mean that you are 'too smart' (**Wider attainment, 1**) and noted the negative impact this would have on your free time. • There was a general emphasis on that it does not matter how much or how many books you read (**Amount read, 3**).

	to read a certain amount. However, at school you need to read a lot for a range of purposes (**Amount read, 1**).	
	So there's no point in reading a lot at home that there's a point, but there's no pressure. Whereas in school you're going to have to read context, emails, for ICT, English, 'Accelerated Reader', you have to read, while home there's no pressure so you don't have to read a lot.	I would swap it with 'reading a lot,' because if you read a lot you'll probably be like too smart and probably affect your time.
Types of material T1: 2. T2: 5. T3: 5.	• The increase in ranked importance for types of material at T2 was related to genre and the importance of reading the types of books you enjoy (**Enjoyment, 2**).	• At T3 the participants explained that it is not important to read different types of books to be a 'successful' reader (**Types of material, 3**) and that enjoyment should be prioritised (**Enjoyment, 1**) and attainment in tests (**Wider attainment, 1**).
	I've done that a few times. I've read a book, and I don't like it, but and I don't really like enjoy it at all. So, you have to know what type of books you like: adventure, fantasy...in order to like really to enjoy what you're reading.	Yes, and I swapped for 'types of material' because you don't have to have different types of books to be a good reader. You can just have one book but keep studying it and then you can use the information just from that one book in like tests.
Speed T1: 1. T2: 0. T3: 3.	• There was not much discussion around speed at T2. The connection between appropriate speed and reading performance was reinforced (**Reading performance, 2**). • There was also a general feeling that reading quickly just is not important for being a 'successful' reader (**Speed, 4**). Speed declined in terms of ranked position at T2 due to one focus group who	• Speed increased in ranked importance at T3. This was related to new reasoning identified about the importance of speed for keeping up in lessons and in particular 'Accelerated Reader' (**Speed, 2**). Although this was new reasoning at T3 this referred to in both the primary and secondary contexts.

	emphasised that not all readers had to read quickly and because of the perceived negative impact of reading too quickly on performance.	• The impact of appropriate speed on performance was emphasised as important again (**Reading performance, 5**). New reasoning linked this to peer judgement (**Public self-consciousness, 3**) in terms of how reading too slowly would be boring or annoying for others and could lead to negative judgements about reading ability and that it is expected that reading performance would be done independently (**Independence, 1**). It was also suggested that pupils could get help if their reading was too slow (**Independence, 1**). • There was also still some reasoning that speed overall is not that important for being a 'successful' reader (**Speed, 3**).
	I agree with her because 'speed' is not that important, like not all readers have to read fast.	I think 'speed' might have a bit more to do with it. In school, they expect you to read along and hurry up and basically finish the book when they finish. Primary as well, because we all read together. Also in 'Accelerated Reading'.

Before focusing upon the key developments in the participants' perceptions over the three time points, it is interesting to note that in relation to discussions around the attribute of types of material specifically, across all three time points the participants only ever discussed books as reading material, in terms of their complexity, genre or length (including thickness of the books). They did not refer to other forms of reading material or reading digitally in any way.

There are several key developments in the participants' perceptions of what is most important to be a 'successful' reader during primary-secondary transitions presented in Table 5.9. For clarity these are discussed, and additional sample quotes provided where these are pertinent. In relation to the consistently highest-ranking attributes of understanding and enjoyment, there was a notable shift towards participants reflecting upon the need to read and understand texts in lessons that they do not enjoy. This was described as being 'forced' to read in the secondary school context. This represents a move away from the very strong emphasis placed on reading for pleasure at T1 prior to the transfer to secondary school. Within these discussions there was also increased reference to wider attainment factors such as tests and exams. References to the importance of attainment in tests were present more frequently in relation to several attributes that were ranked using the diamond 9 approach post transition these were: enjoyment, performance, effort, feel they belong, can use reading and types of material. This development in thinking relates to new reasoning identified in relation to the ability to use reading, where although the overall score remained consistent, the dialogue pointed to the perceived importance of being able to use what they read in subject specific study (Wider attainment, 3) and to perform well in tests (Wider attainment, 4) at T2. This reasoning continued to be present at T3. There was also a noted move away from any references to imagination at T2 and T3. This contrasts with T1 when the reading imaginatively theme was newly identified within the focus group dialogue.

Despite this noted shift in focus towards wider attainment factors throughout and reading within constraints in secondary schools, it is important to recognise that enjoyment and internal motivation factors remained of overall high importance for the participants at T2 and T3. This is clear from both the ranked position enjoyment maintained and how references to enjoyment were evident in new reasoning at T2 related to effort (Enjoyment, 2 new occurrences at T2) and reading a lot (Enjoyment, 3 new occurrences at T2). As summarised below:

> You won't put the effort in to read it if you don't enjoy the books. You may understand it, but you may think it's boring, I don't like it, there's no point. (Marshmallow, T2).

Another key change identified in the participants' thinking related to their perceptions of the importance of reading performance aspects for 'successful' reading. It was found that the participants related reading performance to public self-consciousness post-transition (Public self-consciousness, 9 new occurrences at T2) regarding a fear of reading out loud and being judged by peers in their new environment. This was magnified by the perceived increased frequency that the participants reported they were asked to read out loud in the secondary context and some specific pedagogy that was being employed (Reading performance, 13 new occurrences at T2). This clear shift in thinking prompted further discussion within the focus groups related to why the participants thought their perceptions related to reading performance had changed since they had transferred to secondary school. These discussions highlighted that reading out loud in front of others felt different in secondary school because of their new social environment amongst new peers (New environment, 11 new occurrences at T2) as summarised below:

> This is because, we're in a new environment, a new place and there's lots of new people and we don't really know how they could react if we might pronounce a word wrong, they won't understand. (Eagle, T2).

This was expanded by some participants who agreed that how afraid they were of reading out loud in their new context depended upon the individual peers who were present at the time and whether they felt confident with them or not:

> It's confident in a different way because there are new people like you really like know them and you just seem more comfortable with them and you can like read out loud and be more confident around them and with the people you don't like you just feel like they're going to question you, you don't want to like read in front of them because you think 'oh my god'

> they’re going to say something about me because I can’t pronounce the words right. (Hermione, T2).

The participants also reflected upon how it is not just new peers within their new environments that have impacted upon this development in their thinking, in that they recognised that they had also changed since they had moved to secondary school and so have peers that they knew previously before their transfer (New environment, 4 new occurrences at T2). They felt that these changes have also impacted on their perceptions of reading performance and confidence in relation to what is most important to being a ‘successful’ reader. As illustrated below:

> Over the time people have changed, so their personality is different and they've like being more of a different person than they've been before… I think we’ve changed and others because the people that we've known before are like really different. (Wolfie, T2).

The dialogue surrounding belonging at school in relation to reading declined during primary-secondary transitions and new reasoning was evident in relation to this. Some participants at T2 (Belonging, 4 new occurrences) and T3 (Belonging, 4 new occurrences) generally felt as though feelings of belonging were not relevant being a ‘successful’ reader.

> More of like when they're doing other stuff in the world, they would want to feel like they belong. But in reading it, it doesn't really, to me, it doesn't really make sense to be on the diamond right on there. (Marshmallow, T2).

Although this was not agreed consistently by all participants and some did emphasise the importance of this factor at T2 and T3 in relation to confidence (Confidence, T2, 2 occurrences. T3, 4 occurrences) reading performance (Reading performance, T2, 2 occurrences) and feelings of public self-consciousness (Public self-consciousness, T2, 1 occurrence. T3, 4 occurrences). New reasoning was identified at T2 that highlighted how some participants felt that feelings of belonging were less important post-transfer

as they emphasised the importance of individuality in the secondary context (Public self-consciousness/Identity formation, T2, 3 occurrences). As explained below:

> So, you don't have to belong anywhere for reading, you can just read by your own and then that's how you feel belong to yourself. Basically, if you feel, you don't have to make people, you don't have to feel belong to people, reading has to feel it belong to you. (Midas, T2).

> 'Feel they belong,' it doesn't have to be important. You can do your own thing, your choice… (Nova, T2).

This thinking did not reoccur at T3 and instead the focus switched back to how feelings of belonging facilitated pupils to feel more at ease in their new environment and in front of their peers (Public self-consciousness, T3, 4 occurrences) and therefore feel more confident when reading (Confidence, T3, 1 occurrence):

> But 'feeling you belong' is really important, because if you're at school and you don't feel like you belong then you might not want to read there or talk there, or stuff like that. (Princess Peach, T3).

In addition, there were new ideas discussed around reading speed at T3, and this attribute increased in ranked importance during primary-secondary transitions. The new reasoning that was identified at T3 referred to the importance of being able to read quickly to keep up in certain lessons, including 'Accelerated Reader' (Speed, T3, 2 occurrences). The participants also emphasised the importance of 'successful readers' being able to use an appropriate speed when reading out loud in front of their peers (Reading performance, T3, 5 occurrences). The participants explained that this was linked to peer judgement (T3, Public self-consciousness, 3 occurrences) and potential negative judgements if the reader's speed was perceived as being too slow.

> Yeah, you can't be too slow or else people will just be bored. (Hermione, T3).

The final section summarises the key findings of the diamond 9 ranking and the main changes identified at T2 and T3.

5.3.2.1 Summary of Focus Group Reasoning for Diamond 9 Ranking Decisions at all three time points and changes in thinking during primary-secondary transitions

Overall, the participants consistently ranked understanding, closely followed by enjoyment as being most important to be a 'successful' reader at all three time points. After that, they consistently ranked confidence as being the next most important, alongside effort, which increased in importance during the transitions. Next was values reading, which declined slightly, followed by can use reading, which had a consistent overall score, but there was identified movement between groups. This was followed by accuracy, which remained consistent over the time points. After that was reading performance, which increased in importance, before feel they belong and reads a lot which both declined. Then, types of material, which increased in importance, good imagination, which remained consistent and finally speed which increased in importance over the project.

Despite the relative consistency with the highest ranked factors, there were a number of changes in the participants' thinking in terms of what they felt was most important to be a 'successful' reader and the reasoning given for their collaborative decision making during primary-secondary transitions.

Pupils' perceptions that influenced their diamond 9 ranking choices at T2 and T3 regarding what they thought was most important to be a 'successful' reader.
'Successful readers':

- Enjoy reading and understand what they read. They understand and read text even if they do not enjoy it in class and as part of assessments.
- Read out loud well in front of others within their new environment and in front of new peers. It is noted that it is more embarrassing to read out loud in secondary school because of a fear of being judged by peers.

- Are confident enough to identify as a reader despite potential peer judgement.
- Read at an appropriate speed independently and get the words right when reading out loud in front of others.
- Apply what they have learned from reading in specific subjects to do well in tests and achieve high grades.
- Can read accurately which can be important for reading performance and understanding but this is not crucial as words can be worked out.
- Do not necessarily have to feel they belong. They can be an individual. However, feeling like they belong in school can help with the confidence to read out loud in front of others.
- Do not need to necessarily read a lot, especially at home where there is no pressure to read.
- Can select the types of books that they enjoy and read quickly enough to keep up in lessons.

Overall, there was a general shift towards a more practical utility of reading in the secondary context, even when the reading was not inherently enjoyable which impacted upon the discussions around being able to use reading, the increased importance of putting in effort to achieve outcomes and read quickly as necessary. This was strengthened by an increased focus on high-stakes attainment in secondary school, for example being able to use reading to do well in tests. This also meant that there was a move away from reading imaginatively, which was present in primary school, in a way that goes beyond standard comprehension of the text and more widely reading for pleasure.

The change in the social environment intensified the focus on reading performance aspects, which became more significant in connection with confidence and public self-consciousness. This change stemmed from a fear of reading out loud in front of new peers in case they made mistakes and were judged for this. This extended beyond new peers in the secondary environment, as the participants also noticed changes in the peers they knew in primary school and themselves. As well as this, it was noted that

they were asked to read out loud more frequently in the secondary context and teaching strategies used, such as 'popcorn reading' exacerbated these concerns. This also heightened the importance of getting the speed of reading right, especially when reading in front of others.

In the next chapter the findings from both the quantitative and qualitative data collected is discussed in relation to the RQs and interpreted within the context of the existing literature and relevant theoretical frameworks.

Chapter 6 Discussion

6.1 Chapter Overview

In this chapter the key findings are discussed in relation to the RQs whilst considering their relevance in the context of existing research and theory. This study applied a participatory approach to the methodology and young people were consulted as advisors at identified parts of the design, including in collaboration on the interpretation of some parts of the data. Therefore, I acknowledge that the advisors' reflections have influenced my perspective throughout, and for transparency where relevant, specific interpretations from advisors are explicitly referred to. Recommendations for theory, practice and future research are made. First, I briefly summarise the key findings in relation to all four RQs.

6.2 Summary of Key Findings

RQ1) Do primary-secondary school transitions impact upon pupils' feelings of RSE, RTV and SB?

RQ2) To what extent are RSE, RTV and SB related and does this change during primary-secondary school transitions?

Data collected from the three quantitative online survey measures carried out at all three time points were considered. It was found that both reading task value (RTV) and feelings of school belonging (SB) declined significantly during primary-secondary school transitions. This means that the value the participants placed on reading declined meaningfully following the transfer to Y7, and that participants felt less like they belonged in their secondary schools by the end of Y7 compared to the end of Y6 and the beginning of Y7. Although reading self-efficacy (RSE) did decline on average during primary-secondary transitions, these changes were non-significant, which may be related to the level of variation in the data. RSE and RTV were positively correlated over the three time points, showing that participants with higher RSE and belief in their own ability to complete reading-based tasks successfully, were also more likely to place higher value on reading. There were also relationships found between feelings of SB and both RSE and RTV at the end of primary school, meaning that pupils with higher SB scores also tended to have higher RSE and RTV scores at the end of primary school. However, following the transfer to secondary school these relationships weakened into insignificance over Y7 as their RTV and feelings of SB declined.

RQ3) How do pupils perceive 'good' and 'struggling' readers and how does this change during primary-secondary school transitions?

The data collected from the online surveys, 'role on the wall' activities and focus group discussions were all considered. The participants perceived 'good' readers overall as being accurate, fluent and having strong comprehension skills. 'Good' readers were described as being confident in reading out loud and persistent, motivated readers who were independent and enjoyed reading. They were also related to positive social and emotional traits, such as feeling proud and included at school. Perceptions of 'good' readers were primarily characterised by comprehension skills in the first instance. However, references to reading comprehension skills in relation to 'good' reader identities, declined during primary-secondary transitions as the general focus shifted towards more technical aspects related to reading accuracy. Overall, 'struggling' readers were perceived as inaccurate and lacking in fluency with limited comprehension of what they read. They also lacked confidence to read aloud, did not enjoy reading and needed additional support in school. 'Struggling' readers were

perceived as having 'negative' social and emotional traits, such as being sad or angry and not feeling a sense of belonging at school. Perceptions of 'struggling' readers were mostly described with reference to accuracy in terms of the difficulties that they experienced decoding text and in contrast to perceptions of 'good' readers, there was much less emphasis on understanding factors.

Perceptions of 'good' and 'struggling' discursive reader identities changed during primary-secondary school transitions. One key change was that references to enjoyment factors decreased in relation to both 'good' and 'struggling' readers over the three time points. There was also a general move towards removing emotional traits, such as happiness and anger, when they were no longer seen as being directly relevant to reader identities. The most notable shift post-transfer was a prominent increased emphasis on public self-consciousness related to reading which impacted upon social factors in relation to perceptions of both 'good' and 'struggling' reader identities. Regarding 'good' readers this meant that at the start of secondary school the participants felt that 'good' readers would carry on reading, making contributions to lessons and being true to themselves even when this conflicted with fitting in with peers, they would essentially:

> Be their own shepherd, instead of following the other sheep. (Bruno, T2).

By the end of Y7, however, they agreed that 'good' readers should maintain their reading confidence on the inside, rather than outwardly show it, to avoid judgement from peers in their school environment. This fear of peer judgement and increased feelings of public self-consciousness stigmatised the 'struggling' reader identity and meant that participants felt that 'struggling' readers should mask their difficulties and change their reading behaviours, for example carry out reading practice in private. These changes occurred along with an increased focus on self-conscious emotions, such as embarrassment and guilt. This strong focus on public self-consciousness in the secondary environment also impacted upon perceptions of reading performance and independence factors. Reading performance aspects were minimised for 'good' readers and there were more references to difficulties with out loud elements of reading for 'struggling' readers.

Participants advised that 'struggling' readers should avoid reading publicly to avoid exposure and negative social consequences, and so others would think that they were clever. It was also stressed that 'good' readers are seen to be independent and do not ask for help, and that 'struggling' readers should not ask for help so that they are not seen to be trying, lacking in independence or wasting class time. This was all further intensified by an increased emphasis on high-stakes attainment in the secondary school environment, which led to discussion around how 'struggling' readers were at risk of negative attainment outcomes that could potentially impact upon their future life aspirations.

These participants justified their thoughts about reader identities within the wider context of adaptations to their new school environment, and the impact this had on their identity formation as part of a new peer group in their new school environment at the same time as becoming the youngest in school again. They also noted the more complex secondary school environment that had more pupils and different classes with multiple teachers, which meant that they felt it was more difficult for teachers to get to know the pupils and how they need to be supported. More broadly, it was reflected that wanting to hide reading difficulties from peers in secondary school would be a widespread and national issue for pupils of this age. At the end of the project, they also acknowledged their own ongoing adaptation to their new environment and felt that the emphasis on public self-consciousness factors would fade over time.

RQ4) What do pupils think is most important to be a 'successful' reader and how does this change during primary-secondary transitions?

The data collected from the diamond 9 ranking activities and focus group discussions over the three time points were considered. It was found that the participants consistently ranked understanding and enjoyment as being most important to be a 'successful' reader during primary-secondary school transitions. There were, however, identified changes in the participants' reasoning about their priorities, as their perceptions of what is most important to be a 'successful' reader evolved. First, although enjoyment was ranked as consistently of high importance, there was a shift

towards more practical applications of reading at secondary school, regardless of whether they enjoyed it or not. This perception was magnified by the increased emphasis on high-stakes attainment in the secondary context, for instance the need to be able to read quickly in lessons and to be able to use their reading to perform well in exams. This coincided with a move away from any reference to reading imaginatively and more broadly reading for pleasure.

What the participants thought was most important to be a 'successful' at reading was also exacerbated by the increased focus on public self-consciousness, first noted in relation to RQ3. This again meant that focus upon reading performance increased, which was inherently linked to discussion around reading confidence, triggered by fear of reading out loud in front of their peers in their new environment and being judged negatively by them. This was amplified further by the increased frequency that they felt they were asked to read out loud in the secondary context and pedagogy, that made them feel like they were being put on the spot with reading.

Throughout the rest of the chapter what these findings mean within the context of the existing literature is discussed including recommendations for next steps in practice and future research, starting with a focus on the findings related to reading motivation factors during primary-secondary school transitions.

6.3 Reading Motivation during Primary-Secondary School Transitions

This study found that there was a significant decline in reading task value (RTV) and a non-significant reduction in reading self-efficacy (RSE) over the three time points, both of which are important underlying components of reading motivation. This study contributes new information, that reading task value (RTV) specifically declines during primary-secondary school transitions.

These findings add to existing research that explain more broadly that academic motivation beliefs (Martin and Steinbeck, 2017; Ryan and Deci, 2020) and reading motivation and engagement both decline (Webber et al., 2023) in adolescence, and

that, subjective value beliefs related to literacy in school decline over time (Archambault et al., 2010). This study also supports the development of situated expectancy-value theory (Eccles and Wigfield, 2020) as these findings reinforce that expectancy and value beliefs are influenced by changes in the school environment (Raufelder et al., 2022) such as, in this case, during primary-secondary school transitions. The findings also build on the understanding that engagement and motivation dip in the secondary school context (Jindal-Snape et al., 2020) and that competency beliefs are challenged over primary-secondary school transitions (Jindal-Snape and Miller, 2008).

This significant decline in RTV during primary-secondary transitions means that the value that young people place on reading, which relates to: "the extent to which students' perceive reading as an important, enjoyable and useful activity" (McGeown et al., 2015, p.547), declined in the secondary school context. The implications of this are that young people's reading engagement is negatively impacted in multiple ways (McGeown and Conradi Smith, 2024) meaning that they may read less (Breadmore et al., 2019) and be less cognitively engaged when they do read (Schiefele et al., 2012; Troyer et al., 2019). This is important as reduced reading engagement contributes to a negative 'Matthew effect' (Stanovich, 1986; Chapman and Tunmer, 1997) for the young people affected, which promotes a negative cycle of accumulated disadvantage that can impact upon their reading attainment (McGeown et al., 2015; Duncan et al., 2016; Toste et al., 2020; Murnan et al., 2023) and which can ultimately affect access to and academic outcomes across the curriculum (Guthrie and Coddington, 2009; Quigley and Coleman, 2019). The decline in RTV also means a reduction in young people's affective engagement, or a diminished sense of relevance and enjoyment for reading during primary-secondary transitions, which contributes to the evidenced decrease in reading for pleasure over adolescence (Maynard et al., 2008).

This study also confirms that there was a significant and positive relationship between RSE and RTV at all three time points, although this relationship was strongest at the end of primary school. It is logical that RSE and RTV are interrelated as they both underly reading motivation and engagement, in that task values relate to the value placed on succeeding at a particular task in the first place (Wigfield, 1994), and which

also relates to self-efficacy (Bandura, 1993). This is because if a task is perceived as less valuable, then young people are less likely to both engage with reading and to exert effort when doing it (McGeown and Conradi Smith, 2024). This could potentially lead to less success being experienced by the young person over time which would in turn negatively impact upon their self-efficacy for reading based tasks (Bandura, 1982). As the relationship between the two factors was significant over all three time points and participants in this study placed less value on reading over time, this suggests that self-concept for reading declines in the secondary school environment for the first year at least. If RTV and RSE both continue to decline in the secondary school context this could contribute further still to the negative perpetuating cycle for young people. To build on these findings, future research should explore the relationship between RTV and RSE over primary-secondary transitions with longitudinal designs that exceed the length of this study to find out if these effects persist.

These findings also have implications for the development of self-regulated learning skills in secondary school. Self-regulated learning is: “self-generated thoughts, feelings and actions that are planned and cyclically adapted to the attainment of personal goals.” (Zimmerman, 2000, p.14), as both self-efficacy and task value are integral to self-regulated learning (Holtzheuser and McNamara, 2014; Lee et al., 2020), which has an important role in successful reading comprehension (Thiede and de Bruin, 2017). This is particularly important for young people with difficulties who have lower self-efficacy for self-regulating their learning in the first instance alongside lower RSE (Klassen, 2010). Agency is key to this, as both self-regulated learning and self-efficacy are related to the perceived competency to take control of their actions, set goals and work towards them to impact upon their own lives (Bandura, 1982; Klassen, 2010; Code, 2020).

This is interesting as we now know that RTV specifically declines significantly at this time and one of the ways that task values are thought to be developed is through connecting the task to the goals of the individual (Wigfield and Eccles, 1992). This relates to an insight provided by one of the advisors whilst discussing the raw data related to RTV, as part of an advisory group discussion at the end of primary school (T1). It was explained that the value placed on reading may vary depending on how

important it is for the young people to be able to read at home. They reflected upon lived experience within their community and shared that for some pupils, where they are the person in their household who has the best English language skills, they may need to be able to read aloud both letters and documents from school and home to their parents. This emphasises the importance of taking an individualised approach to increasing the relevance of reading to the personal goals of the young person.

As well as this, traditional approaches to reading intervention are known to not be as impactful for pupils at this age (Clarke et al., 2017) and affective factors are important for developing reading with adolescents (Cockroft and Atkinson, 2017a). The findings of this study therefore suggest that there needs to be more focus on increasing the relevance, enjoyment and value of reading alongside support for positive self-concept within the framework of self-regulated learning, to work towards the young person's own goals, with struggling readers of this age and stage in their education.

There is currently a lack of research into the effectiveness of reading interventions that target affective factors more broadly with adolescents (Cockroft and Atkinson, 2017a). Although some qualitative data has shown positive impacts upon self-efficacy (Cockroft and Atkinson, 2017b), it is noteworthy that the available evidence base provides a mixed picture in terms of the impact realised on reading outcomes (Webber et al., 2021), particularly as the relationship between reading achievement and reading motivation is not as strong for struggling readers. This may be because struggling readers rely more on extrinsic rather than intrinsic motivation (Quirk et al., 2010; Breadmore et al., 2019) and this should be taken into account at the planning stages. Therefore, some targeted reading skills support would also be recommended alongside the focus on motivation (Murnan et al., 2023), wellbeing and self-regulatory factors.

Since reading performance influences the development of reading self-concept during the first three years of school, by the time struggling readers reach secondary school it is negative reading self-concept that is causally predominant over reading achievement (Chapman and Tunmer, 1997). Based on this, it is recommended that the main focus in the early years of the primary school context should continue to be on mastering reading skills alongside increased positive reader self-concept support. This should

then shift in the later primary years and into the secondary context for those who are struggling with reading skills, with a main focus upon supporting positive self-concept and RTV within a self-regulated learning framework, alongside targeted reading skills support as needed.

Since this study aims to be transformative in practice, it is crucial to consider these findings using the lens of the Simple View of Reading (SVR, Gough and Tunmer, 1986) which provides the basis for The Reading House interactive tool for practitioners (Education Endowment Foundation, 2021). This is because the SVR is a foundational model that explains successful reading comprehension, and which continues to widely inform current classroom pedagogy (Department for Education, 2023). This model posits that successful reading comprehension is the result of the processes of language comprehension and word recognition (Gough and Tunmer, 1986). Arguably, it is this simplicity that is the core strength of the SVR (Kirby and Savage, 2008) which means that it is clear and accessible.

However, the findings of this study clearly highlight the importance of reading motivation factors and how this is likely to be influencing engagement with reading and overall reading success during primary-secondary school transitions. The SVR neglects to reference any motivation or affective factors at all (Cartwright et al., 2016; Wyse and Hacking, 2024). Therefore, in this respect, this research suggests that the SVR represents an oversimplification (Kirby and Savage, 2008; Castles et al., 2018) of reading development, particularly with young people of this age and older who are struggling with reading.

Nevertheless, this does not necessarily mean that the SVR is not a useful framework (Castles et al., 2018). This model does facilitate the identification of differences between readers (Francis et al., 2018) and supports practitioners to be able to identify reading difficulties. It is also acknowledged that the SVR does explain a substantial proportion of reading success (Kirby and Savage, 2008). It does mean, however, that this research supports the view (e.g. Cartwright et al., 2016) that the SVR and therefore The Reading House do not represent a holistic view of reading development. This is concerning, as the oversimplification is potentially misleading for practitioners as it

gives the impression that only language comprehension and word recognition are important for supporting reading difficulties (Catts, 2018). In fact, the findings from this research highlight the significance of reading motivation and engagement in shaping reading and wellbeing outcomes for struggling readers of this age. These insights point to the need for practitioners to have increased awareness of models of reading development that integrate affective factors alongside language comprehension and word recognition.

The next section focuses upon what was found in this study in relation to the participants' feelings of school belonging and how this relates to reading development during primary-secondary school transitions.

6.4 Impact of School Belonging during Primary-Secondary School Transitions

In line with existing research, this study found that pupils' feelings of school belonging (SB) declined following the transfer from primary to secondary school (Witherspoon and Ennett, 2011; Uvaas and McKevitt, 2013) and supported research evidence that this effect is not short-lived (Lester et al., 2013). In this case feelings of SB declined significantly by the end of Y7 compared to the end of Y6 in primary school and the beginning of Y7 in secondary school. This was despite efforts being taken at the planning stages of the design, to avoid the 'honeymoon transition period' (Hargreaves, 1984; Bagnall et al., 2020). This takes into account that anxieties can temporarily be reduced in the very initial part of the transfer where young people can perceive their new school environment more favourably perhaps as a result of significant but perhaps short-lived transitions support. The second data collection point (T2) therefore did not take place until November of Y7, after the participants had had at least two months in their secondary schools. Even after taking this into account at T2, the participants' feelings of SB had not declined significantly by this point, although their scores had declined on average. However, this downward trajectory continued and by the final data collection point, after a year in secondary school at the end of Y7 (T3), SB had declined significantly compared to both the end of Y6 and the beginning of Y7.

This means that on average fewer pupils felt: “personally accepted, respected, included and supported by others in the school social environment.” (Goodenow, 1993, p.80) by the end of their first year at secondary school compared to at the end of primary school and the beginning of Y7. The implications of this are potentially far reaching, since SB acts like a buffer against other stresses faced by young people (Hodgkin et al., 2025). For example, it is already accepted that SB contributes towards successful transitions experiences (Lester and Cross, 2015; Jindal-Snape et al., 2020; Spernes, 2022; Holt et al., 2023) because SB promotes social and emotional wellbeing (Holt et al., 2023), academic motivation (Osterman, 2000) and positive academic outcomes (Allen et al., 2018), including a positive effect on reading skills specifically (Tan et al., 2022). Indeed, addressing the psychological wellbeing of adolescents who have disengaged from school is one of the greatest challenges currently in education (Korpershoek et al., 2020).

This study also found that SB was moderately and positively correlated with both RSE and RTV at the end of primary school. This is a new insight that highlights that feelings of SB at the end of primary school were influenced and reinforced by the value young people placed on reading and their competency beliefs related to reading based tasks. This finding is important as it sheds new light on the connection between a student’s school environment and reading outcomes (Chen et al., 2021). Interestingly, Hodgkin et al. (2025) connect positive self-beliefs to the positive perceptions of experiences in school, which relates to how SB is determined based upon individual pupil perceptions of their school experiences (Murphy and Zirkel, 2015).

This identified connection between SB, RSE and RTV makes sense as both self-efficacy (Eccles et al., 1993; Bandura, 1997) and task value (Eccles and Wigfield, 2020) more broadly underly motivation, and SB is connected to the construct of relatedness in self-determination theory (SDT, Ryan and Deci, 2020). Although relatedness is not strictly a necessity for intrinsic motivation, it acts as a ‘needed backdrop’ that makes the development of intrinsic motivation more likely (Deci and Ryan, 2000 p.235) which in turn positively influences school engagement (Korpershoek et al., 2020). For example, if young people have a positive sense of self and feel that they have something valuable to contribute to relevant aspects of their lives this strengthens their

connection to their school environment. This also supports how SB has been associated previously with academic competency beliefs (Marshall et al., 2012; Prince and Hadwin, 2013) or 'academic belonging' (Holmström et al., 2014; Beatson et al., 2023). Korpershoek et al. (2020), who view SB as emotional engagement in school, found strong relationships between SB, self-concept and self-efficacy more generally. Focusing on reading specifically, Tan et al., (2022) noted the direct effect that SB had on reading literacy and found that this relationship was predominatly mediated by mastery goal orientation. Mastery goal orientation is focused upon the task itself, gaining new skills and personal growth, in contrast to performance goal orientation which drives learning motivated by external rewards and demonstrating success relative to others (Was et al., 2009; Tan et al., 2022). Mastery goal orientation is related to intrinsic motivation in that mastery goals mediate the relationship between intrinsic motivation and performance more broadly (Cerasoli and Ford, 2014). They are also connected to self-efficacy (Hsieh et al., 2007) and having a growth mindset (Dweck, 2008). This is interesting, since it connects key strands in this study and because having an MMT-Growth Mindset (MMT-GM) is identified as a key supportive attitude in the XII pillars of successful multiple and multi-dimensional transitions (MMT, Jindal-Snape, 2023). There is further discussion of the findings through the lens of MMT theory (Jindal-Snape, 2016) later in the chapter.

These identified relationships highlight the importance of considering SB factors to support the development of reading motivation and engagement when working with young people of this age. Although this is promising, this study also found that these relationships weakened and dissipated over primary-secondary transitions. Given that these relationships were disrupted post-transfer and that they were not re-established by the end of Y7, this has implications for both reading motivation and engagement, and the wellbeing and identity development of young people. The weakening of these connections over primary-secondary transitions can therefore potentially hinder both emotional adjustment and reading engagement during this critical period, which is particularly concerning for struggling readers.

When considering what this means in terms of next steps, these findings highlight the significance of individual psychological factors, specifically RSE and RTV on experiencing

a sense of SB. This is supportive of SDT in that it reinforces how external and environmental factors influence behaviours and mental health through the connecting role of internal psychological needs (Jang et al., 2009; Tan et al., 2022). Despite this, most of the research related to SB focuses upon social factors within the school context and there is little known about the sense of SB of individual groups of students, in terms of who is more vulnerable to experiencing lower feelings of SB (Štremfel et al., 2024) or about interventions that target enhancing feelings of SB at the individual level (Allen et al., 2022). Berryman and Eley (2019, p. 989-990) warn of the risks of assuming that everyone experiences SB in the same way: "When the notion of belonging at school has been posited as having the same meaning and influence on educational experiences for all students then we are in danger of missing or trivialising the experiences for the marginalised, the othered or the alienated." It is therefore important that efforts are made to identify which groups of young people are more at risk of, or what the precursors are to experiencing a negative sense of SB at this time.

In terms of transitions experiences more broadly, it is estimated that a notable minority do not have positive experiences (Jindal-Snape and Cantali, 2019; Jindal-Snape et al., 2023). Taking a SB lens, it is possible that there is overlap between these pupils and those who do not experience a positive sense of SB. To effectively identify who is more vulnerable, so that individuals can be supported to develop SB during primary-secondary transitions, it is important to initially identify which factors contribute to a positive sense of SB in the first place. Goodenow's definition of SB (1993, p.80) highlights the multi-faceted and complex nature of it as a construct (Štremfel et al., 2024), which includes references to feelings of acceptance as well as feelings of being respected, included and supported by others at school.

In relation to establishing who is at risk of not feeling a positive sense of SB at this time, it is generally understood that those who are from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds (Riley et al., 2020) and young people with marginalised identities are at increased risk of disengaging from school (Pendergast et al., 2018). Much of the literature focuses upon the importance of social factors and relationships, such as those who have poor relationships with their peers (Pendergast et al., 2018), those who struggle to connect with teachers (Chiu et al., 2016) and those who present with

behaviours that challenge (Huntington Research School, 2024). It is already known that pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), are identified as being more vulnerable to negative transitions experiences (Bailey and Baines, 2012; Cantali, 2019; Jindal-Snape and Cantali, 2019; Jindal-Snape et al., 2023) and that the connection between inclusion and SB is well established (Warnock et al., 2010; Prince and Hadwin, 2013; Adderley et al., 2015).

Hodgkin et al. (2025) applied MMT theory and the XII pillars of successful MMT (Jindal-Snape, 2023) as a framework to consider the views of learners over primary-secondary transitions and found that it was the connection to other peers that was valued most by the learners themselves and which contributed to more positive experiences. Interestingly, relationships are identified as being the most prominent factor based on systematic review of pupil views and experiences, that would benefit from further support (Mumford and Birchwood, 2021). Indeed, the importance of social relationships for wellbeing, particularly in adolescence is widely acknowledged (Meeus et al., 2005; Carter et al., 2015) where feelings of alienation are common (Hassard et al., 2024). This was reinforced by advisors in this study at T3, where friendship problems were suggested as a reason why feelings of SB had declined over this project.

Since peer relationships are so integral to SB particularly during adolescence, it is important to consider those young people who experience barriers to social interaction specifically and how they can be supported (Hodgkin et al., 2025). Although not the focus of this study, one example to consider is autistic young people who often face social interaction challenges (National Autistic Society, 2025). While they may experience an overall positive sense of SB over primary-secondary transitions, their scores were found to be lower than typically developing peers (Hebron, 2018). Carter et al. (2015, p.421) point to the importance of peer relationships for self-worth and academic performance at school. They reflect on the challenges linked to establishing peer relationships for adolescents with chronic illness, where symptoms can be seen as ‘socially undesirable’. This is particularly salient during adolescence where peer relationships and peer status are so prominent (Veenstra and Laninga-Wijnen, 2023).

Murphy and Zirkel (2015) explain how belonging is experienced differently by young people whose social identities make them more vulnerable to negative stereotypes and that this impacts upon their academic outcomes. As already established, SB is also essentially a precursor for effective identity development to be able to take place with adolescents (Allen et al., 2018; Verhoeven et al., 2019). Indeed, Hassard et al. (2024) explain that in recent educational reform that has taken place in Queensland, Australia the principle of 'distinct identity' has been adopted where support is provided for young adolescents to develop individual and group identities. They found that in taking this approach that SB remained stable over their transitions from primary to secondary school. Interestingly, Harris and Nowland (2021) point to the importance of social stratification, in terms of the ongoing adaptations that are taking place over transitions (Jindal-Snape, 2018) and emphasise that certain groups of young people have more or less opportunities to make the adjustments they need to across academic, social and emotional domains in their new school environments.

This study focused on reading specifically and it is already established that academic achievement is associated with SB (Korpershoek et al., 2020), including reading achievement (Chiu et al., 2016; Tan et al., 2022). At this point it is helpful to also begin to consider the findings from the qualitative data collected in this study alongside the quantitative findings related to SB, RSE and RTV, particularly the participants' perceptions of 'struggling' reader identities. This part of the data found that 'struggling' reader identities became marginalised, driven by a fear of peer judgement and indicated that young people who are identified as 'struggling' readers by their peers would be considered to have a lower peer status and would potentially be 'socially undesirable' (Carter et al., 2015, p.421) in the secondary school context.

This is very concerning for struggling readers navigating primary-secondary transitions, as this could make them more vulnerable to having difficulties establishing those peer relationships that are so inherent to their feelings of SB. In this way being labelled with the negative stereotype of being a 'struggling' reader in secondary school could act as a barrier to social interaction, which could therefore impact upon feelings of SB, RSE and RTV for young people with reading difficulties. These findings therefore suggest that those who are identified as 'struggling' readers by their peers would potentially

have restricted opportunities for adjustment across academic, social and emotional domains because of negative categorisation within social hierarchies in their secondary school environments.

This new understanding of the consequences of negative stereotypes is an important contribution to both the primary-secondary transitions literature and to the understanding of reading development and motivation for adolescents. The findings from this study therefore clearly demonstrate that further exploration is needed in relation to transitions practices to promote social and emotional wellbeing and SB for struggling readers specifically and to be considered when planning reading intervention for those facing challenges at this age. In terms of next steps in practice, very little is known about evidence-based interventions that target increasing feelings of SB with individuals (Allen et al., 2022). Nevertheless, approaches that focus upon strengths and that promote positive interactions with staff and peers (Allen et al., 2022) and those that support young people to develop a belonging mindset (Borman et al., 2019) are currently looking promising. For example, developing awareness that difficulties with belonging over transitions are a common part of the process that can be overcome. Based on the findings of this research, the importance of focusing upon developing a positive self-concept and identity development, as part of developing supportive mindsets for struggling readers in particular during primary-secondary transitions is emphasised.

To summarise, it has been found that SB declines during primary-secondary transitions and the relationship found between SB and RSE and RTV that exist at the end of primary school are disrupted post-transfer. I argue that this decline in SB and the breakdown of the relationship between SB and RSE and RTV, contributes in part to the negative transitions experienced by some young people. It is therefore critical that an individualised approach is taken to identify young people who are at increased vulnerability of experiencing low feelings of SB, RSE and RTV. Since peer relationships are central to SB, pupils who face barriers to social interaction are particularly at risk. I argue that young people perceived as ‘struggling’ readers by their peers are one such group whose marginalised social identities could potentially act as a barrier to their social interaction, affecting their academic, social and emotional adjustments to

secondary school and their reader identity development. It is important for schools to provide intervention that supports the development of supportive mindsets and that helps to increase positive interactions with peers incorporating opportunities for positive identity development. This leads into the next section which focuses upon the findings in relation to reader identity development in more depth.

6.5 Discursive Reader Identity Development During Primary-Secondary School Transitions

This research established the pupil perspective of what it means to be a 'good' and a 'struggling' reader and how this changed during primary-secondary transitions. This provides new insight into how reader identities are socially constructed at school from the pupil perspective, and how these evolve in response to changes in their school context following the transfer from primary to secondary school, and over the first year of their ongoing adjustments as part of their primary-secondary transitions.

Overall, 'good' readers were perceived as being accurate, fluent and having strong comprehension skills. They were described as confident readers who could read aloud and who were independent. They were also persistent and motivated readers who enjoyed reading. Comprehension skills were emphasised in the participant's perceptions of 'good' readers, in the first instance. However, references to comprehension factors in relation to 'good' reader identities, declined as the general focus shifted towards more technical aspects, related to reading accuracy, in the secondary school context. Interestingly, in this study 'good' readers were also related to positive social and emotional traits, such as feeling proud and included at school, although references to some personal attributes, such as 'excited' and 'kind' were removed post-transfer, where they were considered irrelevant to reading.

On the other hand, 'struggling' readers were perceived as inaccurate and lacking in fluency with few reading comprehension skills. They lacked confidence and feared reading aloud. It was also perceived that 'struggling' readers do not enjoy reading and lack independence. In contrast to perceptions of 'good' readers, perceptions of 'struggling' readers were predominantly characterised with references to accuracy in

terms of their lack of ability to decode text, and there was much less emphasis on understanding factors. In this study 'struggling' reader discursive identities were also perceived as having 'negative' social and emotional traits, such as being sad or angry and not feeling a sense of belonging at school.

It is a novel contribution of this research that the participants made the connection between the way that they perceive that 'good' and 'struggling' readers engage with reading, and more broadly their emotional states and personality traits. It is likely that this is partly related to the methods that were used, that is the 'role on the wall' approach (Goode and Neelands, 2000) whereby participants were asked to add words or phrases to describe 'good' and 'struggling' reader figures both internally, to represent internal thoughts, feelings, and motivations and externally, to show actions and behaviours. Nevertheless, this finding is interesting and relates to how Moje and Luke (2009) refer to how the way people read impacts more broadly upon the type of person they are perceived as being.

Although there is not much existing research in this area (Smith et al., 2023) these findings contribute an up to date and holistic perspective on how discursive reader identities are currently perceived by young people of this age and how this has developed over time. For example, historically it was understood that the pupil perspective of what it meant to be a 'good' reader focused in the main upon technical factors related to accuracy (Johns and Ellis, 1976; Henk and Melnick, 1992) whereas the perceptions highlighted in this study show that pupil's perceptions are now much broader, in that they incorporate comprehension, performance, independence and affective factors in relation to both 'good' 'and 'struggling' discursive reader identities, although the main emphasis was on accuracy and comprehension aspects. These findings reinforce more recent findings by Smith et al. (2023) who identified that young people associated reading comprehension behaviours with being a 'good' reader.

Nevertheless, in this study, perceptions of 'good' and 'struggling' discursive reader identities changed during primary-secondary school transitions and it was identified that references to these understanding factors did start to decline post-transfer in favour of more technical reading accuracy aspects. This study also found that there was

a gradual increase in references to performance factors, in relation to perceptions of 'struggling' readers in the secondary context. This relates to how Pearson (2003) found that Y7 pupils who were underachieving in literacy were very focused upon performance aspects in relation to their descriptions of 'good' and 'poor' readers. In the present study, this shift towards accuracy is likely to be connected to the emphasis on performance factors for 'struggling' readers and the wider findings related to public self-consciousness. This is because the participants perceived that there was more pressure on young people as both 'good' and 'struggling' readers in the secondary context, to minimise reading out loud to avoid public embarrassment, in case they made any mistakes and were judged negatively by their peers. This is an interesting finding, since it is well recognised that adolescents experience low confidence in their oracy skills and that anxiety around talk is a particular problem in secondary schools (Millard and Menzies, 2016). However, it is new information that this self-consciousness around speaking out loud is being applied by young people to their perceptions of reader identities and influencing their discourse and decision making around reading over primary-secondary transitions.

Alongside the move towards more technical and performance aspects of reading, the pupil perspective also showed a decline in the references to enjoyment and motivation factors in relation to both 'good' and 'struggling' reader identities during primary-secondary transitions. This finding supports the evidenced decrease in reading for pleasure over adolescence (Maynard et al., 2008) and shows how this was evident in how pupils perceive what it meant to them to be a 'good' or 'struggling' reader. This is a new insight connecting discursive reader identities to reading for pleasure, and it would be of future research interest to explore this connection further, in terms of how young people's reader identity labels determine whether individuals go on to be adults who read for pleasure (Eriksson Barajas and Aronsson, 2009).

All these identified changes in pupils' perceptions of discursive reader identities are interesting, since they reflect insight into the pupil experience and because pupils' perspectives of reader identities are thought to be influenced by their classroom experiences (Moses, 2015). In relation to these findings, this suggests therefore that the pupil experience in the secondary context was more focused upon reading

accuracy and performance rather than enjoyment and comprehension. This is despite how it is known that at the time of the data collection that in at least two of the three participating secondary schools there were efforts being taken to promote reading motivation and reading for pleasure. The increased emphasis identified on high-stakes assessment in the secondary context is likely to be driving this disconnect, since this is a known barrier to reading for pleasure (Cremin and Scholes, 2024).

The most notable change in pupil's perceptions of 'good' and 'struggling' reader identities post-transfer was a significantly increased emphasis on public self-consciousness related to reading, which impacted upon social factors in relation to perceptions of both 'good' and 'struggling' reader identities. It is a new contribution to the literature that the increased emphasis on public self-consciousness is impacting upon pupil's perceptions of discursive reader identities in the secondary school environment. This study also identified the extensive implications of this shift in relation to reader identity development over primary-secondary school transitions. These findings are particularly important since discursive reader identities or reader identity labels can be powerfully influential over a young person's life, in that they can marginalise or privilege individuals in classrooms (Moje and Luke, 2009) and influence the decisions young people make in relation to reading-based tasks (Moje and Dillon, 2006; Hall, 2009).

In relation to 'good' readers this meant that at the start of secondary school the participants felt that 'good' readers would carry on reading, making contributions to lessons and be faithful to themselves as 'good' readers, even if this conflicted with fitting in. By the end of the year, however, the participants agreed that 'good' readers should maintain their reading confidence on the inside, rather than outwardly show it, to avoid judgement from their peers in their new school environment. This had implications for their reading decisions particularly related to performance and confidence aspects of reading and meant that it was recommended that 'good' readers should refrain from being open and public with their reading behaviours, which has potential repercussions for their engagement with reading whilst in the public space of school.

Crucially, it was the 'struggling' reader identity label that was increasingly disadvantaged in the secondary context because of this fear of peer judgement and increased feelings of public self-consciousness. It is important to clarify that public self-consciousness factors were present in relation to the participants' perceptions of the 'struggling' reader identity label in their primary schools, prior to their transfer to secondary school. However, references to public self-consciousness factors increased considerably over the three time points during primary-secondary transitions. The implications of this were that participants' felt that 'struggling' readers should mask their difficulties and change their reading behaviours, for example carry out reading practice in private and minimise any support in school to avoid public humiliation. This therefore has important consequences in terms of access and engagement with any support needed in school for those with reading difficulties. This also influenced reading performance in that there was increased reference to self-conscious emotions, such as embarrassment and anxiety related to any out loud elements of reading, which would potentially lead to exposure of reading difficulties for 'struggling' readers and resultant negative social repercussions.

The impact of these findings is particularly concerning for pupils with reading difficulties during primary-secondary transitions, since these labels have consequences (Alvermann, 2001), in that the opinions of peers and discourses around reading in school influences how individuals perceive themselves (Coombs, 2013), or their reader self-concept. This relates to how in this study discursive reader identities were focused upon, which is important since reader identities, or positions are constructed socially (Eriksson Barajas and Aronsson, 2009). In this case, this shift in perceptions around the 'struggling' reader stereotype, could lead to negative self-evaluation for those who identify with the 'struggling' reader label during adolescence, when identity formation is crucial and when they are establishing their position in the social hierarchy (Neff and McGehee, 2010) in their new secondary school contexts.

This relates to the importance of agency within reader identity development and how young people are active agents in this process - indeed identities can be developed and redeveloped by young people through literacy (Davies, 2003). For example, young people can position themselves within established hierarchies of their own volition

(Eriksson Barajas and Aronsson, 2009) and can respond by resisting or accepting identity labels that have been assigned to them by others (Abodeeb-Gentile and Zawilinski, 2013). It is important that teachers are aware of these processes and support young people who are struggling to develop their voice and allow them to act with a sense of agency related to literacy practices in the classroom (Wortham, 2004). The findings of this research suggest that from the pupil perspective, individuals with reading difficulties should resist being assigned the 'struggling' reader label by their peers through masking their difficulties and evading support to avoid exposure. This finding gives support to the idea that: "Adolescents with a history of literacy difficulties often generate identities that interfere with future literacy learning." (Moore et al., 2000 p.3) as struggling readers are acting through their own volition in ways that are detrimental to their literacy progress by avoiding engaging with reading and reading support to resist the 'struggling' reader identity label with the aim of evading negative social repercussions.

The consequences of this evolution in reader identity labels or positions, were further magnified in this research by a heightened focus upon high-stakes assessment in the secondary context which additionally increased pressure for struggling readers. This therefore also has implications for the psychological wellbeing of struggling readers, particularly given the connection between reader identity and self-concept (Oyserman et al., 2012; Breadmore et al., 2019; Verhoeven et al., 2019). It is already known that poor self-concept for reading is the factor connecting reading difficulties to anxiety (McArthur, 2022). This identified shift in the pupil perspective of reader identity labels which increasingly stigmatises the 'struggling' reader label, is concerning as this could increase the risk of these young people having negative reader self-concepts and therefore negatively impacting upon the mental health and wellbeing for struggling readers further.

In terms of next steps in practice, it is important first and foremost that teachers are aware of how affective factors are impacting upon reading development over primary-secondary transitions, with an emphasis on reader identity development, which is often overlooked (Breadmore et al., 2019) and particularly the influence of discursive reader identity labels which are socially constructed in the classroom. These findings

reaffirm that the SVR (Gough and Tunmer, 1986) and by extension The Reading House (Education Endowment Foundation, 2021) do not represent a complete view of reading development (Kirby and Savage, 2008). Indeed, these findings emphasise the importance of raising awareness of the impact of affective factors further still.

These research findings present a negative outlook for struggling readers during primary-secondary transitions; however, it is important to recognise that since literacies are socially constructed, then this also poses opportunities for teachers to adapt these constructions if required to support the adolescents they are working with (Comber and Cormack, 1997; Pearson, 2003). Educational transitions can be conceptualised as a change from one identity or 'way of being' to another (Lam and Pollard, 2006; Ecclestone et al., 2009) as young people negotiate the ongoing nature of 'becoming' and 'unbecoming' over primary-secondary transitions. In this way, primary-secondary transitions can be viewed as an opportunity for both primary and secondary schools to enhance wellbeing and social trajectories (Donaldson et al., 2023). Particularly, since these transitions occur alongside the onset of adolescence, when identity development is paramount (Harris and Nowland, 2021), which would therefore be the ideal time to focus on literate identity development in practice.

As part of this, schools need to also be aware of their own influence on this process in terms of how teachers are constructing norms that define being a 'good' or a 'struggling' reader in classrooms. Otherwise, they are at risk of unintentionally negatively impacting upon young people's identity development (Verhoeven et al., 2019). This idea of what counts in schools as being a 'good' reader or 'successful' reading more broadly is important as this impacts upon pupils' sense of self, or their reader identities (Coombs, 2013; Kucirkova and Cremin, 2020). This is magnified by how young people with identities that do not conform with the school definition are left in a position where they need to adjust their identities to fit in or resist this which leads to feelings of being disconnected from school (Harris and Nowland, 2021). This relates to directly to feelings of SB during primary-secondary transitions, which declined significantly in this research. Harris and Nowland (2021, p.64) call for a 'culture of acceptance' for those with alternative social, personal or learning identities in the secondary context. This study supports this recommendation but also argues for

an individualised approach for those who are at increased vulnerability of experiencing a reduced sense of SB, including those who identify with the 'struggling' reader identity label. Although new insight has been contributed about the pupil perspective of what makes a 'good' and 'struggling' reader in the present study, it is a limitation that only the pupil perspective was focused upon. It is recommended that future research explores both the teacher and parent perspective of 'good' and 'struggling' reader identities alongside the pupil perspective during primary-secondary transitions, so that more light is shed on understanding the lifeworlds of young people and the influence of the parent and teacher perceptions of 'good' and 'struggling' reader discursive identities.

In a more generalised sense, this study illuminates how reading development does not take place in a vacuum (Moore et al., 2000) and that learning to read goes beyond reading skills, including a shift in identity, and is very much about the individual (Wagner, 2021). This insight into the dynamic nature of learning emphasises the complexity of the process, in contrast to the SVR (Gough and Tunmer, 1986) which can be perceived as deterministic (Francis et al., 2018) and does not allow for the interplay of affective factors that contribute to an individual's reading development.

The findings from this part of the qualitative data therefore triangulate with the findings from the quantitative data collected related to the participants' feelings of SB, RTV and RSE. In particular, these findings strengthen the argument further that an individualised approach needs to be taken to reading and transitions support for young people of this age, considering reader identity development and the importance of this for developing positive self-concepts for reading and promoting feelings of SB with adolescents. One factor that stands out as being particularly significant to supporting struggling readers during primary-secondary transitions, is the cultivation of self-compassion. Self-compassion is a predictor of positive mental health outcomes for adolescents (Neff and McGehee, 2010). It is also a resilience factor that moderates the connection between academic difficulties and depression (Lahtinen et al., 2020), and it has been found that self-compassion responds positively to intervention with adolescents in particular (Seekis et al., 2023). This is particularly relevant to the findings of this research which highlights how struggling readers as a group may be

contending with feelings of inadequacy and negative reader self-concepts and as it is identified as an MMT-Habit of Heart (MMT-HOH) as part of the XII pillars of successful MMT that influence a young person's perception of their abilities and skills (Jindal-Snape, 2023).

Alongside this, it is pertinent to consider the implications of these findings more broadly in practice. Since reading skills are needed to access nearly all aspects of life this makes this a major societal issue (Toste et al., 2020) and an issue of education and social justice (Cope and Kalantzis, 2023). Applying the multiliteracies perspective, it is argued that to achieve education justice, challenges related to learner diversity need to be addressed and that for marginalised groups it is these lifeworld differences as part of their literate identities that young people bring to school with them, that need to be considered (Cope and Kalantzis, 2023). In this case this is relevant to those who have been positioned as 'struggling' readers and how the adjustments they need to make to become part of school settings may be more challenging for them if they do not feel that their lifeworld fits with what counts as being a 'good' reader in school. This resonates with this study in multiple ways, in that as well as the focus upon those who are struggling with reading as a group who are more vulnerable to being marginalised, most of the participants were also classified as being 'EAL' learners who came from a variety of cultural backgrounds and communities. The negative impact on the opportunities young people have for school adjustment during primary-secondary transitions is combined for young people with multiple marginalised social categorisations (Harris and Nowland, 2021), and this also needs to be considered.

Verhoeven et al. (2019) emphasise that one way to support adolescents at risk of marginalisation is to provide opportunities for reflective exploration and meaningful learning experiences as an intentional and integral part of everyday pedagogy, including opportunities to critically consider the influence of societal inequalities on their identity development. They recommend that supportive classroom environments, where mistakes are valued are pivotal for this, which lends more weight to the importance of promoting a sense of SB with individual pupils within a growth mindset environment. On a practical level it is recommended that in taking an identity lens this can: "help teachers recognise, value and find out about children's previous, current and

emerging reader identities." (Kucirkova and Cremin, 2020, p.130). One way to connect with the lifeworlds of young people and therefore make reading more relevant to them personally is to ensure that schools use authentic reading materials (Lim et al., 2022). Kucirkova and Cremin (2020) recommend exploring pupils' reading histories as part of a reading community for positive reader identity development. They suggest that this could focus upon sharing books from previous classes, or from home and creating reading rivers to present collections of books that they have read to begin to explore the insights gained. As well as focused activities where children draw themselves as readers as a discussion prompt about their personal interests and preferences.

Another way to scaffold reader identity development and support lifeworld diversity is through the approach of academic possible selves. Possible selves are: "cognitive representations of the future desires and fears people have for themselves, reflecting the future aspect of the self-concept." (Efthymiadou et al., 2025, p.2). This approach supports motivation and influences behavioural change (Frazier et al., 2021) and the approach is a driver for self-regulation and agency with adolescents (Arzhangi and Michaeli Manee, 2024), particularly those from socioeconomically disadvantaged and less supportive environments (Efthymiadou et al., 2025). This approach is particularly relevant to this study since the academic possible selves approach has also been linked to increased connection to school (Oyserman et al., 2002) and self-efficacy through agency (Arzhangi and Michaeli Manee, 2024). In a practical sense, academic possible selves can be short or long-term and young people would explore their hoped for and feared academic possible selves and then set goals and plan to achieve their hoped for selves, and avoid their feared selves, where school is seen as a pathway (Efthymiadou et al., 2025). Taking into account the findings of this study, this approach would potentially be an impactful way to support reader identity development at the opportune time of primary-secondary transitions, whereby possible selves related to reading in the secondary context could be explored pre and post-transfer to support self-regulated learning and ensure that the value of reading is made meaningful and relevant to the young people themselves and support positive development of their reader self-concept and feelings of SB. It is the intention that a set of practical materials including the possible selves' approach, cultivation of self-compassion and recognition

of the importance of lifeworld diversity will be developed for schools as part of a follow up project and output from this research.

In sum, this part of the research sheds light on the pupil perspective of 'good' and 'struggling' reader identity labels during primary-secondary transitions and therefore provides new insight into how socially constructed reader identities evolve over this pivotal time. These findings have been discussed in terms of the consequences of these changes for young people in their new secondary school contexts and whilst navigating adolescence. Much of the discussion has focused upon struggling readers, since the 'struggling' reader identity label was increasingly stigmatised and disadvantaged, driven by an increased emphasis on public self-consciousness post-transfer. The potential implications are that this negatively influences wellbeing and social trajectories for young people with reading difficulties and can cause them to resist the identity position in ways that can impede their reading progress. I argue that primary-secondary transitions can be positioned as the ideal opportunity to facilitate positive reader identity development. Approaches to develop self-concept, agency and self-compassion and connect with young people's lifeworld diversity within an overarching individualised approach have been recommended to work towards improved reading and wellbeing outcomes, and to contribute more broadly to increased education and social justice for young people with reading difficulties.

The next section builds upon the findings discussed in this section and focuses on the pupil perspective of what is most important to be a 'successful' reader and how this changed during primary-secondary transitions.

6.6 'Successful' reading and Reading for Pleasure During Primary-Secondary Transitions

To the best of my knowledge this is the only study that has explored what young people think are the most important attributes of being a 'successful' reader over primary-secondary transitions. It is therefore a new contribution that this research found that young people consistently ranked understanding and enjoyment as being most important to be a 'successful' reader over this time. The high value placed on

understanding in relation to ‘successful’ reading reinforces what was found in relation to ‘good’ discursive reader identities in this study and by that of Smith et al. (2023). In contrast, it is noteworthy that reading accuracy, in terms of decoding the words accurately, was not considered one of the most important components for being a ‘successful’ reader by the young people (ranked seventh out of thirteen) and was not the subject of much discussion across the focus groups. This contradicts older research into pupils’ perceptions of ‘good’ reader identities where pupils focused in the main upon technical factors related to reading accuracy (Johns and Ellis, 1976; Henk and Melnick, 1992). It also connects to what was found in this study, in relation to pupil perceptions of discursive reader identities, whereby discussion around accuracy was in the main related to ‘struggling’ readers in favour of comprehension aspects when discussing ‘good’ readers, or likewise ‘successful’ reading in this case.

It is particularly interesting that the young people consistently ranked enjoyment as being one of the two most important factors for being ‘successful’ at reading, as this appears on first glance to conflict with the understanding that regular reading for pleasure declines in adolescence (Maynard et al., 2008). Indeed, adolescence is positioned as a particularly vulnerable time for reading motivation and engagement more broadly (Webber et al., 2024) and it has been found recently that only one third of young people report that they actually enjoy reading (Clark et al., 2024). It is important to note that in this case, although enjoyment was ranked as being a consistently very important attribute, the dialogue that took place surrounding their discussions about reading enjoyment evidenced a shift in their thinking away from reading for pleasure over their transitions, post-transfer.

This development in the participants’ thinking over this time, was related to the necessity of being able to persevere with reading at secondary school, regardless of whether they enjoyed it or not. There was reference in all three participating secondary schools to being ‘forced’ to read or just having to apply their reading skills regardless of enjoyment to be able to pass tests and fulfil lesson requirements. This was connected to the importance of understanding for being a ‘successful’ reader as the participants’ reasoned that understanding of their reading had to be demonstrated regardless of whether the reading had been enjoyable or not.

These perceptions were magnified by the increased emphasis on high-stakes attainment found in the secondary context, which further supports the argument that the performative agenda is a barrier to reading for pleasure (Cremin and Scholes, 2024). Indeed, feeling pressure related to any activity is de-motivating in itself (Webber et al., 2024) and so it is no surprise that when there is an increased focus on high-stakes tests in the secondary context that this impacts negatively on the young person's perspective of reading motivation and reading enjoyment. As mentioned previously, this is despite how, at the time of the data collection at least two of the three participating secondary schools were developing provision to promote reading motivation and enjoyment. It is possible that this disconnect is caused by the way reading for pleasure can be perceived as an 'optional extra' that is of lesser importance and legitimacy than more formal reading instruction (Cremin and Scholes, 2024, p.549), particularly when there are high stakes, such as the outcomes of examinations.

These findings also triangulate with how these participants themselves showed a significant decline overall in their own RTV and feelings of SB in the secondary context, as well as a non-significant decrease in their RSE. In terms of the potential implications of this evidenced shift away from reading enjoyment, it is widely recognised that there are many positive outcomes associated with reading for pleasure for young people, related to both academic and emotional wellbeing (e.g. Sullivan and Brown, 2015; Torppa et al., 2020; Cremin and Scholes, 2024) that young people are therefore potentially at risk of missing out on. This move away from reading for enjoyment in the secondary context also coincided with a reduction in any reference to reading imaginatively, in terms of going beyond the standard comprehension of the text in an individual way. This builds on the finding previously noted, that the young people became more focused upon technical aspects of reading post-transfer.

Nevertheless, the fact that in this research, despite the shift away from reading for pleasure in the secondary context participants still prioritised enjoyment as being one of the most important factors for being 'successful' at reading, is worthy of consideration. This suggests that the current view of adolescent reading motivation and engagement is perhaps an oversimplification that needs to be explored more fully. This supports recent qualitative research with adolescents that argues that careful

consideration of the literature reveals more subtle changes in attitudes and areas of interest at this time (Webber et al., 2024). In fact, little is known about the lived experiences of adolescent's volitional reading more broadly (Cremin and Scholes, 2024). This study therefore begins to provide insight into the young person perspective of barriers to reading for pleasure that occur in response to the change in context that happens during primary-secondary transitions alongside the onset of adolescence, and how this has impacted upon their perceptions of what is most important to be a 'successful' reader.

Very little is currently known about why reading for pleasure declines into adolescence (Webber et al., 2024). A lack of agency, or autonomy from a SDT perspective (Ryan and Deci, 2000; Webber et al., 2024), is highlighted as an influential factor that contributes towards the reduction at this time (Cremin et al., 2014; Reedy and De Carvalho, 2021) and relates to how adolescence is recognised as a time where individuals have a greater need for autonomy (Ryan and Deci, 2000). Indeed promoting 'autonomy supportive' environments (Lord et al., 1994; Soenens et al., 2015; Ryan and Deci, 2020) and relatedness (Gillison et al., 2008) to nurture a sense of belonging (Ryan and Deci, 2024) is necessary to enhance quality of life after the transfer to secondary school (Gillison et al., 2008). The findings from the current study reinforce this perspective, since the idea of being forced to read out of necessity in school completely removes any element of choice or control from the young people themselves. This suggests that another barrier to reading for pleasure in adolescence is a discrepancy between the reading experiences provided by schools and the needs of young people of this age (Webber et al., 2024) and that secondary schools should critically consider how their practice accommodates (Mumford and Birchwood, 2021) or potentially resists the developmental changes that come with adolescence. It is therefore recommended that adults in schools, who are essentially gatekeepers to the reading experiences of adolescents (Beckton, 2015), consider this need for agency and control related to literacy practices in classrooms, particularly in the secondary context where this is paramount.

Agency is particularly important when planning for adolescents who are struggling with reading, as struggling readers are also likely to be contending with lower levels of RSE

(Anmarkrud and Bråten, 2009) as a result of experiencing repeated reading failure (Bandura, 1997) over time. The importance of this is magnified further when working with young people who are from socioeconomically disadvantaged communities who are less likely to feel like they belong at school (Riley et al., 2020) and where it has been found that facilitating reading for pleasure is more challenging (Hempel-Jorgensen et al., 2018). Interestingly, Reedy and De Carvalho (2021) question whether the motivation to read for pleasure is the result of being a more fluent reader with self-confidence in reading skills in the first instance and not the other way around. It is logical that those who identify as being struggling readers, who have had negative experiences and have experienced reading failure, would be less likely to be motivated to read for pleasure (Webber et al., 2024).

Therefore, to support those who are struggling with reading and wellbeing at this stage in education, the focus needs to start with individual factors rather than environmental ones. It is acknowledged that up to now the reading for pleasure movement has focused in the main upon the importance of developing reading communities in school settings (e.g.Cremin et al., 2014; Cremin and Swann, 2016). The value of these approaches are well recognised. However, I argue that for struggling readers navigating primary-secondary transitions, without development of their individual feelings of agency, self-efficacy and their reader self-concept, that there is a danger that these reading communities could become further examples of public spaces where they face social pressure to mask their difficulties and seek to avoid exposure.

It was also found in this study that a heightened focus on public self-consciousness factors prompted by the change in their social environment post-transfer, also influenced the participants' perceptions of what was most important to be a 'successful' reader. As a result, the focus upon reading performance factors in their discussions increased, which was inherently connected to their dialogue around reading confidence and a fear of reading out loud in front of their peers in their new environment to avoid being judged negatively by them. This explicitly builds upon the findings in relation to their perceptions of discursive reader identities and reinforces the arguments made in relation to the negative implications for struggling readers in

terms of their social, emotional and academic adjustments in the secondary environment and their longer-term trajectories.

In relation to this part of the data set specifically, these concerns were amplified further by the increased frequency that the participants' felt they were asked to read out loud in the secondary context. In some cases, there was reference to specific reading pedagogy, that is 'popcorn reading' that made young people feel like they were being put on the spot with reading in their classrooms, which would exacerbate self-conscious feelings such as embarrassment further. These factors also influenced their perceptions of the value of other components of being a 'successful' reader, such as speed. It was thought that it was important for 'successful readers' to get the speed right, as otherwise this would affect their reading performance and how it was perceived by others.

These findings relate specifically to how Webber et al. (2024) point to the impact of social factors on reading experiences at school as barriers to reading for pleasure in adolescence. They highlight that from a SDT perspective (Ryan and Deci, 2000) that if reading for pleasure threatens a young person's pursuit of their relatedness goals, in terms of connection with their peers, that this avoidance of negative social judgement would in turn negatively influence their engagement with reading. Webber et al. (2024) give the example of reading being portrayed as 'nerdy' in the media. When the advisors in this study reflected upon the data in the advisory groups it was noted that being seen to be a 'good' reader was not 'cool' in secondary school. This has implications for their reader identity development, as it is understood that to what extent basic psychological needs are met influences how young people invest in roles, activities and relationships that satisfy these needs, or equally on the other hand avoid those that jeopardise them (Ryan and Deci, 2003; La Guardia, 2009).

The decline in reading for pleasure connects to what has been found this study in relation to SB. Peer relationships are so critical for promoting a sense of SB and young people who face barriers to social interaction are particularly vulnerable to negative SB outcomes. I argue that this includes those who are perceived as 'struggling' readers by their peers as one group whose marginalised social identities negatively impacts upon

their social relationships and status. Therefore, this threatens their basic need for relatedness and potentially their engagement with reading for pleasure, as well as their adjustments to secondary school and their reader identity development.

In terms of next steps in practice for developing reading motivation and reading for pleasure for those who identify as 'struggling' readers, the importance of adopting practice that promotes agency and autonomy when supporting all adolescents has been emphasised, such as, providing authentic choice and time for reading for pleasure that is not graded or judged (Merga, 2018). Hall (2020) found that even for those who have long-term negative reading histories, positive experiences with text can lead to enjoyment gained from reading. It is interesting that Hall (2020) applied the use of a digital game application that allowed the participants to engage with reading in such a way that they did not feel labelled, and at the same time, that they felt in control of what they read and the pace they needed to read at without the pressure of being judged or graded.

Thus, when some of the identified barriers to reading for pleasure are removed even readers who have identified with the 'struggling' reader label in the longer-term can redefine their reader identities (Hall, 2020). This is particularly relevant to this study which has already identified the negative consequences of the 'struggling' reader stereotype on reading behaviours and wellbeing during primary-secondary school transitions. These findings reinforce the idea that reader identity labels are socially constructed which highlights potential for these to be disrupted or shifted by teachers in schools (Comber and Cormack, 1997; Pearson, 2003) to support adolescents, as needed. It also shows that the way an individual self-identifies as a reader has the potential to be changed as a result of positive experiences with text. This provides further support for how primary-secondary transitions can be viewed as opportunities (Donaldson et al., 2023) for this disruption to take place. However, Webber et al. (2024) warn against assuming that the removal of barriers to reading for pleasure equates to the increase of motivating factors. They recommend an individualised approach, which reinforces how this research argues for an individual approach to the development of reading motivation and engagement with adolescents who are struggling with reading.

It is noteworthy that Hall (2020) used a digital platform to facilitate positive reading experiences for participants that identified with the 'struggling' reader identity label. Although digital media has not been the focus of this study, this aligns with the multiliteracies perspective (Kalantzis et al., 2016) which aims to address inequalities in literacy learning and posits the transformative potential of digital media to enable all learners to participate in meaning making (Kalantzis et al., 2016; Cope and Kalantzis, 2023). Although there are both risks and benefits associated with digital reading with adolescents in practice, and it is acknowledged that it should not be just assumed that adolescents always prefer digital platforms (Merga, 2018), online spaces can be viewed as an opportunity to potentially bridge the gap between adolescents' digital media use in their leisure time and reading for enjoyment (Webber et al., 2024). Interestingly, it was noted by an advisor when interpreting the findings that since having a mobile phone for secondary school, that this had reduced the amount of time they wanted to spend reading. As well as this, when discussing the importance of the types of material the participants in this study only ever mentioned books and did not mention other forms of material, or any digital reading.

Despite this, the opportunities for agency and personalisation that the use of technology could bring (Dobler, 2015), to support the recommendations of a more individualised approach for those who are struggling, are worthy of consideration. It is therefore recommended that further research is needed to explore the potential of digital media to promote agency and personalisation to support adolescents who are struggling with reading.

As well as this, Lupo et al. (2019, p.551) advocate for teachers to avoid reducing the complexity of texts provided in practice, but instead to support individuals as needed to 'embrace the struggle'. They emphasise that it is essentially a misconception that teachers should seek to minimise that struggle for those who have difficulties with reading. In effect they recommend normalising struggling with reading (Hall, 2020) within classrooms. Considering how this study found that the 'struggling' reader identity label is stigmatised in the secondary school context, reframing struggling with reading in schools relates to having an MMT-Growth Mindset (MMT-GM). Having an MMT-GM is a particularly supportive attitude that contributes to successful transitions

experiences (Jindal-Snape, 2023) and the development of resilience and academic attainment in the face of challenging circumstances (Yeager and Dweck, 2020) for reading specifically in this case.

To conclude, this part of the research provides new insight into the pupil perspective of what is most important to be a 'successful' reader during primary-secondary transitions. The young people prioritised understanding alongside enjoyment as the most important attributes of reading to be 'successful'. Since adolescence is understood to be a time when reading motivation and reading for enjoyment declines, much of the discussion has focused upon the findings in relation to reading for pleasure. Despite the value placed on enjoyment by the young people there was an evidenced shift in their reasoning about reading enjoyment during primary-secondary transitions. This highlighted insight into the barriers to reading for pleasure in adolescence, related to a perceived lack of agency magnified by pressure from the higher stakes environment of the secondary school and the influence of social factors resulting from the heightened emphasis on public self-consciousness factors, post-transfer.

The participants consistently valued enjoyment during their transitions despite the barriers they noted. This suggests that the current view of adolescent reading motivation and engagement is an oversimplification. I argue that to increase reading for pleasure in adolescents who are struggling with reading, individual factors related to the self in the first instance, such as their RSE, need to be supported alongside the disruption of stigmatic reader identity labels to allow for all readers to participate meaningfully in communities of readers. To support this in practice, it is recommended that all readers would benefit from a climate of MMT-GM and SB to support high agency and low-pressure opportunities to engage with text to increase their positive experiences and reading. The use of digital media to allow for greater personalisation and control for adolescents who are struggling with reading has also been noted as a potentially interesting approach that would warrant future research attention.

The next section reflects upon the participatory approach to the methods taken and evaluates the process and impact on inclusive education that was realised.

6.7 What value can be added through the application of participatory methodologies?

The use of inclusive or participatory approaches to research should be critically evaluated (Walmsley and Johnson, 2003; Nind, 2014b) so that it is not assumed that increasing the involvement of young people in research has inherent benefits (McCarry, 2012). There is debate over whether the added value of participatory research should focus upon the process itself (Walmsley et al., 2018) or the outcomes realised (Fyson and Fox, 2014; Nind, 2016). As this research applied a participatory approach and aimed to be transformative, the approach and the research outcomes are critically considered. Since the process and the research outcomes are interconnected both aspects are reflected upon and discussed holistically in relation to the noted benefits and limitations.

It has been acknowledged from the outset that this project is 'academic-led', as the research questions and design were planned prior to recruitment of the participants (Thomas and O'Kane, 1998). It is understood that doctoral research is unlikely to ever be completely participatory (Björnsdóttir and Svensdóttir, 2008), and in this research the systems and processes followed were academic requirements of this being a doctoral research project. In addition, it should also not be assumed that more involvement equates to greater inclusivity (McCarry, 2012; Horgan and Martin, 2021). Despite this, it is an identified limitation of this research that young people were not consulted on the development of the research questions and design. As collaboration with participant advisors at the planning stages of the project, would have been potentially both insightful and would have increased the authenticity of their involvement.

Even so, the overarching methodology came from the standpoint that children are "experts in their own lives" (Mason and Danby, 2011, p.185) who have significant contributions to make to educational debates (Pearson, 2016). In practice this looked like opportunities for participant choice (Thomas and O'Kane, 1998; Conolly, 2008), an openness to flexibility throughout and collaboration with the participants as advisors at identified phases of the design. Shared spaces (García Iriarte et al., 2023) or 'advisory

groups' were created to work collaboratively with the participants on developing the format of the online questionnaires in the pilot phase of the study, on the 'co-interpretation' (Nind, 2014a) of the findings as part of the preliminary data analysis, to ensure that their voices have been heard accurately and to collaborate on how the findings would be disseminated within their school communities in both the primary (T1) and secondary school (T3) contexts. Although the advisors who supported development of the format of the online questionnaires as part of the pilot phase of the study were not participants in the main study, all members of the advisory groups in the main study were also participants. They were able to: "make sense of a space for thinking about research as a different space from participating in research." (Horgan and Martin, 2021, p.2). This is an important distinction to make in this research, since contributions made by young people as advisors when they were in the space created for collaborative research have not been treated as data. Instead, their contributions and recommendations have been shared with senior leaders in their school settings as part of the dissemination process, and they have influenced my perspective significantly in a co-reflexive way throughout.

One of the benefits noted is that through the application of participatory methods this research has provided insights into what it means to be an early adolescent navigating primary-secondary school transitions in the current social context (Kellett, 2010). It also meant that ethically, the young person perspective was given a space and a platform to contribute their views as active agents or 'social actors' (Christensen and Prout, 2002) in discussions about processes that affect them (United Nations Convention on the Rights Child, 1989). In this case, this provided insight into the pupil perspective of 'successful' reading and 'good' and 'struggling' discursive reader identities. This approach recognised the multiplicity and social diversity of 'literacies' and respected the different ways of knowing (Nind, 2014b) brought by the young people. Their perspective shed light on the reasons why young people begin to disengage from reading and reading for pleasure during primary-secondary transitions and provided valuable insight into: "peer culture where adults are outsiders" (Thomas, 2017, p.167) and what this means for young people struggling with reading at this time.

In the advisory groups specifically where there were opportunities to co-reflect with the young people as advisors, particular value was added in terms of their 'insider' (Thomas, 2017) perspective which provided insight when developing the format of the online questionnaires, when co-interpreting the data and when disseminating the findings. In terms of developing the format of the online questionnaires, their contributions meant that the format of the online questionnaires were improved prior to the main study, in that the advisors themselves felt that they had made them more welcoming and accessible for young people of this age. It supported my confidence in the developments made that I was able to share the revised online surveys with the advisors to ensure that I had understood and interpreted their feedback accurately.

In the main study, the advisory groups worked collaboratively on analysing some of the raw data and on their interpretations of this data, which is much less common in participatory studies (Horgan and Martin, 2021). In retrospect, this co-reflection worked in multiple ways and overall, the emphasis on flexibility throughout meant that it was possible to respond in the moment to the advisors during the sessions, which supports the case for a pragmatic and flexible approach that works for the individual young people taking part (Horgan and Martin, 2021).

First, they explored the raw data that they were most interested in, in pairs and shared their perceptions of what this data meant to them. This revealed authentic insights based on their lived experiences that I would not have thought of otherwise (Thomas, 2017), that have influenced my perspective and have therefore impacted upon the final conclusions drawn (Thomas and O'Kane, 1998). For example, when an advisor shared experience of being asked to read aloud the mail for their family in connection to the RTV data, this influenced my understanding of the findings and reinforced the importance placed upon understanding the lifeworlds of young people through qualitative approaches.

Next, I shared my initial thoughts on how I had begun to interpret the data, in terms of consulting with them as advisors as to whether their voices had been heard accurately. This was essentially 'member checking' (Horgan and Martin, 2021), and it is acknowledged that when young people are engaged just to verify a researcher's

interpretations this can be considered tokenistic (Coad and Evans, 2008). However, in this case it was the beginning of a more in-depth dialogue which provided further insights that deepened my understanding of the data and led into the advisors' own recommendations for changes in practice within their own school communities, based on the findings for dissemination. It is the intention that the dialogue recorded during the advisory groups will be transcribed and analysed as part of a follow up project to provide further reflections on the process and outcomes of involving young people in the co-interpretation of findings as part of the data analysis process.

The contribution that the advisory groups made to the dissemination was critical. In this part of the process the decision making lay completely in the hands of the advisors where they chose what they thought we had found out that was most important to be shared with senior leaders in their schools, and in how they wanted to communicate this. The advisors worked independently on creating posters and PowerPoint slides that were shared in a timely manner with senior leaders in their schools. I also created accessible summaries to support dissemination of the findings in school that included a section on the advisors' reflections and recommendations for next steps in practice, which were also shared with senior leaders in school. An example of an accessible summary provided to a participating school in the pilot study is provided in Appendix H and in the main study in Appendix P. In one of the primary schools in the pilot study and in the two secondary schools in the main study, the accessible summaries were shared at senior leadership team meetings, and it was noted in the primary school as a key document for school improvement in relation to reading. This represents research impact in practice that was realised in time for it to be potentially beneficial for the participants themselves. In this respect taking a participatory approach to the methods was utilised as a vehicle to further inclusive education (Nind, 2014b; Pearson, 2016) and the project started the process of change in school settings.

There were also benefits for the participants themselves. In line with previous research in this area, the young people who participated appeared to have an enjoyable and empowering research experience, and they developed some research skills through capacity building training (Turtle et al., 2010; Lundy and McEvoy, 2012; Horgan and Martin, 2021) in the advisory groups and as part of the initial engagement sessions. In

relation to the wider findings of this study, it is interesting that this approach promoted agency and control for the young people themselves throughout, and that this led to them feeling empowered by the process. This also relates to how adolescence is recognised as a time where individuals have a greater need for agency, or autonomy (Ryan and Deci, 2000) and how throughout this discussion, the importance of promoting agency to support motivation and wellbeing during primary-secondary transitions have been emphasised.

One part of the process that was particularly valuable was the use of with the participants or advisors. This started as an icebreaker activity in the engagement sessions with pupils as part of the recruitment process. This unintentionally became a regular part of the project throughout as the young people requested that we play games, that is, 'two truths and a lie' and 'Who am I?', usually at the start of sessions. On reflection, in the earlier stages of the project when the young people were still in their primary school settings this supported the development of trusted relationships between myself and the participants, which was an important part of the process in establishing a favourable environment for meaningful participation (Lee et al., 2022). As the project progressed post-transfer, in their secondary schools, being part of the research project presented an opportunity for the participants to get to know their peers from different primary schools in a context away from the classroom. Playing games was an important aspect that supported them to make new peer connections (Daw, 2024). On one occasion I observed two participants shaking hands whilst in the middle of a game of 'Who am I?' who went on to become friends over the course of the project. I also noted participants learning each other's names when choosing whose turn it was next. This represents an unexpected benefit for the participants that occurred because of taking part in a participatory research project that included playing games, longitudinally across their primary-secondary transitions. Based on this, I recommend playing games as part of participatory methods with young people as good practice to establish rapport in the first instance (O'Connor et al., 2011; Daw, 2024).

Essentially, playing games and being part of a collaborative project across a year of their primary-secondary transitions supported the participants' relatedness needs. This

relates to the wider findings of this study. When considering young people's engagement this needs to be in relation to what extent their basic psychological needs are being met or indeed threatened (Ryan and Deci, 2003; La Guardia, 2009). It is relevant to note that young people get less breaktimes in secondary school compared to primary (Baines and Blatchford, 2019) and that their opportunities for play decrease (Finney et al., 2020). Interestingly, it has been found that Y7 pupils feel that they have less permission to play in the secondary context, mainly because of social factors, related to the fear of being rejected or targeted by their peers (Finney et al., 2020).

As peer relationships are so critical to feelings of SB, I argue that participating in a project which promoted play as well as feelings of agency supported the participants' adjustments to their new school settings. Another unique aspect of this project that supported the development of positive relationships, was that in my position as the facilitator I was able to work with the young people between schools. Although further research into the impact of these processes is needed, this project could potentially serve as a model of what can be achieved through promoting autonomy and relatedness with adolescents in projects that start in primary school and that continue into the secondary context, including playing games and an emphasis on building up positive relationships, facilitated by a trusted adult who can work between schools. This could then be replicated as part of an inclusive approach to support successful primary-secondary transitions. In addition, there is a dearth of research into the wider impact of playful pedagogies in secondary education. It is acknowledged that these approaches could have broader potential beyond the scope of this study, for example on academic outcomes (Parker et al., 2022).

The biggest challenge of facilitating a participatory approach was in attempting to balance power dynamics (Bourke, 2009) to promote authentic and meaningful participation. It was complex to balance these dynamics between myself and the young people because of my positionality as an adult and teacher. Particularly, since I carried out this project in schools that are all within the same local authority that I work in, which meant that in some cases I had worked as an external professional in some of the schools that participated in this study. The boundaries were blurred with regards to whether I was an 'insider' or 'outsider' to the social group that I facilitated the research

with (Ritchie et al., 2009; Moore, 2012). I believe that I was mostly viewed as an 'outsider' by the young people themselves and when I was researching in schools with the young people, I aimed to take on the role of a collaborative facilitator. Although this was still a challenging balance to achieve, it is acknowledged that it would be even more complex to navigate for practitioners to carry out participatory research with young people in schools that they work in (Czerniawski, 2023).

Facilitating positive relationships over time were key to support this meaningful participation and as mentioned previously, playing games together supported the development of this. It was also important that agency and control were promoted throughout. For example, the participants or advisors always knew that they were taking part voluntarily and that they could leave at any time. There were also opportunities for flexibility and decision-making throughout. Despite the application of these approaches and how I feel that positive collaborative relationships were established over time, there were still difficulties faced, particularly where participants presented with behaviours that challenged.

Although this was not a regular occurrence, when faced with behaviours that challenged as the facilitator, I chose to consciously ignore low-level disruptive behaviours which I would have potentially challenged if I had been there in my position as a teacher. However, on one occasion a young advisor was outwardly unkind and intimidating to another who was sharing an opinion. On this occasion, I responded and reproached them authoritatively, as it felt that it was ethically the right choice to intervene.

On reflection, it is interesting to consider this incident through a power lens. Gallagher (2008) explains that the value of participatory methods and indeed this idea of 'balancing' power dynamics, is rooted in oppositional models of power, where power is perceived as a commodity that can be given and taken away. He reflects upon his own research experience: "Caught between my commitment to allowing the children freedom over the research process, my desire to keep the group focused and produce the kind of data that I thought would be useful, and my obligation to protect Jennifer from the impositions of her peers, I felt confused and unsure of what to do."

(Gallagher, 2008, p.142). He then argues that power has multiple forms, including as a form of action and strategy, that is exercised rather than possessed. Based on this he recommends that when applying participatory methods that aim to be emancipatory that the focus should not be on avoiding power, but instead of how to use power to resist domination. From this perspective therefore, exercising power in this way to protect one young person from another and maintain a favourable environment for meaningful participation, does not mean that the power dynamics were not balanced successfully. These reflections therefore support the idea that power is complex, and that it should be considered critically by facilitators as strategic action within group dynamics, rather than as a commodity.

Another factor that contributed to this complexity was that fact that this research took place in school settings where power dynamics and hierarchies between adults and pupils are deeply entrenched (Thomas, 2017; Horgan and Martin, 2021; Vasalou et al., 2021). In this case spaces away from classrooms, such as libraries and information technology suites were used as the setting for the participatory research, which mitigated some of this effect. Nonetheless, we were still in school settings, and I recognise that this is likely to have added to the challenge of successfully balancing power dynamics. I recommend that it would be potentially less problematic for future research with young people that aims to be participatory to take place in spaces with less established authoritative roles for adults, and compliant roles for young people. To mitigate this, Vasalou et al. (2021) recommend building up long-term partnerships with young people to support authentic participation, which reinforces the importance of relational approaches further still.

In addition, it was also challenging as a facilitator to balance power dynamics within the groups of young people themselves (García Iriarte et al., 2023). This was particularly pertinent during the focus group discussions where it was clear that certain voices within each of the groups were more dominant than others and that some participants chose not to contribute as much. As the facilitator I tried to carefully balance out these group dynamics, without impacting upon the agency of the participants. To evaluate the success of this, it would be potentially interesting to analyse the focus group dialogue surrounding ‘good’ and ‘struggling’ reader identity

labels and ‘successful’ reading again, from this perspective to explore which participants across the focus groups were making which contributions to the discussions, in terms of whether they were assessed as being good or struggling readers themselves.

The participants and advisors were both self-selecting, and therefore they were made up of young people who had been assessed as being across a range of reading attainment levels. For clarity, 69.5% of the focus group participants were assessed as meeting or above the national standard for reading for their age and 30.5% as below the expected threshold, which is higher than the national average, but broadly in line with the national picture (Department for Education, 2024c). Although the participants were not asked if they identified as a ‘good’ or ‘struggling’ readers, it is likely that some members of the focus and advisory groups identified with the ‘struggling’ reader identity label themselves. Interestingly, García Iriarte et al. (2023) question whether inclusive research can in fact reinforce perceptions of ‘deficit’ and contribute to exclusionary practice, within the context of research with adults with learning disabilities. It is important to question whether this project reduced the stigma associated with the ‘struggling’ reader identity label, or if it inadvertently reinforced it.

Despite the importance of opening the dialogue to discuss reading stereotypes with the young people who socially construct them, it is recognised that this draws attention to these stereotypes, which could potentially reinforce bias, or lead to negative self-evaluation for young people who identify with the ‘struggling’ reader identity label. This is an ethical dilemma, and, in this research, I was aware of the need to handle this sensitively throughout to protect the self-esteem of all the young people who contributed. I would make contributions to gently challenge any stereotypical reasoning. It was a difficult balance to strike as I was also conscious of not wanting to influence the participants’ reasoning or dominate the discussion in any way. Cecchini (2019) provides guidelines to support the process and highlights that alongside ethical considerations and the importance of identifying ethically sensitive moments that facilitators of participatory research should ensure that participants reflect upon stereotypical thinking. In this case, the advisory groups provided an ideal space for co-reflection and meant that without diminishing any agency for the young people, that

active and critical discussion about the findings took place. In this respect the advisory groups served an additional purpose which ensured that stereotypical reasoning was challenged which was in my opinion an empowering experience for the young people.

To sum up, both the process and outcomes of applying a participatory approach to the methodology have been evaluated. It is argued that the process leads to clear benefits to both the research outcomes and for the participants themselves. However, challenges in balancing power dynamics, particularly in a school setting, between the adult facilitator and young people and between the young people themselves have been highlighted. These reflections have reinforced the idea that power is complex and that it should be considered critically by facilitators as strategic action, rather than as a commodity. The application of advisory groups as a way of working co-reflexively with young people on the co-interpretation of the findings as part of the data analysis and dissemination within their schools has been recommended as a model of research that could be generalised over wider systems. The collaborative reflection that took place within the advisory groups deepened the understanding of the data, ensured critical reflection on any potentially harmful stereotypical thinking and led to impact through dissemination that was led by the young people.

Participatory approaches to research can also lead to benefits for the participants themselves as they contribute towards meeting their basic psychological needs for autonomy and relatedness (Ryan and Deci, 2000) particularly during primary-secondary transitions when these needs can be challenged. Playing games together to build up positive relationships throughout and support the development of their peer connections over the transitions was particularly valuable. Through promoting accessible dialogue in collaboration with young people, insights were gained into the young person perspective of discursive reader identities and ‘successful’ reading more broadly. These insights shed light on why young people begin to disengage from reading and reading for pleasure during primary-secondary transitions and provided meaningful insight into their lived experiences of their peer culture during primary-secondary transitions and how this interacts with perceptions around reading. It is recommended that these methodological approaches could be replicated in practice to support the development of collaborative projects with young people both before and

after their transfer to secondary school to support the facilitation of more successful transitions' experiences.

The next section interprets the findings of this study through the lens of MMT theory (Jindal-Snape, 2016) and in line with the conceptualisation of transitions adopted (Jindal-Snape, 2018).

6.8 The Lens of Multiple and Multi-Dimensional Transitions Theory (Jindal-Snape, 2016)

Throughout this research, transitions have been conceptualised as an ongoing process of adaptations across multiple domains (Jindal-Snape, 2018), including the academic, social and emotional (Harris and Nowland, 2021) as a result of multiple changes in context (Jindal-Snape, 2018). Multiple and Multi-dimensional Transitions (MMT) theory (Jindal-Snape, 2016) emphasises the ongoing, multiple and dynamic nature of transitions that the individual pupil experiences simultaneously that interact and impact reciprocally upon each other. The findings of this study reaffirm this conceptualisation (Jindal-Snape, 2018) and support MMT theory (Jindal-Snape, 2016). Even though this was a three-stage longitudinal project which therefore recognised adaptations over time, the participants themselves felt that their adaptations to their new school environment continued to be ongoing by the end of the research. The dynamic and multiple nature of transitions have also been recognised. For example, the influence of adolescence, which coincides simultaneously with primary-secondary transitions has been considered when interpreting the findings.

This study has found that the process of ongoing adaptation in response to the changes in the school environment, negatively and significantly impacted upon the participants' feelings of SB and RTV, as well as a non-significant reduction in their RSE. These changes have negative implications for psychological wellbeing, reading motivation and engagement. These declines also meant that relationships between SB and RTV and SB and RSE that were present in the primary context dissipated, post-transfer, which sheds light on the connection between external environmental factors, internal psychological needs, wellbeing and behaviours, in relation to reading. In addition, the participants'

perceptions of 'good' and 'struggling' readers and of what is most important to be a 'successful' reader also changed. The consequences of these changes were that the 'struggling' reader identity label was increasingly stigmatised and disadvantaged, driven by an increased emphasis on public self-consciousness and that their reasoning about reading enjoyment shifted away from reading for pleasure, in the secondary context.

In the context of MMT theory (Jindal-Snape, 2016) these identified shifts in reading motivation, SB, perceptions of reader identity labels and of what is most important to be a 'successful' reader can be viewed as additional transitions that young people experience simultaneously, triggered by primary-secondary transitions, thereby strengthening the understanding of transitions as being dynamic and multiple. The consequences of these additional transitions have been highlighted as most concerning for struggling readers as a group, since the implications of these have the potential to negatively impact upon them the most. For instance, the shift towards public self-consciousness influenced the decision making made by young people towards reading based tasks in classrooms (Hall, 2009), and it was emphasised that 'struggling' readers should hide their difficulties to avoid negative judgement from their peers. This meant that it was recommended by the participants that performance aspects of reading should be minimised, and that young people would prefer to miss out on support rather than face negative exposure. It is argued that the decline in reading motivation and SB, alongside changes in perceptions of reader identities, alters the dynamic context in which reading development takes place (Levy, 2011). It is suggested that these changes contribute towards the evident decline in reading attainment (Hopwood et al., 2017) that is typically difficult to ameliorate (Clarke et al., 2017) at this time.

MMT theory understands 'successful' transitions as being subjective and emphasises that the individual most affected needs to be consulted when planning support (Jindal-Snape, 2023) which reaffirms the necessity of considering the views of young people throughout (Mumford and Birchwood, 2021). The emphasis on subjectivity also relates to how positive self-beliefs have been connected to positive perceptions of experiences in school (Hodgkin et al., 2025), which relates to how SB is based upon individual pupil perceptions of their school experiences (Murphy and Zirkel, 2015) and the relationship

between this and RSE and RTV identified. Participants in this study noted that one of the reasons why their perceptions had changed was related to being in a larger and more complex school environment with several different teachers and how this meant that it was more difficult for teachers to know the pupils and how they wanted to be supported. This reinforces what was found by Demkowicz et al. (2023) who focused upon the pupil perspective of wellbeing support over primary-secondary transitions and highlighted the importance of responding to the needs of individuals so that they felt understood. This is relevant to all pupils, but particularly for those who require increased support, including those identified as having SEND and which would encompass many struggling readers. It is argued that the evidenced disruption to reading motivation, SB and perceptions of reader identities in the secondary context, contributes in part to the negative primary-secondary transitions experienced by a notable minority of young people. An individualised approach to supporting young people as part of the ongoing transitions process has been recommended throughout to identify struggling readers who are at increased vulnerability of experiencing low feelings of SB, RSE and RTV and of being marginalised socially to support their academic, social and emotional adjustments and their reader identity development.

Regarding recommendations for practice, it is helpful to utilise the XII pillars of successful MMT (Jindal-Snape, 2023) as a framework. The findings of this study relate to the importance of the 'Perception of Ability and Skills to Navigate Transitions' pillar. This pillar represents how an individual's perception of their abilities and skills to navigate transitions successfully can impact upon the success of their experiences. This relates explicitly to competency beliefs, which is an integral part of the basic psychological need of competence that underpins motivation and wellbeing (Ryan and Deci, 2000). The findings of this study point to the importance of self-concept for reading to motivation and wellbeing outcomes as part of reader identity development during primary-secondary transitions. Therefore, it is recommended that the 'Perception of Ability and Skills to Navigate Transitions' pillar of successful MMT should encompass competency beliefs, such as RSE or reader self-concept more generally in relation to the sense of self, considering the new insights gained about socially constructed reader identity labels. Practitioners should consider competency beliefs related to reading and the impact of identity labels, when planning for individual

transitions support and to support the development of reading skills for those who are struggling at this age.

The findings from this study in relation to the 'struggling' reader identity label, emphasises the need for individualised intervention. I recommend that this focuses upon social and emotional factors including focus upon the development of supportive mindsets, positive reader identity development, disruption of stigmatic reader identity labels, self-compassion and high agency and low-pressure opportunities to engage with text and make connections with peers. In this way, I position primary-secondary transitions as the ideal opportunity to facilitate this support to work towards improved reading and wellbeing outcomes. One intervention that focuses upon affective factors more broadly when planning for successful transitions for young people, is the Talking about School Transitions (Bagnall, 2020) emotional-centred intervention that focuses upon developing emotional resilience factors, including self-efficacy for pupils over primary-secondary transitions. In terms of reading specific interventions, there is currently a lack of research into the effectiveness of developing reading through affective factors with young people of this age (Cockroft and Atkinson, 2017a) and the available evidence base provides a mixed picture in terms of the impacts gained (Webber et al., 2021).

It is noteworthy that the XII pillars of successful MMT are interdependent and interact with each other (Jindal-Snape, 2023). In this research more broadly, all the different strands have been found to be interwoven and interactive in terms of how they have responded to the changes in the school environment. MMT-Habits of Heart (MMT-HOH) are particularly relevant to the findings of this study and would influence a young person's perceptions of their ability and skills. MMT-HOH relate specifically to social-emotional intelligence including self-compassion (Jindal-Snape, 2023). These XII pillars are not fixed but can be actively created and maintained (Jindal-Snape, 2023), which has important implications for intervention. Self-compassion responds positively to intervention with adolescents (Seekis et al., 2023) and has also been linked to having a positive sense of SB (Zhang et al., 2021). The cultivation of self-compassion specifically has been highlighted as significant for struggling readers to challenge feelings of inferiority in their new school setting. As well as this, it is suggested that developing the

skills needed for self-compassion would support more positive appraisals, in terms of how young people evaluate and respond to their transitions experiences , as part of the ongoing process of their transitions (Garner and Bagnall, 2024). It is therefore a key recommendation of this study that fostering self-compassion in practice should include teaching the skills needed for self-compassion in primary schools as a protective MMT-HOH (Jindal-Snape, 2023) as well as taking a self-compassion lens when planning support for those struggling.

In addition, 'Perception of Ability and Skills to Navigate Transitions' are influenced by 'Attitudes and beliefs about transitions' including the importance of adopting a growth mindset (MMT-GM, Jindal-Snape, 2023) as part of the XII pillars of successful MMT. The importance of promoting an MMT-GM is explicitly relevant to the findings of this study and to struggling readers specifically. This is because having an MMT-GM supports the development of resilience and academic attainment in the face of challenging circumstances (Yeager and Dweck, 2020) and since the relationship between reading and SB is mediated by mastery goal orientation (Tan et al., 2022) which is connected to both self-efficacy (Hsieh et al., 2007) and having a growth mindset (Dweck, 2008).

Having the agency to be able to change negative transitions experiences into positive ones is also identified as part of having an MMT-GM (Jindal-Snape, 2023) that is a supportive attitude about transitions, as part of the XII pillars of successful MMT. This connection is logical since having an MMT-GM, includes the belief that competencies can be developed (Rattan et al., 2015) and which fosters agency and self-efficacy in terms of individuals feeling in control of their actions, to set goals and work towards them to impact upon their own lives (Bandura, 1982; Klassen, 2010; Code, 2020). The promotion of agency has been a recurrent and uniting factor throughout the interpretation of the findings in this study, in relation to how it supports motivation and wellbeing related to literacy practices, particularly in adolescence. Interestingly, Kwan et al. (2022) found that strategies that promote self-compassion can foster positive academic and mental health outcomes for young people with fixed mindsets. It is therefore reinforced that promoting an MMT-GM environment within primary and secondary schools alongside strategies to foster self-compassion and agency would

promote positive RSE and reader self-concept development and feelings of SB for struggling readers and contribute towards improved transitions outcomes.

It is important to critically reflect upon MMT theory considering the findings presented in this study. MMT theory is relatively new, particularly in relation to the XII pillars (Jindal-Snape, 2023) and therefore it is currently under-applied (Cantali, 2025). When applying the framework in this research, I found the XII pillars particularly aligned to my worldview that is rooted in both the transformative (Mertens, 2007) and constructivist (Schwandt, 1994) paradigms. MMT theory emphasises the individual experience, which supports the aim of this research to understand discursive reader identity development during primary-secondary transitions based upon lived experiences and multiple perspectives. It was particularly useful to draw upon the XII pillars to support thinking around translating the research findings into practicalities for transformation, to contribute towards reduced inequities (Mertens, 2017). It is noteworthy, that the complexity captured by MMT theory, including the interconnectedness of the pillars, while a significant strength, meant that applying the theory required ongoing reflection. My understanding of how the pillars interplay continues to evolve. This complexity may present a limitation as well as a strength as it potentially reduces accessibility, which may limit its practical utility.

MMT theory and the XII pillars have the potential to be applied broadly across educational and life transitions, which is a real strength of the framework. However, as the theory is not rooted in literacy, in this research, which is literacy specific as well as transitions focused, required a degree of interpretative flexibility and adaptation to align the relevant constructs within this context. This relates explicitly to how the findings of this study connected to the 'Perception of Ability and Skills to Navigate Transitions' pillar. This pillar represents an individual's perception of their abilities and skills to navigate transitions specifically with success, however, it was necessary in this case to extend the scope of this construct to incorporate competency beliefs in relation to reading. It is a strength that the framework allowed for this adaptation, however, further consideration of how MMT theory could potentially evolve further to allow for adaptability in more domain specific contexts is warranted. This is particularly relevant since the findings of this study suggest that some of the transitions experienced by

individuals at this time are literacy based for instance, adapting to changes in perceptions around reader identity labels, which adds to the complexity of transitions that MMT theory represents.

To conclude, the findings of this study reinforce the ongoing, multiple and dynamic nature of transitions, in line with the conceptualisation adopted (Jindal-Snape, 2018) and with MMT theory (Jindal-Snape, 2016). In this case, primary-secondary transitions have triggered further transitions in reading motivation, school belonging and the perceptions related to discursive reader identities and what young people think is most important to be a 'successful' reader, which have led to negative consequences impacting upon reading development in the secondary context. Based on the findings of this study, it has been suggested that the 'Perception of Ability and Skills to Navigate Transitions' pillar of successful MMT (Jindal-Snape, 2023) should encompass competency beliefs, such as RSE or reader self-concept in this case, and it has been highlighted that self-compassion as an MMT-HOH and adopting an MMT-GM, are particularly relevant to the findings of this study. However, the complexity of MMT theory may limit its accessibility and further consideration of its application in domain specific contexts would be beneficial. An individualised approach to support, considering the views of young people, as part of the ongoing transitions process is recommended to support struggling readers. In particular, the cultivation of self-compassion as an MMT-HOH, alongside promoting an MMT-GM to foster agency within a climate of SB to support meaningful reader identity development, motivation and wellbeing.

The next section summarises the recommendations for practice that have been made throughout in response to the findings and presents the specific recommendations for practice made by the advisors based upon their interpretations of the preliminary data.

6.9 Recommendations for Practice

This research aimed to be transformative and intended to utilise the insights gained from the research findings, to contribute towards greater inclusivity of primary-secondary transitions and to enhance reading intervention and curriculum approaches.

The findings have pointed to the necessity of taking an individualised approach in practice, considering individual psychological factors whilst taking into account the views of the young person affected at the planning stages of any support (Mumford and Birchwood, 2021; Jindal-Snape, 2023). In keeping with the overarching participatory approach, I first highlight the specific recommendations for practice that were made by the advisors in response to the preliminary data analysis that took place in the advisory groups at T3. These were shared with senior leaders in their school communities as part of the dissemination, in time for them to be acted upon and potentially benefit the participants. For transparency, the recommendations for practice made specifically by the advisors are presented separately to those made after their involvement had ended, considering the analyses of the full data set.

6.9.1 Advisors' Recommendations for Practice

- Regular small group social activities and more trips for all pupils in Y7 to speed up getting to know everyone.
- Increase the amount of reading that takes place at school so that reading is normalised and those who enjoy reading will not feel like a 'nerd.'
- More opportunities for reading for pleasure during break and lunchtimes.
- Increase the number of library lessons and increased opportunities for pupils to showcase their reading strengths, for example reading contests to raise the profile of reading.
- Some advisors felt that library lessons would be more motivating if there was reduced pressure from the set reading targets and if sanctions related to these were removed. For some they felt that the targets set led to them rushing the book. It was acknowledged by some advisors that without the targets or sanctions altogether they would not engage with reading at all, and so it was suggested that these could be reduced rather than removed.
- More support in library lessons for struggling readers that they could access in a way that they would not find embarrassing.
- A greater variety of books to choose from during library lessons.
- More opportunities for confidence building particularly around speaking and reading out loud in front of the class to develop their confidence and

skills amongst their new peers. It was noted that they feel this is needed more in the post COVID-19 context after spending a lot of time at home. One specific suggestion was 'debate club' to build confidence when speaking out loud in front of their peers.

- Support for pupils who do not feel that they can be themselves, to be encouraged to 'try it once.'

It is the intention that the dialogue recorded during the advisory groups' discussions will be transcribed and analysed as part of a follow up project. This would provide further reflections on the process and outcomes of involving young people in the co-interpretation of findings.

The following recommendations for practitioners, school and national policy were made by me as the researcher and facilitator of the project, considering the views of the advisors and the analysis of the full data set.

6.9.2 Researcher/facilitator's Recommendations for Practitioners and School Policy

- Practitioners should generally have increased awareness of the connection between external environmental factors, internal psychological needs, wellbeing and behaviours, in relation to reading. More broadly, this should include the connections between reading and wellbeing and reading and feelings of SB. More precisely and considering these findings, increased recognition of the impact of primary-secondary transitions on reading motivation, engagement and socially constructed reader identity labels and how these can influence reading behaviours. As part of this, increased awareness of models of reading development that include the influence of affective factors on reading success should be considered. These factors need to be taken into account when planning for individual transitions support and to support the development of reading skills for those who are struggling at this age.

- On a school policy level, it is recommended first and foremost that schools should develop transitions specific policies. These should include, transitions support to promote social and emotional wellbeing and SB that is specifically available for struggling readers and be considered when planning reading intervention for those facing challenges at this age.
- As part of school transitions policy development, it is helpful to view primary-secondary transitions as opportunities for both primary and secondary schools to enhance wellbeing and social progression in practice. This project could serve as a model of how autonomy and relatedness can be promoted with adolescents in collaborative projects that start at primary school and that continue into the secondary context. An emphasis on building up positive relationships is key to this, facilitated by a key adult who can work between schools (ideally situated in the secondary school in the longer-term) including playing games to support the development and maintenance of peer connections as part of an inclusive approach. This model could be applied to a reading and transitions intervention that encompasses the recommended approaches outlined to support successful primary-secondary transitions and identity development related to literacy.
- In terms of the primary and secondary school curriculum more widely, schools should critically consider how their practice meets or threatens the basic psychological needs of autonomy, relatedness and competency which underly motivation and wellbeing. In secondary schools, this needs to account for the onset of adolescence and how young people are likely to have an increased need for agency and peer connection at this time. Promoting a sense of agency is recommended in relation to reading practices to promote SB, RSE, RTV, and reading for pleasure. For example, high agency and low-pressure opportunities to engage with text. As well as, integrating playful pedagogies to enhance positive relationships with school staff and peers.
- To promote RSE, RTV and SB, schools should critically evaluate as part of their literacy and SEND policies how their reading interventions should focus upon developing competency beliefs and motivation for young people who may identify with the ‘struggling’ reader identity label at this stage in education. This should include the development of supportive mindsets (including an MMT-

GM), positive reader identity development, disruption of stigmatic reader identity labels and development of self-compassion as an MMT-HOH.

- The cultivation of self-compassion as an MMT-HOH is particularly significant for struggling readers during primary-secondary transitions to challenge potential feelings of inadequacy in their new school setting. This should be taken into account as part of whole school approaches to mental health and wellbeing. This also relates more extensively to support young people to evaluate and respond to their transitions experiences more positively. Practitioners should consider teaching the skills needed for self-compassion in primary schools and taking a self-compassion lens when planning support for struggling readers within the secondary context to allow for meaningful reader identity development.
- One specific approach that warrants further exploration to scaffold reader identity development and support lifeworld diversity in practice is through the approach of academic possible selves.

To increase the transformative potential of this study, it is imperative that the recommendations for practice are shared more widely than within this thesis, with practitioners who can act upon them when working with young people to realise more direct impact. Future research is clearly needed into the impact that can be realised by applying these recommendations and these approaches on reading outcomes, wellbeing and transitions experiences. It is the intention that a set of practical materials will be developed for practitioners as part of a follow up project that will support the application of these recommendations, alongside a set of supportive materials for young people who identify with the 'struggling' reader identity label at this age based upon advice collected from the participants using the 'messages in a bottle' (Parrilla et al., 2016) collected from the participants in the closing activity at the end of each focus group (not analysed or reported as data in this study).

As there is currently no statutory guidance, or consistent transitions policy for maintained schools (Department for Education, 2024a) or academy trusts (Department for Education, 2024b) in England, it is not possible to inform or evaluate how these recommendations align with central transitions procedures or requirements to support

the development of primary-secondary transitions practice more universally. This research echoes the recommendation from Garner and Bagnall (2024) that calls for stronger guidance, taking into account the recommendations made and wider empirical evidence to increase the consistency of the level of support offered to young people. Instead, recommendations are made in relation to existing policy frameworks and guidance at the national policy level related to wellbeing, reading, SEND and teacher education.

6.9.3 Researcher/facilitator's Recommendations for National Policy

- Overall, this research advocates for national policy that explicitly recognises the role of affective factors in reading development, the relationship between reading and wellbeing and potential impacts upon those who identify with the 'struggling reader' identity label, particularly during primary-secondary transitions. It is argued that this understanding should be embedded in national policy frameworks that provide guidance for wellbeing, SEND and reading practice in schools, and teacher education.
- The reading framework (Department for Education, 2023) refers to motivation and promotes reading for pleasure through building reading communities to support engagement. It also implies a connection between reading and wellbeing and alludes to reader identity development as part of case studies provided to illustrate examples of pupils who need support to catch up. However, where it does this, there is no reference of affective factors in the recommended actions for next steps in provision, where the focus remains on systematic synthetic phonics. The findings of this research suggest that the importance of affective factors in reading development should be explicit in national policy, in particular for older learners who are struggling with reading. This should also consider models of reading development that include the influence of affective factors on reading success. As well as this, it is recommended that national policy should consider providing guidance around reading interventions that target affective factors and wellbeing specifically to develop supportive mindsets (including self-compassion and a growth mindset) and positive reader identity development.

- The Department for Education and the Office for Health and Disparities (2023) provide eight principles for whole school approaches to wellbeing. The recommendations for practice made in this study align with these principles and have the potential to extend this framework. For example, although educational transitions are mentioned, this would benefit from further exploration and from being positioned as a time when feelings of school belonging are particularly vulnerable. In addition, there is currently no reference to the connection between reading and mental health or around the unique challenges faced by struggling readers related to motivation and the social construction of reader identity labels over primary-secondary school transitions. It is suggested that wellbeing frameworks should include the connection between mental health and literacy and recognise the psychological and social vulnerabilities faced by struggling readers during primary-secondary transitions.
- This research also builds upon the SEND Code of Practice (Department for Education and Department for Health, 2015) which clearly emphasises an individualised approach and the need to plan and prepare young people with SEND for educational transitions. Based on the findings of this study, the SEND Code of Practice (Department for Education and Department for Health, 2015) would benefit from explicit consideration of internal psychological approaches, such as competency beliefs, motivation, feelings of school belonging and academic identity development, particularly for young people with literacy difficulties. Furthermore, this research highlights the need to address more explicitly the overlap between learning needs and mental health and advocates for a more holistic approach that integrates social, emotional and mental health and academic factors particularly post-transfer in the secondary school environment.
- To ensure that teachers have awareness of these factors it is important that developments in national policy are communicated through continuous professional development in schools. In terms of teacher education these recommendations would fit well as part of the SEND and adaptive teaching focus in the new Initial Teacher Training and Early Career Framework

(Department for Education, 2024e) to support the wellbeing and engagement of struggling readers.

The next section identifies the limitations of this study and makes suggestions for future research to build upon the research findings.

6.10 Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

This research has applied the lens of MMT theory (Jindal-Snape, 2016) which emphasises the ongoing, multiple and dynamic nature of transitions that the individual pupil experiences, in line with the conceptualisation of transitions adopted (Jindal-Snape, 2018). MMT theory also emphasises the multi-faceted nature of transitions, often represented by a Rubik's Cube analogy, where one colour represents the multiple transitions experienced by an individual young person and the other colours represent their significant others. I recognise that transitions are best understood from multiple perspectives (Jindal-Snape, 2009) and therefore in the case of primary-secondary school transitions, in order to understand the experiences of pupils more fully, the perspectives of their significant others, such as teachers and parents, need to be understood (Bagnall et al., 2020).

In line with MMT theory, it is therefore a limitation of this research that the focus is entirely on the pupil perspective, which is essentially just one colour on the Rubik's Cube. Focusing upon the pupil perspective was intentional at the design stage, since qualitative explorations of learner experiences are often neglected in transitions research (Hodgkin et al., 2025). As well as that it was not considered feasible to explore the perspectives of all stakeholders within the academic constraints of a doctoral research project. However, I acknowledge that consideration of the perspectives of other stakeholders would have been insightful, particularly in relation the parent and teacher perspectives of discursive reader identities to shed further light on the social context wherein reader identity labels are constructed. The parent perspective in particular would provide understanding into the 'funds of knowledge' (González et al., 2006) that young people bring from home and their communities and the impact of 'lifeworld diversity' and learner differences that can either privilege or disadvantage

(Cope and Kalantzis, 2023) at school. Thus, it would be of future research interest to explore both the teacher and parent perspective of 'good' and 'struggling' reader identities alongside the pupil perspective over primary-secondary transitions. Such an approach would expand upon the current understanding of the lifeworlds of young people and the influence of the parent and teacher perceptions on the development of 'good' and 'struggling' reader identity labels.

In terms of the generalisability of the quantitative findings, the sample size of 55 participants is less than originally hoped for. This means that these findings need to be taken within a frame of limited generalisability. Although this is regarded as adequate for the exploratory purposes of this study and these findings can be used to further the research field, I recognise that having more participants would increase the statistical power and generalisability of the quantitative findings. It is relevant to note that the recruitment phase for the main study began following the re-opening of schools in England in March 2021 (Education Hub, 2021) following school closures because of the COVID-19 pandemic and where there were still many restrictions in place for schools in England (Department for Education, 2021). This meant that even with known contacts in schools within the local authority where I work, the recruitment was particularly challenging because schools were very cautious about visitors coming in. These circumstances are likely to have diminished the number of schools that were willing to engage with a research project in the first instance.

I also acknowledge that the characteristics of the participants are not representative of the wider demographic in England. More girls than boys volunteered to take part in this study, which was in part due to one of the participating secondary schools being an all-girls school. In terms of language status, 97.4% of the sample were identified as EAL learners. Although it has been acknowledged that this sample is typical and relatable in several multiracial cities in England, it is also recognised that this is much higher than the 19% reported nationally (Department for Education, 2020) and therefore merits consideration. EAL learners are a heterogeneous group who have diverse English language proficiency skills (Department for Education, 2020). In this case, the participants' teachers felt that all pupils who participated in this research would be able to understand the online surveys and be able to fully access the project. Most of

the participants (90.1%) were bi or multilingual and fluent in English, and so in this case this is more of an issue with the very broad definition of EAL learners (Chalmers and Bennett, 2022). There were a small number of participants (7.3%) who were categorised as being relatively New to English. These participants required some adjustments in line with their everyday classroom practice, such as peer support. It is also worth noting that the perspectives of EAL learners are often neglected in transitions research (Corcoran and Kaneva, 2023) and that EAL learners can potentially face greater challenges over educational transitions (The Bell Foundation, 2024) especially considering the increased complexity of the language used in secondary schools (Deignan et al., 2023).

Although this study did take a longitudinal approach through application of a three-stage design, which therefore recognises the ongong process of adaptation, I acknowledge that adjustments to the participants' new schools were still ongoing at the end of the project (Jindal-Snape and Cantali, 2019). Practically, it was unattainable to continue the project further into the participants' transitions journeys, within the stipulated timeframe of this being a doctoral study. However, despite this, I accept that it would have strengthened this research to be able to identify how long the evidenced decline in SB and RTV continued over time in the secondary context and also to establish if the non-significant decrease in RSE would have continued on a downward trajectory and become statistically significant or not. On this basis, to build on the research findings, future research should explore RSE, RTV and SB and the relationships between them, over primary-secondary transitions with longitudinal designs that go beyond the length of this study to investigate if and for how long effects persist.

Furthermore, a longer study focusing upon the continued qualitative exploration of the development of pupil perceptions of reader identity labels and what is most important to be a 'successful' reader would also merit future research attention. For instance, this study provided new insights that connected discursive reader identities to reading for pleasure. One potential direction for future research that would extend the scope of and build upon the existing research findings could include exploring this connection further, in terms of how young people's reader identity labels determine whether they go on to become adults who read for pleasure (Eriksson Barajas and Aronsson, 2009).

Another exploratory pathway that warrants consideration, relates to evaluating the effectiveness of using digital media in collaboration with young people to allow for greater personalisation and agency for adolescents who are struggling with reading and the impact this has on engagement and positive experiences with text.

Since this project applied a participatory approach to the methodology, it is also an identified limitation that the advisory groups were not consulted on the development of the research questions and design phase, where is accepted that collaboration with the participants would have added value. Although I aimed to carefully balance out power dynamics, it is recommended that as schools have very entrenched hierarchies, future participatory research with young people should take place in more equitable spaces, wherever possible. A next step for this research specifically would be to analyse the focus group dialogue surrounding 'good' and 'struggling' reader identity labels and 'successful' reading again, to explore power dynamics within the focus groups and identify which participants were making which contributions, in terms of whether they were assessed as being good or struggling readers themselves.

It has been recommended that this project could serve as a model of a collaborative project that could be applied to a reading and transitions intervention that starts at primary school and continues into the secondary context incorporating the recommended approaches, such as playing games, to support the development of self-compassion, SB and positive reader identity development. Next steps will be to develop and trial a set of practical materials for practitioners as part of a follow up project that will support the application of these recommendations. Additional research will be needed to explore the effectiveness of the approaches on reading outcomes, wellbeing and transitions experiences. Furthermore, there is a particular need for investigation into the role and impact that can be achieved through applying playful pedagogies more broadly in secondary education, recognising that such approaches may hold wider potential beyond the scope of this project.
The final section ties together the key findings and their implications and summarises the original contributions this research has made.

6.11 Conclusions

Reading self-efficacy (RSE), reading task value (RTV), school belonging (SB) and the relationships between these factors during primary-secondary transitions have been explored. A significant decline in RTV, and a non-significant reduction in RSE was found, both of which are important components of reading motivation more generally. In line with existing research, this study also found that pupils' feelings of SB declined significantly, in this case by the end of Y7 compared to the end of Y6 in primary school and the beginning of Y7 in secondary school. This study also confirms a significant and positive relationship between RSE and RTV at all three time points and identified that this relationship was strongest at the end of primary school. Positive relationships between SB and RSE and SB and RTV at the end of primary school were also established that then dissipated following the transfer to secondary school.

The pupil perspective of what it means to be a 'good' and a 'struggling' reader and how these perceptions evolved during primary-secondary transitions has also been determined. The key finding was that the 'struggling' reader identity became marginalised, driven by an increased emphasis on public self-consciousness and fear of peer judgement, post-transfer. The pupil perspective of what is most important to be a 'successful' reader was also explored and it was identified that the participants prioritised understanding alongside enjoyment as the most important attributes. This research highlights how reading development does not occur in a vacuum (Moore et al., 2000) and that learning to read extends further than reading skills and is very much about the individual who needs to learn them, including a shift in identity (Wagner, 2021).

A participatory approach to the methods was taken from the standpoint that young people are "experts in their own lives" (Mason and Danby, 2011, p.185). The process led to benefits for the participants themselves and to the research outcomes, although challenges in balancing power dynamics were shared and reflected upon. It has been recommended that the broad approach taken in this study could be replicated in practice to support the development of collaborative projects that promote agency and positive relationships with young people both before and after their transfer to

secondary school. One way to put this into practice would be as a vehicle to support the implementation of the recommendations for practice that have been made, in terms of bespoke transitions and reading interventions to facilitate more successful transitions' experiences and support positive reader identity development.

6.11.1 Contributions

There are several areas where this study makes an original contribution. First, this research presents new information, that RTV specifically declines during primary-secondary school transitions. This adversely impacts upon reading engagement, which fuels negative 'Matthew effects' (Stanovich, 1986; Chapman and Tunmer, 1997) and perpetuates a spiral of progressive disadvantage (McGeown et al., 2015; Duncan et al., 2016; Toste et al., 2020; Murnan et al., 2023) exacerbating further the negative self-concept and the anxiety experienced by struggling readers (McArthur, 2022; Robidoux et al., 2024). This therefore highlights the influence of RTV in widening the reading attainment gap which can negatively impact across the whole curriculum (Guthrie and Coddington, 2009; Quigley and Coleman, 2019).

Secondly, it is also a new insight that SB was moderately and positively correlated with both RSE and RTV at the end of primary school. This demonstrates that feelings of SB at the end of primary school were influenced and reinforced by the value young people placed on reading and their competency beliefs related to reading based tasks and represents a meaningful relationship between a young person's school environment and their reading outcomes. The implications of this are that the decline in SB and RTV which disrupted the relationships between SB and RSE and RTV and may contribute in part to the noted negative transitions experiences affecting a significant minority of young people (Jindal-Snape et al., 2023; Jindal-Snape and Cantali, 2019).

Thirdly, these findings also contribute an up-to-date perspective on how discursive reader identities are socially constructed at school, and how these evolve in response to changes in the school context during primary-secondary transitions. It is a new contribution to the literature that the increased emphasis on public self-consciousness in the secondary school environment is impacting upon pupil's perceptions of

discursive reader identities. The shift in discursive reader identity development during primary-secondary school transitions has been shown to negatively influence social and wellbeing trajectories for young people with reading difficulties. Furthermore, this can cause struggling readers to resist the 'struggling reader' identity position in ways that can impede their reading progress. This new understanding of the consequences of negative stereotypes is an important contribution to both the primary-secondary transitions literature and to the understanding of reading development and reading motivation in adolescence.

Fourthly, to the best of my knowledge this is the only study that has explored the pupil perspective of what are the most important attributes of being a 'successful' reader over primary-secondary transitions. It is therefore a new contribution that this research has found that the young people in this study consistently ranked understanding and enjoyment as being most important to be a 'successful' reader during this time. This insight is significant within the broader context of adolescence and adds a further layer of complexity to the understanding of adolescence as a time when reading motivation and reading for pleasure declines (Maynard et al., 2008). Despite the consistent high value placed on enjoyment, there was an identified shift in reasoning about reading enjoyment during transitions which provided insight into the barriers to reading for pleasure in adolescence. These were where engaging with reading negatively impacts upon identity development in a way that threatens the young person's autonomy or relatedness needs (Ryan and Deci, 2003; La Guardia, 2009; Webber et al., 2024) exacerbated by a perceived lack of agency and pressure from the high stake's environment of the secondary school and the evidenced increase in public self-consciousness factors.

To conclude, I argue that primary-secondary school transitions trigger changes in the dynamic context where reading development takes place in the secondary school environment, which contributes to a decline in reading attainment (Hopwood et al., 2017) that can be resistant to traditional approaches to intervention (Clarke et al., 2017). These findings mean that, young people who are perceived as 'struggling' readers by their peers can face marginalised social identities. This can negatively impact upon their ongoing academic, social and emotional adjustments to secondary

school and reader identity development leading to reduced reading engagement, less reading for pleasure and diminished long-term educational outcomes. This study recommends that an overarching individualised approach should be taken, drawing upon the XII pillars of successful MMT (Jindal-Snape, 2023), to support young people who are identified as being at increased vulnerability of experiencing low feelings of SB, RSE and RTV over transitions. I argue that primary-secondary transitions can provide the ideal opportunity to facilitate positive reader identity development and enhance social and wellbeing trajectories for young people. This should include approaches to develop positive self-concept, connect with lifeworld diversities, promote agency and self-compassion as an MMT-HOH within a climate of SB and MMT-GM to develop positive reader identities in the secondary school environment, so that young people can **'**be their own shepherd' to work towards improved transitions, wellbeing and reading outcomes.

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Appendix A – Interview Schedule used for Semi-Structured Interviews at Time 3

Contextualisation

Please tell me about what you are enjoying doing in your spare time at the moment. (Link back to previous responses).
Please describe being at secondary school after nearly a year.
What does transition mean to you now?
Tell me about how secondary school is similar to/different from your primary school.
Please describe anything that surprised you or is not what you expected about your secondary school now that you have been here for nearly a year.
How has your life changed over the last year?
How are you adapting to these changes?
What advice would you give now to somebody just about to move from primary to secondary school?
How are you feeling about the move to Year 8?

The Phenomenon

Describe to me what you think a good reader is in secondary school (link back to previous responses).
Tell me about reading in secondary school.
How are you feeling about your reading after a year in secondary school?
Please describe how you typically read in school now.
Can you describe what you think is most important when reading.
Tell me about reading in the different subjects.
Please could you describe how it is the same/different.
Please tell me about how reading is harder/easier in (for example) science.
Please describe how you now read at home.
Has how you read at home changed at all over the last year? If so, please can you tell me about this is different.
Tell me about a time recently when you really enjoyed reading.
Please describe a time recently when you were proud of your reading.
Do you think it is important to be a good reader? Please tell me about your thoughts.
Have you found reading useful to you at school this year/how about at home?
Do you think being a good reader is important for your future?
Can you tell me about a time recently when reading was hard?
What advice would you give to somebody who is finding reading hard in secondary school.
Do you think a year of secondary school has changed your view of reading at all?
If so: please could you tell me about this.
If not: please could you describe how it is the same.

Is there anything else you would like to talk about before we stop the recording?

Clarifying

If questions to clarify meaning using 'imaginative variation' (Bevan, 2014). This section will need to respond to the individual responses given in the previous section.

Appendix B - Guidelines for Carrying out Research in School during COVID-19

In line with their own risk assessments, if schools are happy to participate in the research project on a face-to-face basis the researcher will come into your school to administer Online Surveys and carry out small group work. Below are details of the protocols which both school and the researcher will adhere to in order to ensure compliance with current Government COVID-19 guidance.

Researcher Responsibilities

- Will only attend school if they are symptom free.
- The researcher will ensure:
    - ✓ they sanitise hands on arrival and after any breaks or following any movement around the school.
    - ✓ any equipment used during the assessment is sanitised.
    - ✓ they sit 2 metres apart during their work and follow "Catch it, Bin it, Kill it"
    - ✓ they wipe down tables, chairs and door handles in the room before and after any activities have been completed.
- The researcher will bring their own refreshments and avoid using shared facilities.
- The researcher will wear a transparent visor during group and individual pupil work.
- The visor used will either be new or sanitised prior to the school visit.
- The researcher will ensure that individual work is no longer than 45 minutes and group work will be no longer than 1hr.
- The researcher takes regular lateral flow tests.

School Responsibilities

- Prior to the project the researcher will request a copy of your school's risk assessment and COVID-19 protocols for visitors and ensure they adhere to them.
- You will need to provide a sanitised and well-ventilated environment with enough space for the researcher and pupils to sit two metres apart.
- Please ensure:
    - ✓ There are tissues, wipes and hand sanitiser in the room.
    - ✓ There is a bin in the room to ensure that the researcher and pupils can follow the "Catch it, Bin it, Kill it" guidelines.
    - ✓ The researcher will have access to a designated toilet for visitors.
    - ✓ The participant brings any permitted refreshments (water etc.).
    - ✓ The pupil has their own pens/pencils for any written work.
    - ✓ Ensure that parents of participants have been provided with a letter (see below) giving details of the safety protocols in place. **This is in addition to the other supporting documents provided**

by the researcher for both participants and parents as part of the informed consent process.

Advice for parents whose children will be participating in the research project.

Dear Parents/Carers,
We are pleased that your child will be participating in the upcoming research project that will be taking place in school on XXXX
Together with the school, the researcher will ensure the work is carried out in a COVID-safe environment:

- The researcher will be aware of and follow the school's protocol for external visitors.
- The researcher will sanitise their hands and clean all equipment used before and after use.
- The researcher will be working in a well-ventilated room and will keep 2 metres apart.
- The researcher will wear a transparent visor.
- The researcher will take regular lateral flow tests.

Thanks again for supporting new research into reading motivation and school belonging during the primary to secondary transition.

Very best wishes,

Joanne Callaghan
Lead researcher with the University of Leeds

Appendix C - Confirmation Email of Conditional Ethical Approval from University of Leeds

Hi Joanne,

AREA 19-130 - Reading self-efficacy, school connectedness and pupils' perceptions of 'successful' reading during the primary to secondary transition: A participatory research project.

I am pleased to inform you that the above research ethics application has been reviewed by the AREA FREC Committee and on behalf of the Chair, I can confirm a conditional favourable ethical opinion based on the documentation received at date of this email and subject to the following condition/s which must be fulfilled prior to the study commencing:

1 – **Consider and responds to the comments in the attached review document as instructed. Submit any updated documentation to the Research Ethics and Governance Administrator so it can be filed appropriately.**

The study documentation must be amended where required to meet the above conditions and submitted for file and possible future audit.

Once you have addressed the conditions and submitted for file/future audit, you may commence the study and further confirmation of approval is not provided.

Please note, failure to comply with the above conditions will be considered a breach of ethics approval and may result in disciplinary action.

Please retain this email as evidence of conditional approval in your study file.

Please notify the committee if you intend to make any amendments to the original research as submitted and approved to date. This includes recruitment methodology; all changes must receive ethical approval prior to implementation. Please see https://leeds365.sharepoint.com/sites/ResearchandInnovationService/SitePages/Amendments.aspx or contact the Research Ethics & Governance Administrator for further information.

Ethics approval does not infer you have the right of access to any member of staff or student or documents and the premises of the University of Leeds. Nor does it imply any right of access to the premises of any other organisation, including clinical areas. The committee takes no responsibility for you gaining access to staff, students and/or premises prior to, during or following your research activities.

Please note: You are expected to keep a record of all your approved documentation, as well as documents such as sample consent forms, risk assessments and other documents relating to the study. This should be kept in your study file, which should be

readily available for audit purposes. You will be given a two week notice period if your project is to be audited.

It is our policy to remind everyone that it is your responsibility to comply with Health and Safety, Data Protection and any other legal and/or professional guidelines there may be.

I hope the study goes well.

Best regards
John Hardy
On behalf of Matthew Campbell, (Chair) AREA FREC

John Hardy
Research Ethics & Governance Administrator
The Secretariat,
University of Leeds, LS2 9LT

Appendix D – Confirmation of Approval of Ethical Amendments

Amendment 1

Hi Joanne,

AREA 19-130 (Amd 1, Jan 2021) - Reading self-efficacy, school connectedness and pupils' perceptions of 'successful reading' during the primary to secondary transition: A participatory research project.

NB: All approvals/comments are subject to compliance with current University of Leeds and UK Government advice regarding the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as any local restrictions where the study is being carried out regarding in-person data collection and travel.

I am pleased to inform you that the above research ethics application amendment has been reviewed by the AREA FREC Committee and I can confirm a favourable ethical opinion based on the documentation received at date of this email.

Please retain this email as evidence of approval in your study file.

Please notify the committee if you intend to make any further amendments to the research as submitted and approved to date. This includes recruitment methodology; all changes must receive ethical approval prior to implementation. Please see https://leeds365.sharepoint.com/sites/ResearchandInnovationService/SitePages/Amendments.aspx or contact the Research Ethics & Governance Administrator for further information (researchethics@leeds.ac.uk) if required.

Ethics approval does not infer you have the right of access to any member of staff or student or documents and the premises of the University of Leeds. Nor does it imply any right of access to the premises of any other organisation, including clinical areas. The committee takes no responsibility for you gaining access to staff, students and/or premises prior to, during or following your research activities.

Please note: You are expected to keep a record of all your approved documentation, as well as documents such as sample consent forms, risk assessments and other documents relating to the study. This should be kept in your study file, which should be readily available for audit purposes. You will be given a two week notice period if your project is to be audited.

It is our policy to remind everyone that it is your responsibility to comply with Health and Safety, Data Protection and any other legal and/or professional guidelines there may be.

I hope the study continues to go well.

Best wishes
John Hardy
On behalf of Matthew Davis, (Chair), AREA FREC

John Hardy
Research Ethics Administrator
The Secretariat, University of Leeds, LS2 9LT

Amendment 2

Hi Joanne,

AREA 19-130 (Amd 2, Feb 2021) - Reading self-efficacy, school connectedness and pupils' perceptions of 'successful reading' during the primary to secondary transition: A participatory research project.

NB: All approvals/comments are subject to compliance with current University of Leeds and UK Government advice regarding the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as any local restrictions where the study is being carried out regarding in-person data collection and travel.

I am pleased to inform you that the above research ethics application amendment has been reviewed by the AREA FREC Committee and I can confirm a favourable ethical opinion based on the documentation received at date of this email.

Please retain this email as evidence of approval in your study file.

Please notify the committee if you intend to make any further amendments to the research as submitted and approved to date. This includes recruitment methodology; all changes must receive ethical approval prior to implementation. Please see https://ris.leeds.ac.uk/research-ethics-and-integrity/applying-for-an-amendment/ or contact the Research Ethics & Governance Administrator for further information (researchethics@leeds.ac.uk) if required.

Ethics approval does not infer you have the right of access to any member of staff or student or documents and the premises of the University of Leeds. Nor does it imply any right of access to the premises of any other organisation, including clinical areas. The committee takes no responsibility for you gaining access to staff, students and/or premises prior to, during or following your research activities.

Please note: You are expected to keep a record of all your approved documentation, as well as documents such as sample consent forms, risk assessments and other documents relating to the study. This should be kept in your study file, which should be readily available for audit purposes. You will be given a two week notice period if your project is to be audited.

It is our policy to remind everyone that it is your responsibility to comply with Health and Safety, Data Protection and any other legal and/or professional guidelines there may be.

I hope the study continues to go well.

Best wishes
John Hardy
On behalf of Matthew Davis, (Chair), AREA FREC

John Hardy
Research Ethics Administrator
The Secretariat,
University of Leeds, LS2 9LT

Amendment 3

Hi Joanne,

AREA 19-130 (Amd 3, Mar 2021) - Reading self-efficacy, school connectedness and pupils' perceptions of 'successful reading' during the primary to secondary transition: A participatory research project.

NB: All approvals/comments are subject to compliance with current University of Leeds and UK Government advice regarding the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as any local restrictions where the study is being carried out regarding in-person data collection and travel.

I am pleased to inform you that the above research ethics application amendment has been reviewed by the AREA FREC Committee and I can confirm a favourable ethical opinion based on the documentation received at date of this email.

Please retain this email as evidence of approval in your study file.

Please notify the committee if you intend to make any further amendments to the research as submitted and approved to date. This includes recruitment methodology; all changes must receive ethical approval prior to implementation. Please see https://ris.leeds.ac.uk/research-ethics-and-integrity/applying-for-an-amendment/ or contact the Research Ethics & Governance Administrator for further information (researchethics@leeds.ac.uk) if required.

Ethics approval does not infer you have the right of access to any member of staff or student or documents and the premises of the University of Leeds. Nor does it imply any right of access to the premises of any other organisation, including clinical areas. The committee takes no responsibility for you gaining access to staff, students and/or premises prior to, during or following your research activities.

Please note: You are expected to keep a record of all your approved documentation, as well as documents such as sample consent forms, risk assessments and other documents relating to the study. This should be kept in your study file, which should be readily available for audit purposes. You will be given a two week notice period if your project is to be audited.

It is our policy to remind everyone that it is your responsibility to comply with Health and Safety, Data Protection and any other legal and/or professional guidelines there may be.

I hope the study continues to go well.

Best wishes
John Hardy
On behalf of Matthew Davis, (Chair), AREA FREC

John Hardy
Research Ethics Administrator
The Secretariat,
University of Leeds, LS2 9LT

Amendment 4

Hi Joanne,

AREA 19-130 (Amd 4, Mar 2021) - Reading self-efficacy, school connectedness and pupils' perceptions of 'successful reading' during the primary to secondary transition: A participatory research project.

NB: All approvals/comments are subject to compliance with current University of Leeds and UK Government advice regarding the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as any local restrictions where the study is being carried out regarding in-person data collection and travel.

I am pleased to inform you that the above research ethics application amendment has been reviewed by the AREA FREC Committee and I can confirm a favourable ethical opinion based on the documentation received at date of this email.

Please retain this email as evidence of approval in your study file.

Please notify the committee if you intend to make any further amendments to the research as submitted and approved to date. This includes recruitment methodology; all changes must receive ethical approval prior to implementation. Please see https://ris.leeds.ac.uk/research-ethics-and-integrity/applying-for-an-amendment/ or contact the Research Ethics & Governance Administrator for further information (researchethics@leeds.ac.uk) if required.

Ethics approval does not infer you have the right of access to any member of staff or student or documents and the premises of the University of Leeds. Nor does it imply any right of access to the premises of any other organisation, including clinical areas. The committee takes no responsibility for you gaining access to staff, students and/or premises prior to, during or following your research activities.

Please note: You are expected to keep a record of all your approved documentation, as well as documents such as sample consent forms, risk assessments and other documents relating to the study. This should be kept in your study file, which should be readily available for audit purposes. You will be given a two week notice period if your project is to be audited.

It is our policy to remind everyone that it is your responsibility to comply with Health and Safety, Data Protection and any other legal and/or professional guidelines there may be.

I hope the study continues to go well.

Best wishes
John Hardy
On behalf of Matthew Davis, (Chair), AREA FREC

John Hardy
Research Ethics Administrator
The Secretariat,
University of Leeds, LS2 9LT

Amendment 5

Dear Joanne

AREA 19-130 Amendment 5 – April 2022 - Reading self-efficacy, school connectedness and pupils' perceptions of 'successful reading' during the primary to secondary transition: A participatory research project.

NB: All approvals/comments are subject to compliance with current University of Leeds and UK Government advice regarding the Covid-19 pandemic.

I am pleased to inform you that the above research ethics application amendment has been reviewed by the School of Business, Environment and Social Services Ethics Committee and I can confirm a favourable ethical opinion based on the documentation received at date of this email.

Please retain this email as evidence of approval in your study file.

Please notify the committee if you intend to make any further amendments to the research as submitted and approved to date. This includes recruitment methodology; all changes must receive ethical approval prior to implementation. Please see or contact the Research Ethics & Governance Administrator for further information researchethics@leeds.ac.uk if required.

Ethics approval does not infer you have the right of access to any member of staff or student or documents and the premises of the University of Leeds. Nor does it imply any right of access to the premises of any other organisation, including clinical areas. The committee takes no responsibility for you gaining access to staff, students and/or premises prior to, during or following your research activities.

Please note: You are expected to keep a record of all your approved documentation, as well as documents such as sample consent forms, risk assessments and other documents relating to the study. This should be kept in your study file, which should be readily available for audit purposes. You will be given a two week notice period if your project is to be audited.

It is our policy to remind everyone that it is your responsibility to comply with Health and Safety, Data Protection and any other legal and/or professional guidelines there may be.

I hope the study continues to go well.

Best wishes
Rachel Prinn

On behalf of Dr Matthew Davis, CHAIR, ARE

Appendix E - Example Letter to Head Teacher

School of Education
University of Leeds, Leeds, LS2 9JT

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Reading Self-Efficacy and Task Value, School Connectedness and Pupils' Perceptions of 'successful' reading during the Transition to Secondary School

Dear Headteacher,

I am postgraduate researcher with the University of Leeds and an experienced practitioner who has worked in local schools as both a class teacher and specialist teacher for learning difficulties over the last 18 years. This research needs both primary and secondary schools who are willing to participate in a research project that follows young people from Year 6 to Year 7, as they navigate their primary to secondary school transition. I have already made partnerships with XXXX and XXXX who will both be participating in this research with as many of their new intake of Year 7 pupils (September 2021 intake) as possible. I am therefore inviting your Year 6 pupils, who will transfer to either XXXX or XXXX, to participate in this research project during their last term at primary school.

The existing research tells us that the primary to secondary transition can be a vulnerable time for young people and that their wellbeing and attainment can be challenged. Reading in particular has been found to decline at this time, pupils' own beliefs about their abilities can waver and pupils' feelings of belonging or connectedness at school are disrupted. For most young people any negative impact is short-lived, but for some it persists. There is currently a need for more research into this transition for different groups of pupils, particularly those that face additional educational barriers, so that outcomes can be improved. Therefore, I am carrying out a research project that is interested in finding out more about reading during this transition from the pupil perspective. This research aims to explore pupils' reading motivation, including their perceptions of their own ability to complete reading tasks successfully, how important they perceive reading to be and how they perceive what 'successful' reading is, alongside their feelings of school connectedness before and after their transition. It is hoped that this research will contribute to making the transition process more inclusive and shed light on how reading curriculum and intervention for pupils with difficulties at this age can be developed.

This project wants to consult with pupils as 'experts in their own lives' and has three phases to the data collection and three data collection points (these are at the end of Year 6, at the beginning of Year 7 and then finally at the end of Year 7). All three phases will take place at all three data collection points. Phase 1: three quick and easy to complete online questionnaires. Phase 2: small groups of willing volunteers will be invited to contribute to participatory group interviews. Phase 3: follow up individual interviews with 4 willing volunteers. There will also be some opportunities for some interested pupils to find out more about research through collaborating on the data

analysis and sharing the findings within school. I hope to offer your pupils an enjoyable and valuable research experience and this project may lead to interesting findings with regards to the transition process, reading and pupil wellbeing that it is hoped you will be able to utilise and share within your school community. **Considering the existing and evolving COVID-19 pandemic schools are invited to participate in this study on either a face-to-face (following all recommended guidelines) or remote basis. Schools can change their preferences in line with their own risk assessments as the situation evolves over the course of the research.** All data collected will be anonymised and although general findings may be published, pseudonyms will be used to protect the identity of any schools or pupils involved. All data will be held and stored in line with data protection legislation and with University of Leeds policy.

In partnership with researchers at the University of Leeds and in collaboration with XXXX and XXXX, I would like to invite you to participate in this project. If you require any additional information please do not hesitate to contact me (edu1jd@leeds.ac.uk) or the primary research supervisor Dr Yvonne Griffiths (y.griffiths@leeds.ac.uk).

Yours faithfully,
Joanne Callaghan

Appendix F - Parent/Caregiver Information Sheet and Consent Form

School of Education
University of Leeds, Leeds, LS2 9JT

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Dear Parents and Carers,

As I'm sure you're well aware your child will be finishing their primary education at the end of Year 6 and starting their secondary education in their new school at the beginning of Year 7. In partnership with researchers at the University of Leeds, both your child's primary and secondary schools have agreed to take part in a research project interested in finding out more about reading and feelings of school belonging during this move from primary to secondary school. I would like to invite your child to take part in this project. Before you decide if you would like your child to take part, it is important that you understand why this research is happening and what it will involve.

What is this research trying to find out?

This project is interested in finding out more about pupils' thoughts and values about reading and how they feel about their own reading during the transition and in how pupils feel they belong at school during this transition. This research is interested in how thoughts and values about reading and confidence in reading ability may relate to each other and may be related to feelings of school belonging during this time. There is currently not enough research into reading and confidence in reading ability during this time, even though reading is a very important skill for life and how this move from primary to secondary school can be a challenging time for some pupils. It is hoped that this research will help schools work towards improving their support for pupils' reading skills and emotional wellbeing during this move.

What would be involved for your child?

First, there will be 4 quick and easy to complete online questionnaires that will take place in school at the end of Year 6 in primary school, at the beginning of Year 7 and then again at the end of Year 7 in secondary school. One questionnaire will be about their feelings about their own reading, one will be about how important reading is to them, one will be about their feelings of school belonging and one will ask them to describe what a 'good reader' and 'struggling reader' looks like to them. All children who choose to participate, with your consent, will be invited to complete the questionnaires. Then, the children will be invited to volunteer to take part in the next phases of the research. Some volunteers can then share their thoughts about reading through 'hands on' activities, as part of a small focus group and some volunteers will be able to talk in more detail about their reading and transition experiences informal interviews. The focus groups and interviews will take place at the end of Year 6 in primary school, at the beginning of Year 7 and then again at the end of Year 7 in secondary school. All the research activities will take place in school, as part of the normal school day and will take between 30 minutes and 1 hour each. **All the activities will take place in school with all COVID-19 guidance followed (see separate guidance with regards to safety protocols/remotely through Webex/Teams (delete as appropriate).**

Please be reassured that all children taking part will be supported to be able to access all activities they are participating in fully. There will always be a trusted member of staff nearby in

the unlikely event that discussing reading causes any upset. Should your child choose to take part, the audio of the focus groups and interviews will be recorded. No images or video of your child will be taken.

This research wishes to consult with your child as an 'expert in their own life' and aims to be empowering. If your child is interested in finding out more about research, there will also be some opportunities for pupils to become involved in the analysis of the findings and in sharing the findings within their school.

What will happen to the results?

All data will be anonymised and will be held and stored securely, in line with data protection legislation, the University of Leeds policies and ethics committee guidelines. For example, children will be identified with a code number by the end of the data collection and only transcripts will be held. Summary findings will be shared with school and made available to parents. Should this research be published, this would only be in a journal for teachers/educationalists and the schools and pupils would be anonymised and non-identifiable. Children are able to withdraw at any time during the data collection and their data will not be analysed. Once the project is over it will no longer be possible to withdraw, since their data will be unidentifiable.

Who is carrying out this research?

This project is led by myself, Joanne Callaghan, who is a postgraduate researcher at the University of Leeds. I am also an experienced classroom teacher and specialist teacher for learning difficulties, who has worked in local schools for 18 years. This research is supervised by Dr Yvonne Griffiths, Dr Judith Hebron and Dr Lucy Taylor from the University of Leeds. This research has received ethical clearance from the University of Leeds ethics committee.

What should I do next?

If you would like your child to take part, please complete the attached consent form and return it to your child's primary school. Thank you for supporting new research into reading and wellbeing during the primary to secondary transition.

School of Education
University of Leeds, Leeds, LS2 9JT.
education@leeds.ac.uk

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Dear Parents and Carers,

- Your child's primary and secondary school have agreed to participate in a research project led by the University of Leeds that is interested in finding out more about reading, children's feelings about their own reading and school belonging during their transition from primary to secondary school.

- If your child takes part, they will be asked to complete 4 short questionnaires (one about their feelings about their reading, one about how important reading is to them, one about their perceptions of a 'successful' and 'struggling' readers and one about their feelings of school belonging) at the end of Year 6, at the start of Year 7 and then again at the end of Year 7. Some children who want to, will be invited to share their thoughts about reading as part of small group activities and/or in an informal individual interview at the end of Year 6, at the beginning of Year 7 and then again at the end of Year 7. The activities will take place in school with all COVID-19 guidance followed/remotely through Webex/Teams (delete as appropriate).

- To find out more about the project please read the attached information sheet. If you have any questions, please contact the school SENCo in the first instance. If you require further clarification contact the researcher, Joanne Callaghan (edu1jd@leeds.ac.uk) or the primary research supervisor, Dr Yvonne Griffiths (y.griffiths@leeds.ac.uk).

- If you are happy for your child to participate please read, sign and return the consent form below to school as soon as possible.

Pupil name:_____

Primary school:_____

Secondary school:_____

I have read and understood the details of the above study and I have had chance to think about, discuss this with others and ask questions. I understand how the data will be collected, stored and what will happen to it in the end. I understand that this study has received ethical clearance from the University of Leeds. I understand that the audio of the interviews will be recorded, but that no images or video will be taken. I understand that participation is voluntary and that myself or my child is able to withdraw at any time, without giving reasons. However, I understand that once the project is finished (July 2022 TBC) that I will be unable to withdraw the data.

I give consent for my child to participate in the above research.

Signed:_____

Contact phone number:_____

Appendix G - Pupil Information Sheet and Consent Form

School of Education
University of Leeds, Leeds, LS2
9JT

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS



Dear Year 6 Pupils,

Your primary and secondary schools have agreed to take part in a research project about reading and feelings of school belonging during the move from primary to secondary school.

As you are about to leave primary school and move to your new secondary school this project is interested in finding out about your feelings and ideas about reading and school belonging during this time.



This is an exciting time, but it can sometimes be challenging for some students and this project wants to work towards making changes that help pupils like you with reading and support during this time.



This project is interested in your thoughts and ideas and considers you to be 'experts in your own lives'. There will be opportunities for some interested pupils to learn more about research by collaborating with me on understanding what is found out and on sharing the findings within your school.



If you **choose** to take part you will be asked to complete:

- 4 quick and easy online questionnaires both at the end of Year 6, at the beginning of Year 7 and then again at the end of Year 7.

You will then be asked if you **want** to be considered to take part in:

- Small group activities.

And/or

- Informal interview.

The activities will all take place in school and all safety guidelines will be followed/I will work with you remotely through Teams/Webex (delete as appropriate).

You can choose to withdraw at any time during the project without giving any reasons and your data will not be included. Once the project is finished you will not be able to withdraw. The audio only from the group work and interviews will be recorded. If the interviews take place online, only the audio will be recorded.

All of your data will be **anonymised**. This means that if the research is published that nobody would know that your school or you had been involved.

Thank you for supporting new research into reading and wellbeing during the primary to secondary transition.

Any questions?



School of Education
University of Leeds, Leeds, LS2 9JT
education@leeds.ac.uk

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Dear Pupils,

- Your primary and secondary school have agreed to participate in a research project led by the University of Leeds that is interested in finding out more about reading, your feelings about reading and school belonging during your move from primary to secondary school.

- If you take part, you will be asked to complete 4 short questionnaires (one about your feelings about reading, one about how important reading is to you, one about what you think a 'successful' reader and 'struggling reader' is and one about your feelings of school belonging) at the end of Year 6, at the beginning of Year 7 and then again at the end of Year 7. Some children who want to, will be invited to share their thoughts about reading as part of small group activities and/or in an informal individual interview at the end of Year 6, at the beginning of Year 7 and then again at the end of Year 7. All of the activities will take place at school and the researcher will follow all safety guidelines/work with you over Webex/Teams (delete as appropriate).

- To find out more about the project please see the attached information sheet. You can also discuss this with your teacher, the researcher or post a question in the question box for the researcher.

- If you are happy to participate please read, sign and return the consent form below.

Name:_____
Primary school:_____
Secondary school:_____

I have read and understood the details of the above study and I have had chance to think about, discuss this and ask questions. I understand how the data will be collected, stored and what will happen to it in the end. I understand that this study has received ethical clearance from the University of Leeds. I understand that the audio of interviews will be recorded, but that no images or video of me will be taken. I understand that participation is voluntary and that I am able to withdraw at any time, without giving reasons. However, I understand that once the project is finished (July 2022 TBC) that I will be unable to withdraw the data. **I give my consent to participate in the above research.**
Signed:_____

Appendix H - Accessible Summary Feedback Pilot Study

School of Education
University of Leeds, Leeds, LS2 9JT

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Reading and Wellbeing during the primary to secondary Transition- Pilot Study

Thank you to all the participants who collaborated with me in the pilot study and to all the staff that helped with the project. Here is a summary of what we found with pupils from this school.

School Belonging	Reading Self-Efficacy	Reading Task Value
92% of the participants had a positive sense of school belonging.	Perceptions of reading self-efficacy/confidence were around the expected level at this age with not much variation.	On average participants felt that reading was a little important to them in their lives.

How did these pupils perceive 'successful' reading?

- Good readers read fluently, understand what they read and read accurately, which is the opposite of how they perceived struggling readers.
- Good readers have a wide vocabulary, have superb ideas, and feel confident, but can feel pressured to do well. Struggling readers feel worried and shy and do not participate as much.
- They decided as a group that the most important factor for 'successful' reading is either motivation or enjoyment and it was agreed that these were closely linked, followed by: understanding, valuing reading and being able to use what they have read.

The advisory groups collaborated on developing the online surveys for other Year 6s. Most of you:

- ✓ Liked that the survey was on the computer, showed you if you had missed a question and that you could understand them. Some of you felt that the surveys were good for your wellbeing.
- ✓ Enjoyed completing the surveys and felt that the layout was clear.
- ✓ Enjoyed sharing your own opinions and the open-ended questions.

You said and I did:

- ✓ Added more colours, more pictures (but not too much), texture, and a more informal layout to the surveys to make them more welcoming for young people of your age.
- ✓ Included more details and pictures for the instructions.
- ✓ Organised the surveys into levels so young people know how far through they are.

When I tried out some of your suggestions you:

- ✓ Agreed that the changes I made reflected your views.

Appendix I - Reading Self-Efficacy Questionnaire (Carroll and Fox, 2017) with additional items

Practice

Read each item and rate how certain YOU are that you can do the actions described below by circling one of the numbers below the item. High scores equal a higher certainty that you can do the action. Please wait for instructions before starting the practice items.

Lift a bag of sugar

Very certain I cannot do- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 - Very certain I can do

Lift one of my class friends

Very certain I cannot do- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 - Very certain I can do

Lift two of my class friends

Very certain I cannot do- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 - Very certain I can do

Main questionnaire

Read each sentence and rate how certain **YOU** are that you can do the things described below. It is important you tell us what **YOU** think about your reading. When you think about reading, think about the any reading that you do at school and at home. These could be things you read in books, magazines, newspapers, comics, emails, text messages and the internet. To give an answer circle one of the numbers on the scale below the item.

Very certain I cannot do - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 - Very certain I can do

1. Read out loud in front of the class
2. Continue reading even when I find it difficult
3. Work out the sounds in words I have not seen before

4. Sound out a word that I find hard to read
5. Read on my own without an adult's help
6. Read things that are harder than the book I normally read at school
7. Know what I can do to improve my reading
8. Continue reading even when I find the subject boring
9. Read out loud quickly and still get words right
10. Make out words easily when I read
11. Improve my reading if I really want to
12. Continue reading even when I do not like the subject
13. Read as well as my friends
14. Continue reading even when I get frustrated
15. Practice reading in my spare time even when I don't have to
16. Read without making lots of mistakes
17. Read difficult books
18. Read a book I have not read before
19. **Understand what I read in text books at school**
20. **Understand the content of a book**
21. **Do well on reading comprehension tests**

Appendix J - Reading Task Value Questionnaire (items based on the MRIB-S and MRIB-NS, Wigfield et al., 2012 and scale based on the MRQ, Wigfield and Guthrie, 1997)

Practice

Here are some ones to try before we start on the ones about reading:

If the statement is **very different from you**, select a 1.

If the statement is **a little different from you**, select a 2.

If the statement is **a little like you**, select a 3.

If the statement is **a lot like you**, select a 4.

Practice item: I like chocolate.

Practice item: I like cauliflower.

Main

Okay, we are ready to start on the questions about reading. Remember there are no right or wrong answers, we are just interested in YOUR ideas and feelings about reading. To give your answer select one number from each question. Please follow along with me while I read eacch of the statement and then choose your answer.

1) I usually learn something from what I read.
2) It's important to me to understand what I read.
3) Reading is more useful than most of my other activities in school.
4) Reading is more useful than most of my other activities outside of school.
5) Reading is important to me.
6) I can use the knowledge that I learn from reading.
7) It is very important to me to be successful at reading.

Appendix K - Psychological Sense of School Membership (Goodenow, 1993)

Table 1
The Psychological Sense of School Membership (PSSM) Scale

1.	I feel like a real part of (name of school).
2.	People here notice when I'm good at something.
3.	It is hard for people like me to be accepted here. (*reversed*)
4.	Other students in this school take my opinions seriously.
5.	Most teachers at (name of school) are interested in me.
6.	Sometimes I feel as if I don't belong here. (*reversed*)
7.	There's at least one teacher or other adult in this school I can talk to if I have a problem.
8.	People at this school are friendly to me.
9.	Teachers here are not interested in people like me. (*reversed*)
10.	I am included in lots of activities at (name of school).
11.	I am treated with as much respect as other students.
12.	I feel very different from most other students here. (*reversed*)
13.	I can really be myself at this school.
14.	The teachers here respect me.
15.	People here know I can do good work.
16.	I wish I were in a different school. (*reversed*)
17.	I feel proud of belonging to (name of school).
18.	Other students here like me the way I am.

Appendix L - Codebook Qualitative Survey Answers

Speed: reads quickly, slowly, fluently (crosses over with accuracy).
Reading Performance: reading out loud in front of others- reads with expression, does the voices, hesitates/pauses/stutters, reads with/without emotion
Ability to use reading: learns from reading, uses vocabulary learned, applies what they have learned from reading and use reading in their lives/futures.
Understanding: comprehension, understanding stories, can explain what they have read, can answer questions about they have read and understands characters and their feelings. Includes empathy with character and understanding the emotions of the book.
Accuracy: the mechanics of reading-can/can't read/read words, pronunciation of words, sounding words out, decoding, has trouble reading/can't read properly, gets words mixed up. This is mostly at the word level but sometimes with reference to whole texts.
Enjoyment: likes/dislikes reading, wants to read, motivated to read, chooses to read in their own time/spare time. Enjoys the emotions of reading.
Effort: tries hard/does try hard, keeps going/gives up, focuses attention, relates to persistence and resilience, learning from mistakes.
Wider attainment: performs well/struggles in other subjects, is a role model, has wider skills such as a good imagination, is in good/middle group/lower groups, is smart/clever, has wider aspirations for future, making good/limited progress.
Confidence: relates to believing in themselves, feeling good about themselves and having the confidence to participate/contribute.
Types of material: reads hard/easy/thick/thin books, reference to reading stages/levels/book bands and difficulty.
Independence: Needs help/doesn't need help/asks a teacher/adult.
Amount Read: Reads a lot/doesn't read much.

Appendix M - Overview of Themes Developed during Analysis of Focus Groups Data

Basic emotions and personal attributes: General emotional states related to basic emotions (Tracy and Robins, 2004) e.g. joy/sadness/anger/fear or personality traits, e.g. being perceived as being open minded or having a good imagination.
Public self-consciousness: Includes self-conscious emotions that are related to identity goals and attribution, e.g. shame, guilt, embarrassment and pride (Tracy and Robins, 2004), feeling judged, anxious, nervous or shy related to the perceptions/judgement of others.
Belonging: Feeling they belong, feeling included, having lots of friends, being a valued/accepted part of the group.
Identity formation: Individuality, outward presentation of self-image to others, presenting as being within a social category/label, e.g. 'cool,' 'popular,' 'nerd' etc and wanting to fit in.
New environment: Different environment, different people and people they knew before appearing to be different within the new environment, incorporates changes in both physical and social environment.

Appendix N - Overview of Theme Developed during Analysis of Diamond 9 Data

Reading imaginatively: Imagination whilst reading that goes beyond the standard comprehension of the text.

Appendix O - Illustrative Example of Qualitative Analysis Process

The examples provided are from the focus group data analysis related to discussions around diamond 9 ranking choices in relation to the attributes of 'successful' reading.

Example of dialogue being grouped according to attribute of 'successful' reading and of the codebook analysis. The colours and writing in bold represents different themes from the codebook used. In this case this is related to the attribute of enjoyment:

Enjoyment	**D9 Score T1**	**D9 Score T2**	**D9 Score T3**	**Overall Score**
'Enjoyment' on D9.	22	**20**	**21**	**63**

Time 1
I think 'enjoyment' is because to enjoy something you have to like it, and you don't have to be good at anything to be a good reader. You just have to enjoy it.
I think that confidence and understanding are both equal. So, I think that enjoyment will be the most important. If they enjoy it, and they're not just reading for the sake of it, just because it's there, they don't, if they don't like it, then there's no point in reading.
I changed my opinion I think enjoyment should go at the top because you need to enjoy reading before you actually become like a fluent reader. And you need to enjoy what you do, in like in the future and now.
I agree to Lush that, you should enjoy the book before you read. So then you don't you can like the book you read more.
And you don't find it boring and like you don't want to read it and you're just doing it because you kind of, you don't want to say anything.
I think 'enjoyment' because if you don't enjoy anything then you won't be interested in the book or you won't be, you won't be able to read, and it would be boring for you.
Yeah, I think 'enjoyment' is the most important because what's the point of doing something if you don't enjoy doing it?
I agree because 'enjoyment,' if you're going to do something you have to enjoy it a little.
I agree with Midas because **if they feel they belong** to get more motivation and confidence to keep on going and reading.
I agree with Midas and Masie, because it might, if they're not, **if they feel that they don't belong**, it might actually put people off reading and you can learn a lot from reading.
I agree with that because **if you feel like you belong**, you'll be like more motivated to do more and like progress a bit more.
You don't always have to enjoy your books but like if you understand what it's saying and you know what the book is about it's like good to read it and help you practise, but you don't always have to enjoy it.
Time 2
I think we should move 'effort' and put 'understanding' here because I think 'effort' you don't really need that much effort to read, you can read to just enjoy it, not to like be like 'I want to be better'.
No, I think put like 'types of material' because sometimes like whenever you read a book then you find it boring it's like you wouldn't want to carry on reading and like, I've done that a few times. I've read a book and I don't like it, but and I don't really like enjoy it at all. So, you have to know what type of books you like: adventure, fantasy...in order to like really enjoy what you're reading.
Yeah, because sometimes they wouldn't, like 'enjoyment' is at the top of the diamond. But like, let's say, if somebody who likes fantasy reads an adventure book, they wouldn't really enjoy it as much because it's not like what they would like. As peer relationships are so critical to feelings of SB and because young people who face

Example of a summary of the codebook analysis and reflexive analysis of the reasoning for decisions the participants made for the attribute enjoyment, the colours represent the different themes from the codebook:

Intrinsic Motivation (enjoyment/motivation) Enjoyment (D9)

Time point	**Summary/Reflections- the 'why' (with reference to codes, see coding book).**
Time 1 (Pre-transition) Y6 **D9 Score: 22**	Intrinsic motivation was important (7) related to **feeling like they belong** (3) which → 'successful reading' in the form of increased 'desirable' reading behaviours, that is fluency (1); amount read (2); persistence (1); learning from reading (1) and making progress for now and in the future (2). Some didn't feel that enjoyment was as important as understanding (1) this is also reflected in D9 scores where some groups ranked 'understanding' more highly.
Time 2 (Post-transition) Y7 beginning. **D9 Score: 20**	Overall score declined very slightly. Intrinsic motivation remained important (17). Post-transition this was linked more to persistence (5), in particularly having a positive mindset towards reading and types of material (4), in terms of genre of books chosen and some reference to performance/reading out loud (2), in that this wasn't as important as enjoyment since you could pre-record your reading if necessary if you were a professional reader. What impacted negatively on the score was new thoughts that emerged post-transition? These were the relationship between understanding and enjoyment was unpicked more, 'if you can't understand how can you enjoy it' and the impact of tests/progress or attainment in school linked to the idea of being 'forced' to read to achieve whether you enjoy it or not.
Time 3 (Post-transition) Y7 end **D9 Score: 21**	Overall score increased slightly again. New thoughts that emerged at T2 continued to be developed by some groups and the same themes emerged for the first time from different groups in different schools. Intrinsic motivation remained important (7) with reference to types of books (1) and choice. This time this was mainly linked back to this idea of unpicking the relationship between 'understanding' (6) and 'enjoyment'. This time thinking had developed in that you can use the pictures or other information to understand if it is confusing, however, if you don't enjoy it you won't engage in the first place. Other groups (3/5 groups raised this at either T2 or T3 all 3 were in different secondary schools) also raised the idea of being made to read in school in lessons whether you enjoy it or not.

Example of summary reflexive analysis for the changes made relevant to each theme over time, in this case for the attributes of enjoyment, understanding, confidence and performance:

Summary Table RQ4 Diamond 9 Focus Group Dialogue- What is most important to be a successful reader and does this change over the primary to secondary transition?

Factor	D9 Scores over 3 timepoints (T1, T2, T3)	Changes in reasoning FGs T2	Changes in reasoning FGs T3
Understanding	20, 23, 21	As in the 'Intrinsic motivation/enjoyment' category, see above, at this time point more discussion went into unpicking the relationship between understanding and enjoyment (7) some of the same dialogue was repeated in both boxes. The argument is some think that you need to be able to understand to enjoy and others think that enjoyment is most important in the first instance	The idea of forced reading in class even if you don't enjoy it also emerged in relation to understanding in that participants have to demonstrate their understanding, for example summarise the story even if they haven't enjoyed it under these circumstances.
Intrinsic Motivation/Enjoyment	22, 20, 21	These were the relationship between understanding and enjoyment was unpicked more, 'if you can't understand how can you enjoy it' and the impact of tests/progress or attainment in school linked to the idea of being 'forced' to read to achieve whether you enjoy it or not.	This time thinking had developed in that you can use the pictures or other information to understand if it is confusing, however, if you don't enjoy it you won't engage in the first place. Other groups (3/5 groups raised this at either T2 or T3 all 3 were in different secondary schools) also raised the idea of being made to read in school in lessons whether you enjoy it or not.

Appendix P - Accessible Summary Feedback Main Study.

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Reading and Wellbeing during the primary to secondary Transition Times 2 and 3 at XXXX School

Thank you to the 18 participants who collaborated with me in these phases of the study and to all the staff that helped with the project. Here is a summary of what we found with pupils from this school. It is important to note that this feedback is based upon preliminary findings and that analyses is still underway. Final outcomes will be available later in the Spring.

School Belonging

100% of the participants had an overall positive sense of school belonging at the beginning of Y7. This had fallen to 82% by the end of Y7. Feelings of school belonging declined overall compared to the end of Y6 and the beginning of Y7. Declines in school belonging are considered typical at this age.

Reading Self-Efficacy

Perceptions of reading self-efficacy/confidence declined at the beginning of Y7 but began to increase again by the end of the year. At the beginning of Y7, 89% of this small group had feelings of reading self-efficacy at least around the expected level for their age. By the end of Y7 this had increased to 94%.

Reading Task Value

On average feelings of reading task value increased slightly at the beginning of Y7 but then declined by the end of the year. Participants felt that statements related to how important and useful reading was 'a little' like them at both the beginning and end of Y7. Task values are precursors to intrinsic motivation, which has been shown to decline during adolescence.

How did these pupils perceive 'successful' reading?

- In their individual descriptions they emphasised the importance of accuracy and understanding for being a 'successful' reader at both time points.
- Performance aspects of reading (reading in front of others) became more important over Y7 in their perceptions of both 'good' and 'struggling' readers.
- Their perception of the importance of 'speed' for being a successful reader, increased over Y7 and this was unique to this group.
- Their perception of the importance of enjoyment and motivation factors for being a successful reader declined over Y7.
- After some debate the focus group decided collaboratively that the most important factors for being a 'successful' reader overall were understanding, being able to 'use reading', effort and enjoyment.
- Their perceptions of 'struggling readers' seemed to change over their primary to secondary transition. They felt that 'struggling readers' would not want to ask for help as they would want to keep that they are struggling hidden, as they would not want other people to think that they are not clever and that this might cause them anxiety.
- They noted that if teachers did pick up that someone was struggling that they could get help from the SENCo or go to 'The Lighthouse.'
- By the end of Y7 they still felt that they were experiencing transition and adapting to their school.

Participant Advisory Groups

Sixteen of the participants also contributed to advisory groups, that worked with me on analysing the data, interpreting the findings and on discussing what needs to be disseminated back to school leaders to work towards impact. This group considered data from all the participants across all the schools that participated. The contributions made by these groups are of vital importance to the research.

Key points from the participants' discussions:

- When looking at the raw data, they highlighted that a small number of pupils at the end of Year 7 didn't feel like they belonged in their schools. Although they recognised that this was a minority, they were surprised at the number of people who did not feel like they belonged and were concerned about these pupils as they felt that school should be a place you can feel comfortable.
- Some members of the group thought that feelings of school belonging may have gone down overall by the end of Y7 because people feel that they cannot be themselves of school for fear of being judged by their peers. They also felt that because they felt as though they don't get to know all their teachers as well in secondary, that this may have impacted along with what they considered to be 'stricter' approaches to behaviour.
- They also noted that school belonging may have decreased overall as at the beginning of Y7 everyone is nice to each other at first, but over time this reduces, and friendship problems can occur.
- It was also felt by some participants that there was an emphasis on being lucky to get in at this school and some pupils didn't feel like they deserved their place.
- Some participants thought that the reason reading task value may have gone down a bit over Y7 is because reading isn't a very popular subject, that good readers can be perceived as 'nerds.'
- Some pupils felt that it was easier to get help with reading in primary if you needed it as they only had one teacher, who would get to know them well, and that struggling readers may feel judged if they ask for help. They noted the increased emphasis on independence and responsibility in secondary school and that they feel this increases the pressure on struggling readers and may impact upon whether they ask for help if they need it.
- They also noted that because they get more homework now, they don't have as much time as before for reading. Some participants explained that they also spend a lot of time each day at mosque which can make fitting in reading even more challenging.
- Some pupils felt that because they got their own phone in time for secondary school that going on their phone has impacted upon the time they spent reading.
- A few members of the group felt that the COVID-19 pandemic had impacted upon feelings of school belonging and on perceptions of reading, in that they missed quite a lot of school in Y6 and so now they may not have the skills needed for making new friends and for having the confidence to read out loud in front of their peers. It was also noted that this cohort didn't get the opportunity for transition days.

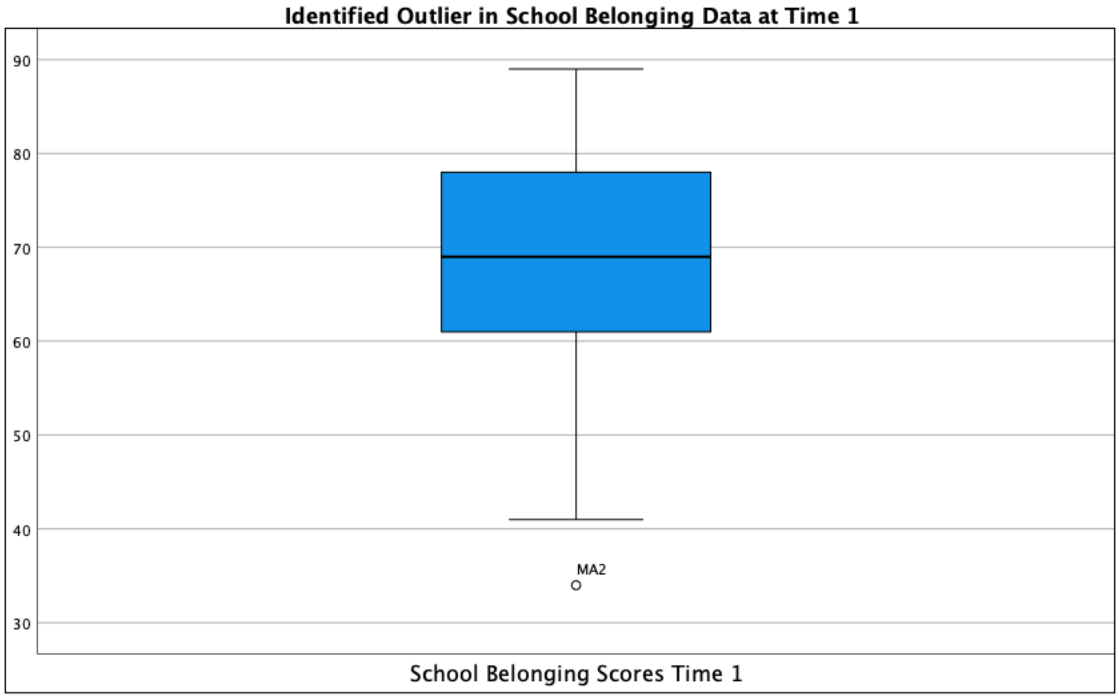
- They all agreed that, at the end of Y7, they are still adapting to being in a new school and that by Y11 they think their feelings of school belonging will have increased again and recovered to how it was in Y6, as they'll have been in the school for longer. They felt that they were still adapting to their new schools at the end of Y7.

Suggestions from the participants of what next steps would make a positive impact:

- Regular small group social activities for all pupils in Y7 to speed up getting to know everyone.
- Increase the amount of reading that takes place at school so that people get used to it so those who enjoy reading will not feel like a 'nerd.'
- Increase the number of library lessons to raise the profile of reading.
- Some participants felt that library lessons would be more motivating if there was reduced pressure from the set reading targets and if sanctions related to these were removed. For some participants they felt that the targets set led to them rushing the book. It was acknowledged by some participants that without the targets/sanctions altogether they wouldn't read and so it was suggested that these could be reduced rather than removed.
- More support in library lessons for struggling readers that they could access in a way that they wouldn't find embarrassing.
- More opportunities for reading for pleasure during break and lunchtimes.
- A greater variety of books to choose from during library lessons.
- More opportunities for confidence building particularly around speaking and reading out loud in front of the class to develop their confidence and skills amongst their new peers and post COVID-19 after spending a lot of time at home.

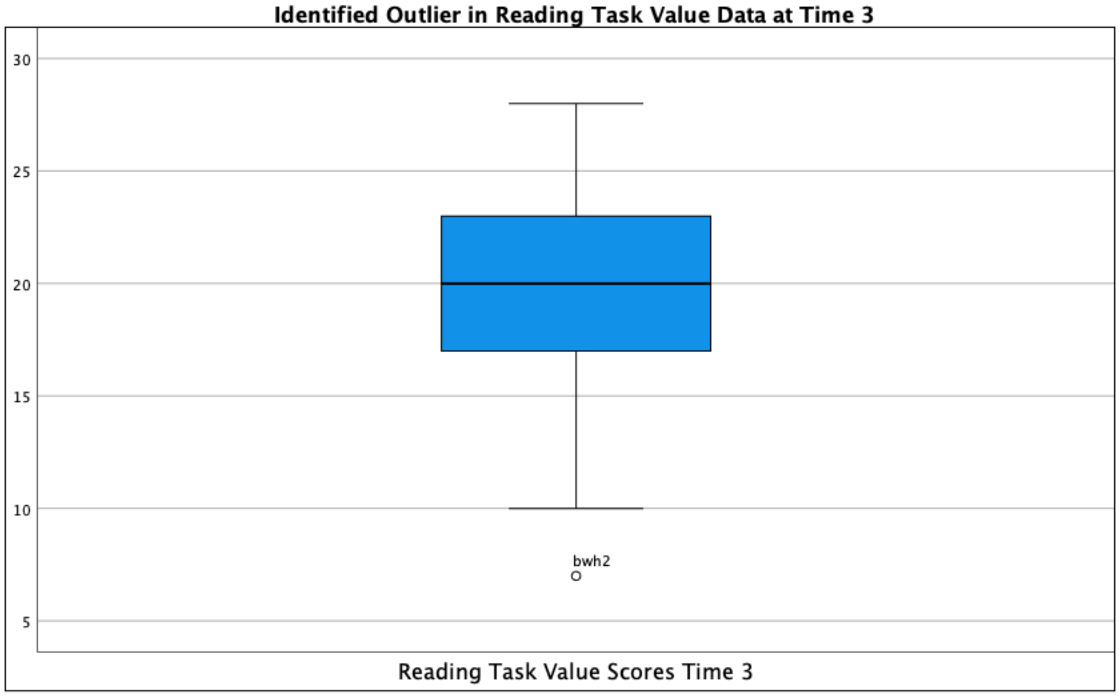
Appendix Q - Box Plots to show Outliers






Identified Outliers in Reading Self-Efficacy Data at Time 2
140
120
100
80
60
40
20
MGL6
MG1
owh1
BG1
Reading Self-Efficacy Scores Time 2


Identified Outlier in School Belonging Scores Time 2
80
60
40
20
MA2
School Belonging Scores Time 2


Identified Outlier in Reading Task Value Data at Time 3
30
25
20
15
10
5
bwh2
Reading Task Value Scores Time 3