**Chapter 1 - Introduction**

*“For good nurture and education, implant good constitutions”* – Plato, 332 BC

**1.1 Chapter Overview**

Children with emotional difficulties often experience problems at school in terms of their academic progress and within peer relationships. This can create a particular challenge to teachers in terms of managing their behaviour and meeting their needs (Bennathan, 2000). Nurture groups (NGs) were developed by educational psychologist Marjorie Boxall in the 1960’s with an aim to improve the emotional wellbeing of children with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD). This chapter explores the definition of Nurture Groups, SEBD and places current research within both local and national contexts.

**1.2 What are ‘Nurture Groups’?**

As an Educational Psychologist (EP) in Hackney in 1969, Marjorie Boxall saw that a large number of children entering school arrived with severe social, emotional and behavioural needs. These students were unable to form trusting relationships with adults or to respond appropriately to other children – in effect, they were simply not ready to meet the social and intellectual demands of school life (Nurture Group Network, 2014).

As a result, Nurture Groups (NGs) have been established and can be defined as a school-based learning environment, specifically designed to address the unmet social, emotional and behavioral needs of children and young people (Bennathan & Boxall 2000; Cooper 2004). A ‘classic’ nurture group consists of a small supportive class of 8-10 children and two trained staff (one teacher and an assistant), usually in a mainstream primary school, and provides a safe and predictable structured environment in which children are given opportunities to re-visit early nurturing experiences.

Children or young people within a NG are considered developmentally as opposed to chronologically, in that they may be displaying inappropriate behaviours in comparison to their peers and are functioning at a level more appropriate for a child much younger in terms of their social and emotional development (Furness, 2014). Hence NGs were constructed to teach children in a developmentally appropriate manner as opposed to a focus on age appropriate teaching, ensuring that NGs respond to the needs of children whilst providing positive models of relationships both with and between adults (Boxall, 2002).

Classic NGs take place within a defined ‘Nurture Room’, which sets out to provide a safe, welcoming and caring environment for learning and will replicate the home environment, providing a comfortable areas for socialising, an area for eating and a working area to address more the more formal demands of the curriculum (Colley, 2009). Children spend a large proportion of their week within the NG environment but remain members of their own class, returning frequently for activities with their mainstream class peers. This element of maintaining contact is important, as the purpose of NG support is to enable children to reintegrate back into mainstream classes when they are ready.

Nurture groups offer an educational ‘bridge’ for pupils most at risk of academic failure and/ or exclusion (Colley, 2009). Central to the slow moving, supportive and routinised environment are six principles (see Figure 1.1) that underpin the philosophy of NGs. These also highlight the importance of language, communication and self-esteem during development. A successful NG is one that becomes fully embedded into whole school ethos and is recognised and valued by all staff as a valuable method of early intervention, thus enabling consistent support for the needs of all children.

The identification of pupils requiring NG support can be a sensitive issue; the rationale behind selecting a child may be seen in a more negative context by parents or the child themselves. Children presenting with negative behavioural issues can be more obvious candidates for selection, however children who are more insular and internalise their difficulties can make identification more of a challenge. In order to provide a form of consistency for pupil selection, standardised tools of assessment have been established.

Figure 1.1: Nurture Group Principles (Lucas, Insley and Buckland, 2006)

Good practice sees pupils referred to NGs via assessment using the Boxall Profile (Bennathan & Boxall, 1998), whereby teachers measure children against two strands: developmental (e.g. ‘engages cognitively with peers’) and diagnostic (e.g. ‘negativism to others’). More recently, The Boxall Profile for Young People (Bennathan, Boxall & Colley, 2010) adapted this model of assessment with the aim of identifying unmet developmental needs of young people aged 11 – 14 years, standardising the same profile strands against this age range and supporting with age appropriate strategies and activities that allow these strands to be measured (Beyond the Boxall Profile for Young People - Rae, 2013). The Boxall Quality Mark Award (Nurture Group Network, 2014) provides an additional accreditation against which schools can monitor and evaluate NG support.

Boxall based her rationale for NGs around the principles of attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969) and sociocultural theory of learning (Vygotsky, 1978). Children attending NGs have often experienced trauma, instability or poor care at home and may have missed out on the formation of strong bonds or relationships with parents. NGs aim to enable youngsters to (re)experience attuned, nurturing care through intensive interactions within a predictable and safe environment (Griffiths, Stenner & Hicks, 2014). A more in-depth analysis of the theoretical aspects of NGs is provided in Chapter 2: ‘Literature Review’.

These espoused NG principles and procedures advocated by Bennathan and Boxall (2000) are not always observable within practice. Cooper, Arnold and Boyd (2001) identify four variants of the classic NG provision. Variant one refers to the ‘classic’ NG as described above. Variant two termed ‘new variant NGs’ have the same underlying principles as the ‘classic’ model but differ with respect to organisation and/or structure. Variant three, referred to as ‘groups informed by NG principles’, differ fundamentally from both ‘classic’ and ‘new variant’ models in respect to their organisation and structure, whereby NGs may take place during lunchtimes or as after school clubs. Variant four is described as ‘aberrant NGs’. This variant simply bears the name of the NG and fundamentally contradicts the ‘classic’ model both in terms of defining principles and structure (Griffiths, Stenner & Hicks, 2014). Evidence for variant NGs is reviewed in greater depth in chapter 2.3.1.

**1.3 Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD)**

Frequently schools raise concerns regarding the progress in learning, behaviour or physical and emotional well-being of several pupils within their provision. These factors can have an effect not only on a child’s ability to function and learn, but can also have a detrimental effect on those around them. Research by Kalambouka, Farrell, Syson and Kaplan (2005) suggests that, at primary school level, the impact of inclusion of students with SEBD on results for other children in a class can be negative. Pupils with SEBD can also pose a challenge to teachers; research has underlined an association between increased psychological stress/ distress amongst teachers and their professional contact with children categorised as SEBD (Adera & Bullock, 2010). Furthermore, Armstrong & Hallett (2012) argue these concerning effects on teacher mental health are the result of educators being conceptually and emotionally underequipped to support children and young people presenting with SEBD.

At best SEBD is a loose umbrella encompassing behaviours and expressions of emotion among school pupils which are experienced by adults and pupils as disruptive (Cefai, Cooper & Camilleri, 2009). One definition of this complex condition can be drawn from a preceding Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice, describing a child with emotional and behavioural difficulties as ‘[being] withdrawn or isolated, disruptive and disturbing, hyperactive and lack concentration; those with immature social skills; and those presenting challenging behaviours arising from other complex special needs’ (DfES, 2001, p87). As reflected by this definition, the wide range of criteria can make it difficult to define if a child ‘has’ SEBD. For example Daniels, Visser, Cole & De Reybekill (1999) found that teachers had a shared concept of SEBD but struggled to provide a clear definition of the disorder.

The varying presentations of SEBD in children contributes to this lack of clarity. SEBD can be manifested in an extrovert form through angry or aggressive behaviour in the classroom, or can be internalised, causing concern for a child’s emotional health and wellbeing. Those children displaying forms of external, disruptive behaviour can be easy to identify. However, those ‘withdrawn or isolated’ children, presenting as quiet individuals and who internalise their difficulties can be easily overlooked by school staff. It therefore becomes difficult to place a true figure on pupils with SEBD.

However, SEBD is said to contribute a significant percentage to the total of those permanently excluded from mainstream schools (Cooper, 2008). During 1996//97 these figures surged to a high of over 12,000 (DfEE, 1999); it could be argued these figures were a result of schools lack of tolerance towards disruptive behaviours during this period. However, over the last decade the UK government has recorded a steady decrease in those excluded, with recent estimates suggesting a figure of approximately 5,170 for academic year 2011/12 (DfE, 2013). However, within these figures, boys are around three times more likely to receive a permanent exclusion that girls, and pupils claiming free school meals are four times more likely to receive a permanent exclusion. Given the challenging circumstances children with SEBD often have at home, it could be argued that exclusion exacerbates their situation, ironically creating more of a need for stability. This approach also suggests schools can be rid of a problem defined as ‘within child’ instead of considering the impact of the systems around a child (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

One possible link to the prevalence of SEBD is the increasing rate of mental health issues in young people aged 11 – 16. Findings from a sample of children (N=71) defined as having severe SEBD and asked to complete Strength and Difficulties Questionnaires indicate a much higher than national level of perceived mental health difficulties within this population (Hackett et al, 2010). Mental health problems in children and young people cause distress and can have wide-ranging effects, including impacts on educational attainment and social relationships, as well as affecting life chances and physical health (Murphy & Fonagy, 2013). As a result, there is some call for children and young people to be ‘screened’ for mental health problems in schools; Fazel et al (2014) suggest whole school audits, with teachers trained to spot physical or mental issues such as weight gain or bullying. Evidence therefore suggests the increasing importance towards spotting indicators of mental ill health – that may lead to further SEBD – at an early age and countering these with models of intervention that nurture children, reestablishing a healthy balance in their physical, mental and emotional wellbeing.

Against this backdrop, there appears to be a paucity of research which seeks to advocate the views of young people with additional learning needs such as those with SEBD (Sellman, 2009). Davies (2005) draws attention to the large body of research that takes into account the views of young people in mainstream provisions in relation to their educational setting and compares this with the distinct lack of literature that include a focus on the views of pupils with SEBD.

**1.4 Voice of the Child**

In 1989 the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child gave rise to the inclusion of the child’s voice as an integral part of legislative development in the UK, particularly towards the SEN Code of Practice (DfES, 2001). In addition to the perceived political benefits, the value of actively involving children and young people in research and practice stems from the invaluable messages conveyed to researchers and policymakers as well as the empowerment of children and young people themselves (Cullingford, 2006; Sellman, 2009).

The involvement of young people in research can have a positive ‘ripple effect’ that permeates direct and indirect support systems around a child. Research suggests pupil participation can lead to benefits and positive outcomes for the individual children and young people, staff, organisations and communities (Kendall et al, 2008; Lyle et al, 2010). When children and young people’s voices are given a platform to be heard within literature, they can and do convey valid, challenging and important messages relating to curriculum design and environments they feel would be conducive to their learning (Cefai & Cooper, 2010; O’Connor et al, 2011).

As professionals who contribute to research and have regular contact with young people, EPs have an important role to play in promoting the pupil voice. Furthermore, EPs are positioned to elicit children’s views in a neutral context and can ensure they are included in any proposed plans for their education (DfEE, 2000). The prospect of how to include pupils has been a recent topic of debate for EPs; Todd, Hobbs & Taylor (2000) argue that the development of professional practice that genuinely enables the views of children and young people to be heard should be a central focus for every EP. Furthermore, the very nature of the EP role as ‘scientist practitioner’ (Fallon et al, 2010) infers that EPs should consider the voice of pupils when engaging in research relating to educational interventions underpinned by psychology (Griffiths, Stenner & Hicks, 2014). The views of young people relative to their own experiences of NGs are a prime example of this advocacy in practice. Further evidence of pupil voice within literature can be found under section 2.4.3 ‘Young people in literature’.

**1.5 National context**

The ‘Every Child Matters’ (DfES, 2004) agenda placed emphasis on schools and local authorities to ensure measures are in place to support ‘every child’ in achieving positive outcomes. Despite the now dated nature of this legislation (see DfE, 2014 on p. 10), there remain groups of children in society who are particularly vulnerable to negative outcomes. Children with SEBD are frequently linked with this category, making much less academic progress than either their peers who do not have SEN or those with learning difficulties (Anderson, Kutash & Duchnowski, 2001). After the family, schools are the most important supportive organisation in the lives of the vast majority of children and young people. The final report of the National CAMHS review (2008) states that the school setting has a significant impact on children’s mental health and psychological well being. As such, the NG model aims to support children and young people as a form of early intervention, aiming to enhance progress and achievement through a safe, supportive and emotionally enriching environment.

The number of registered NGs running in the UK has increased exponentially over the past decade, with recent figures estimating approximately 1500 active groups running nationally (Nurture Group Network, 2014); a figure that could be higher if it were able to incorporate unregistered groups. Recognition of the increasing profile of NGs as a valued intervention in supporting pupils with SEBD is seen through acknowledgements throughout the development of government legislation. Early policy describes NGs as a method of early identification and intervention in schools (DfEE, 1998), with more recent legislation adding value to NGs as methods of good practice (DfES, 2005; Ofsted, 2005).

In July 2011, a government commissioned report examined the use of nurture groups in supporting children with SEBD in 29 infant, first and primary schools (Ofsted, 2011). Key findings from this report illustrated the considerable difference nurture groups made to the behaviour and social skills of those who attended. Furthermore, the report recommended the Department for Education and local authorities should ‘take into account the substantial value of well-led and well-taught nurture groups when considering policies and guidance on early intervention and targeted support for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural needs’ (Ofsted, 2011, p7).

Following on from this, the development of the SEN green paper (‘Support and Aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability’; DfE, 2011) attempted to remove an apparent ‘bias towards inclusion’ and intimated parents should have greater choice and control over their child’s education. Importantly the paper also highlights areas such as low expectations for pupils with SEN and aims to raise levels of aspiration. This area can be seen as particularly relevant for pupils with SEBD who may be perceived as having low expectations and therefore lack the confidence or skills to reach their potential (Furness, 2014).

The findings from this green paper fed into the creation of the new Children and Families Bill (DfE, 2013), which aims for more positive outcomes for children by placing SEN and education within a wider social context, alongside health and social care. As a symbol of this unification of services, the Bill proposes the implementation of Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) as a replacement to the previous statement of SEN, aiming to create less repetition of information for parents and a more collaborative (and fiscally efficient) approach to service delivery for the state. SEN support is extended to age 25, and the introduction of personal budgets aim to give families greater control over the services they receive, indicated through the introduction of personal budgets. Introducing the EHCP may be a beneficial move for young people with SEBD; SEN departments have a responsibility to include details of social and emotional issues within such documentation, and to meeting such needs with appropriate provision.

Most recently, the development of the SEND Code of Practice (DfE, 2015) has resulted in the merging of previous ‘School Action’ and ‘School Action Plus’ levels of SEN into one single ‘SEN support’ category. The shift includes a linguistic change to SEBD as an area of need, dropping the ‘behavioural’ element of the acronym and redefining as ‘Social, Emotional and Mental Health’ (SEMH). This change of narrative may perhaps reflect a modification of thought towards behaviour as a consequence of social and emotional development as opposed to a singular entity. This shift of thinking may also lead to a change of how SEBD pupils are considered for NG selection.

**1.6 Local context**

Research is being conducted in a large ‘home’ county in the south-east of England, which due to geographical size is divided up into five municipalities. SEBD provision across the county varies, from inclusive practice within mainstream schools to provision in five Educational Support Centres (ESCs, known elsewhere as Pupil Referral Units or PRUs), one per municipality. Until 2008, NGs formed an integral part of the county’s ‘Behaviour and Achievement Strategy’, with 15 NGs set up in Key Stage 1 settings. Within a 2010 directorial report, 13 of these 15 primary schools had continued with NG provision, with nine other primaries implementing Primary Support Bases (PSBs) and 23 secondary schools providing Learning Support Units (LSUs) for supporting pupils with SEBD amongst others.

The local SEN, Disabilities and Inclusion Strategy places particular emphasis on meeting the needs of children within county boundaries, hence ‘Delivering Special Provision Locally’ (DSPL) groups have been setup. These groups, nine in total across the county, aim to:

* Meets the needs of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), aged 0-25, as close to home as possible
* Improve outcomes for wellbeing and attainment
* Widen choice for children and parents/ carers
* Remove barriers to learning
* Use resources more effectively

Recently these groups have also stipulated additional funding available for local authority regulated schools that wish to introduce or reinforce nurturing principles. Several schools have decided to ‘cluster’ together and share training around nurture principles, with one secondary choosing to use funds to implement a new NG as part of their inclusion base (unfortunately implementation of this NG began after data for this research had been collated). Local interest in NGs and cross-county funding dedicated to nurturing principles allows for this research to be closely aligned to local priorities.

The local authority Educational Psychology Service (EPS) currently operates on a time allocation model, with each EP responsible for a patch of primary, secondary and special schools within a particular geographical area. Recently the local EPS has undergone rapid change in terms of staff transition and adaptations to meet the need for psychological input to EHCPs, therefore needing to switch to a centralised referral system and consultative model of working, which may have implications for the amount of time EPs are spending in schools supporting children or young people with SEBD; potentially the most common referral need received by the EPS.

**1.7 Current research**

As illustrated, Nurture Groups in primary settings are expanding as a holistic, evidence based form of intervention for pupils with SEBD (now SEMH), with ‘classic’ NG adaptations now beginning to push into secondary school provisions. Secondary NGs appear to be slowly germinating within the home county for this research, yet due to initial difficulties locating and recruiting a suitable secondary NG (a process explored further during the Discussion chapter), the key aim of this research was to explore the ‘lived’ experiences of a secondary nurture provision for young people, and through this expand upon secondary NG awareness both locally and regionally.

**1.8 Chapter summary**

This chapter began by illustrating the background and formation of NGs and how NGs relate to SEBD. National and local contexts of policy and procedure were the expanded upon, and finally the aims of research were explicitly stated. Further detail around the NG model and principles can be found in the following chapter.

**Chapter 2: Literature Review**

*“Attachment is an integral part of human nature from the cradle to the grave. It may be very prominent during childhood, but it’s true of you and me today.”*

John Bowlby (1969)

**2.1 Chapter Overview**

The following chapter reviews the literature relevant to the research: an exploration of young people’s experiences of a nurture group in a secondary school.

Section 2.2 presents the theoretical standpoint of the research and looks at links between nurture groups and neuroscience. Section 2.3 presents a tabulated meta-analysis of nurture group research, initially from a primary perspective, with a particular emphasis on the impact and effectiveness of nurture groups. Section 2.4 takes a micro-analytical perspective and, through a systematic literature search, critically reviews key papers that focus on factors closely positioned to this research, namely secondary NGs, variant NGs and the voice of the child.

**2.2 Theoretical Standpoint**

Boxall (1996) created nurture groups as a practical response to a growing number of children with SEBD in mainstream infant schools that appeared to lack exposure to critical experiences of early childhood, including secure parental relationships, which Boxall felt were crucial to meet the demands of school life. Boxall therefore emphasised the relationship between child and teacher in a nurture group when providing positive early years experiences, also serving to enhance the socio-emotional development of a child (Garner & Thomas, 2011). The key theoretical underpinning of nurture groups is attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969), from which the ‘internal working model’ is derived; how a child positions themselves in relation to their attachment figure - typically a mother and/ or father (see Figure 2.1).

The mental representations illustrated in Figure 2.1 provide the child with a sense of self in relation to others, particularly a sense of self-worth linked to how their attachment figure perceives them, and the subsequent acceptance and support given in times of stress. If the ‘No’ pathway from the attachment cycle is repeated, Bowlby (1973) argued that over time a ‘defective’ internal working model (insecure attachment) is formed, having potentially detrimental results for a child’s mental, social and emotional well-being. Bowlby also suggested that a child’s future behaviour, future relationships and future choices would all be linked to the quality of relationships that the child enjoyed in his or her earliest years (Sroufe, 1983).

Figure 2.1: Bowlby’s Attachment Cycle

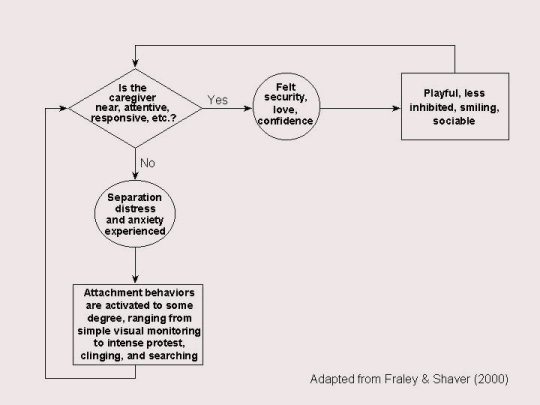


Where a child has enjoyed love and security within an intimate and continuous relationship with a primary caregiver, an ‘affectionate bond’ develops that represents a long and enduring tie to a uniquely viewed care-giver (Ainsworth, 1978). Within that bond, it is argued that a child’s internal working model is therefore ‘securely attached’, offering a sense of comfort and stability to the child.

Attachment theorists believe the quality of the earliest childhood relationship is reflected in the degree to which the child experiences a ‘safe base’ through the relationship with the care-giver (Colley, 2012). Central to the principles of classic nurture groups as an intervention is the development of this safe base concept for children and young people within school. This sense of safety in a nurture group setting is generated through a number of deliberate, well planned ways:

1. Classroom is warm and welcoming, with soft furnishings, curtains around the room, a play area, a breakfast/ eating area, a full length mirror and a formal working area
2. Days are slow paced and follow predictable routines, giving children time to settle, relax and feel comfortable
3. Ratio of staff to students ensures that each child can receive the time, care and attention they need and deserve
4. As theorised by Ainsworth, nurture groups allow for lengthy, trusting relationships that provide an ensuring tie (or ‘affectional bond’) and ensure both emotional and psychological safety

(Adapted from Colley, 2012)

Nurture groups can provide the parameters of trusting relationships that are based on honesty, integrity and respect. Young people learn developmentally appropriate behaviour though the authentic care that is on offer in a nurture group (Colley, 2012). These parameters also help to process emotional outbursts in a healthy manner, containing but rejecting the behaviour without rejecting the child themselves (Bennathan & Boxall, 2000).

Attachment theory does not position itself in complete synergy with Boxall’s theoretical framework; attachment theory does not support the notion that replacing early experiences within a school-based environment rectifies an insecure attachment (Bani, 2011). Social, emotional and learning skills are a specifically taught element of nurture groups – attachment theory does not accommodate this mode of practice.

**2.2.1 Maslow and Vygotsky**

Several authors have cited Maslow (1943) as a theory of motivation in relation to NGs (Cooper, Arnold & Boyd, 2001; Cooper & Whitebread, 2007). Maslow (1943) described a hierarchy of needs (see Appendix 1) whereby early, lower order needs would need to be met in order for higher order needs to be present. NGs are seen to provide basic physiological needs, for example food and safety, at the foundation of this model.

Reference to theory by Vygotsky (1978) provides a logical interpretation as to how children’s learning develops through relationships within a NG. Through a model he describes as the ‘Zone of Proximal Development’ (ZPD) – the distance between a child’s actual level of development and what they could achieve in the presence of a more competent peer – Vygotskian theory proposes transference of this deeper form of mediation to NG relationships between teacher and child.

**2.2.2 Attachment theory and neuroscience**

Although at an early stage, developments in neuroscience are beginning to offer a pillar of support to Bowlby’s theory, thus indirectly informing nurture group practice. Research by Schore (2001) appears congruent with attachment theory, in that an infant will:

* Be biologically disposed to make strong emotional bonds with a significant other
* Seek safety, or a safe base, in the presence of a significant other
* Find the safe base ‘contains’ otherwise overwhelming emotional experiences
* Find attachment behaviours emerging through contact and proximity
* Develop ‘empathic attunement’ through sensitive responses of a carer to the needs of the infant

The implications of these neuro-scientific findings suggest nurture groups could act as an intervention that satisfies the otherwise unmet needs of a child or young person, perhaps also acting as the catalyst for repairing any social, emotional or behavioural ‘damage’ caused during formative development.

Recent research around neuroscience during adolescence also supports this notion, in that adolescence may represent a sensitive period for social and emotional development. From research into the distinct socio-emotional processing of the adolescent brain, Sebastian (2014) looked at four key areas relative to neural development in adolescents:

* Processing emotional cues
* Understanding others’ thoughts and feelings
* Sensitivity to social rejection
* Risk taking in the presence of peers

Sebastian noted that the processes of mentalising and theory of mind are newly developing concepts in an adolescent brain, with the amygdala producing an increased ‘fear response’ to facial expressions adults considered as ambiguous. Adolescents also have a neurological tendency to show lower moods than adults or young children after rejection, and tend to take greater risks when peers are present than when alone (Sebastian, 2014). Three potential outcomes from this research emerge through input towards neurologically-informed interventions (e.g. Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning – SEAL, DfES 2005), resource allocation informed by the importance of brain development, and, importantly, informing adolescents themselves about the complex ways in which they are developing. Furthermore, this research illustrates the impact of other biological variables at play for young people and adolescents, perhaps instead of or in addition to difficulties with attachment.

**2.3 Research Evidence: A Meta-Analysis**

Research from the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE, 2009) demonstrated that children with emotional difficulties are more likely to struggle to achieve and participate at school. Indeed, government policy has previously attempted to address this gap in attainment; the publication of the *Every Child Matters* agenda (DfES, 2004) made it a priority for schools to both enhance the emotional well-being of children and provide particular support for those experiencing social, emotional and/ or behavioural difficulties (SEBD).

Furthering this, the Targeted Mental Health project in Schools (TaMHS; DCSF, 2008) project laid out a model for schools to support the social and emotional wellbeing of their pupils. Reports from the projects indicated high quality evidence was gained through approaches involving small group work focused on problem-solving and social skills. The project also incorporated the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL), a national strategy aimed at promoting the social and emotional wellbeing of all children, including sessions around empathy, motivation, self-awareness and managing feelings. The TaMHS project also supported well-established NGs as a provision for children with SEBD, though they were not singled out due to the lack of an evidence base at the time.

Furthermore, the Ofsted survey ‘Supporting Children with Challenging Behaviour through a Nurture Group approach’ (2011) recommended the Department for Education and local authorities consider the value of NGs that are well led and help children make academic gains as well as improving their emotional and social development. The report also highlighted the importance of clear and frequent communication between mainstream teachers and NGs staff; it is therefore important to consider evidence around other factors that influence the impact and effectiveness of NGs.

**2.3.1 Nurture Groups in Primary Schools**

In terms of the conditions under which nurture groups have an impact in a primary context, it is possible to divide and ascribe evidence under four categories: child, school, relationship and organisational factors:

Table 2.1: Nurture Group Impact in Primary Schools

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Factor** | **Impacts** | **Research evidence** |
| Child | * Younger, older, internalising and ‘acting out’ children all benefitted from NGs * These benefits demonstrated through improved SEBD scores via Boxall Profiles, SDQ and qualitative interviews * Gains in social and emotional functioning of NG children are maintained over time * Children who attended a NG had a significant chance of improving their learning skills | Binnie & Allen 2008; Bishop & Swain 2000; Colwell & O'Connor 2004; Cooper & Tiknaz 2005; Cooper & Whitebread 2007; Reynolds et al 2009; Sanders 2007; Scott & Lee 2009; Seth-Smith et al 2010. |
| School | * NGs improve whole school environment through calmer classrooms * NGs empower teachers to meet needs of children * NGs resulted in a positive change to SEBD in school, at home and an increased ethos at school * NGs resulted in a positive attachment to school | Binnie & Allen 2008; Bishop & Swain 2000; Cooper 2004; Cooper & Tiknaz 2005; Cooper & Whitebread 2007; Doyle 2001, 2004; Lucas 1999; Reynolds et al 2009; Sanders 2007; Scott & Lee 2009. |
| Relationships | * NGs improve home school relationships * Improved pupil attitudes towards school * Parents felt their children were given support and their needs fully recognised. | Binnie & Allen 2008; Sanders 2007; Seth-Smith et al 2010. |
| Organisation | * NGs found to be cost-effective in comparison to other educational interventions * Costs reduced for complex needs placements, out-of-borough day schools, out-of-borough independent schools and full-time LSA support * However, only if no more than 30 children throughout the year, and no more than 12 children at any given time * The best results have been achieved when the nurture group has been in existence for at least for two years. | Cooper and Whitebread 2007; Rautenbach 2010; Garner 2010. |

(Adapted from Bennett, 2014)

**2.3.2 Effectiveness of Primary Nurture Groups**

Whilst this initial meta-review of research around NGs in primary schools looked to summarise impact, it also highlighted the conditions in which NGs can work effectively, together with factors that may influence efficacy. Again these can be broken down into four key subthemes; Child, Group Dynamics, School and Organisational factors:

* *Child*

Variations in children’s fluency in English and national curriculum attainment levels can explain variance in children’s progress in a NG (Cooper & Tiknaz, 2005).  However, further research is required to understand how important characteristics such as age, SEB challenges and gender are towards the effectiveness of NGs, as currently no evidence-based consensus exists around these factors. In addition, only one study currently exists (Griffiths, Stenner & Hicks, 2014) that looks specifically at the constructs and experiences of NG children themselves (a topic discussed in greater depth later in this chapter).

* *Group Dynamics*

Nurture Group characteristics, such as class environment, balanced group composition, good peer relations, and stability of staff and teacher partnerships were found to be important for successful Nurture Groups (Cooper & Tiknaz 2005; Cooper et al 2001; Garner 2010; Dowsell, 2011; Kourmoulaki 2013) Class size and previous experience of the teacher are two areas linked to NG effectiveness but both require further research to validate such claims.

* *School*

Whole-school policy was also found to be fundamental to the success of Nurture Groups and reintegration of pupils into mainstream classes. Those schools where the whole-school community is committed to pupils’ needs were found to make the most out of Nurture Group provision (Cooper and Tiknaz 2005).

* *Organisation*

Organisational factors such as the time the group has been in existence, the proportion of the time spent in the group and the length of time spent in the group has attracted the most attention in past research. Findings showed that groups that have been in existence for two or more years have been most efficient (Dowsell 2011) and that both full and part-time groups have been equally beneficial in supporting children’s SEBD (Cooper & Whitebread 2007; Cooper & Tiknaz 2005; Garner 2010; Scott & Lee 2009). The two first terms were found to be the most important for SEBD improvements while cognitive progression seems to continue within the third and fourth terms (Cooper & Whitebread 2007).

**2.3.3 Critique**

Several studies have also highlighted less positive conclusions around the effectiveness of nurture groups in primary settings. Feedback from class teachers has reported concerns around the limited opportunities for academic assessment (and therefore gains) of children in nurture groups (Cooper & Tiknaz 2005, Sanders 2007; Binnie & Allen 2008). Teachers have also commented on pupils ‘boasting’ about their nurture group experiences to other non-nurture group pupils, occasionally inciting jealousy. Mainstream class teachers also stated they did not ‘know’ the children as well when included in nurture groups (Sanders 2007). Furthermore, Garner (2010) explicitly suggests a need for more research on parents, mainstream teachers and pupils’ perspectives of nurture groups, with Kearney, Reynolds & MacKay (2009) suggesting interviews with these stakeholders to explore both challenging and successful factors.

**2.3.4 An Educational Bridge?**

The concept of nurture groups providing an educational bridge between school and home is also supported by studies that suggest they improve child relationships both at home and at school, whilst conjointly improving relations between parents and school staff (Sanders 2007). However, Boxall profiles of the control group were already high at the start of this research, limiting the effectiveness of comparisons. In addition, research data was interpreted by the EP involved in setting up the nurture group; recruitment of a more rigorous, external research assistant may have improved the validity of findings by interpreting data from a more objective stance.

**2.4 Research Evidence: A Micro-Analysis**

In order to analyse and critique areas of NG research in greater depth, a systematic literature review was carried out using EBSCo, an online research database that allows access to scholarly journals, articles, books and theses. The following table illustrates the process of literary filtration, from initial search terms used through to a final output of 21 published research items:

Table 2.2: Systematic Literature Search

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Inclusive Databases (via EBSCo) | Boolean/ Phrase | Filters | Results |
| Academic Search Complete  Child Development & Adolescent Studies  Education Research Complete  PsychINFO  Teacher Reference Center | ‘Nurture AND Group’ | - | 1,343 |
| ‘Breakfast Club’ | - | 495 |
| ‘Nurture Group’ | - | 317 |
| ‘Nurture Group’  ‘Breakfast Club’ | Peer Reviewed Only | 203  94 |
| ‘Nurture Group’ | Peer Reviewed Only & Age: ‘Childhood’ (0-12 yrs) | 18 |
| ‘Nurture Group’ | Peer Reviewed Only & Age: ‘Adolescence’ (13-17 yrs) | 3 |

In terms of criteria for inclusion, a final stage of the process deemed only articles that had been peer reviewed should be included, thereby establishing a level of quality appropriate for the research. Researchers can bias the results of a literature review by excluding data that is methodologically questionable, based on their own personal, subjective judgement (Ogawa & Malen, 1991). Therefore in an attempt to be objective, all 21 resulting peer reviewed articles were analysed and critiqued.

‘Nurture’ and ‘Group’ as separate entities in the same search returned 1,343 results across all five databases, a large majority of which were extraneous. The phrase ‘Nurture Group’ then returned 317 results, whilst at the same time terminologies for other variant NGs were considered. Given the focal NG of this research had breakfast as the nucleus of the intervention, the phrase ‘Breakfast Club’ returned 495 results. However, these studies appeared to focus solely on the provision of breakfast before school as an intervention and detracted from the six previously defined principles of NGs and hence were not considered for analysis. In addition to peer reviewing, an age bracket of ‘0-12 years’ was set as a criterion, as this would incorporate all existing NG research from primary whilst overlapping and exceeding the secondary age group (11/12) for this research.

**2.4.1 Variant Nurture Groups**

Two studies focused on NGs that followed variant two - ‘new variant’ NGs - as previously described by Cooper, Arnold & Boyd (1998). Scott & Lee (2009) looked at part-time nurture groups, established in four different primary schools within the same Scottish local authority. 50 children were assessed using Boxall Profiles against control groups; for those in the NGs, statistically significant gains were found in developmental (social and emotional) areas. In addition, the same children were also able to maintain and surpass a level of progress in literacy, numeracy and motor skills comparable to that of their peers, although these results were not deemed to be statistically significant. A key finding, however, was that outcomes for some older children demonstrated the limitations of a part-time nurture group provision on its own to compensate for deep-seated difficulties and/ or adverse family circumstances. The study concludes by recommending further research into the efficacy of NGs as an intervention for older children; an area this research looks to explore and add substance to.

Furthermore, Binnie & Allen (2008) analysed 36 children (28 male, 8 female) in NGs across 6 schools. Children in groups had an average age of 7 years and accessed the group for a maximum of four mornings a week. NGs were found to allow schools to be more proactive with support for children with SEBD and ‘more nurturing’ due to a multi-agency approach to NGs as intervention, i.e. an open-door policy for staff, parents, professionals and the children themselves. The paper concludes that the part-time NG model is more inclusive and allows for a greater liaison between the NG and mainstream classroom, both in terms of staff expectations and also children’s adaptability and generalisation of behaviour.

However, two possible critiques of the paper are that firstly it relies substantially on quantitative data obtained from scaled questionnaires and Boxall Profiles without looking at what key stakeholders have to *say* about NGs, and therefore secondly it fails to take into account views of the children themselves. It stands to reason that methods of obtaining these views would need adapting given the relatively young average age range of NG children involved, perhaps through artwork or audio diaries. Yet given recent SEN reforms and changes to Code of Practice to make plans much more child-focused, it could be argued that the child’s voice is a vital ingredient to include in future NG research.

**2.4.2 Nurture Groups in Secondary Schools**

Three key research papers concentrated on the relatively recent phenomena of NG integration within secondary school settings. Cooke, Yeomans & Parkes (2008) studied first year secondary school students who joined a NG once they started secondary school. A year on, participation in the NG had shown overall improvements on the Boxall Profile (Bennathan & Boxall 1998) for the group as a whole and for the individual who was used as a case study. However, the statistical significance of that impact is not discussed and the samples are too small to allow generalisation.

This study paved the way for pioneering research by Colley (2009). Within his paper entitled ‘Nurture Groups in Secondary Schools’, four secondary school head teachers, one special education coordinator and one NG teacher were asked to reflect on the NG provision in their schools and whether the original version of NGs can be replicated in secondary education. Staff suggested additional functions of the NGs compared to those in primary school: NGs offer a sanctuary for young people who have experienced sudden loss or trauma or are facing a severe illness, are a step into the school if they have been long-term absent and are a way to keep young people in mainstream.

The paper also mentions three key areas that would be anticipated to differentiate primary from secondary education NGs. First, the size of secondary schools means more young people with additional support needs and thus a tendency to divide need based on its nature, namely social/emotional, behavioural or educational, and allocate support accordingly (Colley, 2009). Furthermore, the size of secondary schools mean NGs are only perceived as successful by results ‘on the ground’, for example a NG only gains ‘earned credibility’ from mainstream staff if it is seen to alter the behaviour and therefore outcomes of pupils with SEBD.

Another dimension raised by secondary provision is the number of internal management structures contained within. In primary establishments the management team often consists of the head teacher and one or two deputy head teachers, while in secondary there are multiple teams. This feature of secondary schools adds to the complexity of the organisation and can have an impact on several aspects including familiarity with students and their needs, internal communication systems, and continuous support of students across the school (Colley, 2009).

The third and final element is the necessity for secondary nurture provision to have an awareness and understanding of adolescent life experiences that may not relate to attachment, e.g. common issues with self-image, social grouping and peer relationships (as explored earlier in section 2.2.1), and ensuring pupils aren’t accidentally included for these reasons. Two further points from this paper pertinent to this research are firstly the suggestion that a nurture breakfast can become a key activity transferable to secondary nurture group practice, and secondly the argument presented around NGs happening in one purposely furnished setting or, due to secondary space constraints, more than one setting (Colley, 2009). Research will attempt to address the questions of whether a) a specific NG room is necessary or appropriate in a secondary context and b) if a NG can operate across more than one permanent base.

Finally, an article by Garner and Thomas (2011) looks at the influence of three secondary NGs, examined through parent/ staff focus groups and interviewing six young people. Differences between the classic NG and secondary variant model were presented: secondary NGs saw relationships between staff and young people as more equal, offered a more flexible ‘secure base’ and offered extended support from a whole school/ home perspective as required. Secondary NGs were also seen to provide the ‘independent regulation of affect’ (Allen and Manning, 2007), with young people returning to NG when experiencing extreme emotions i.e. being bullied, bereavement, parental divorce.

The study also provides a noteworthy link between attachment and Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979 – see Appendix 2) in that NGs provide a supportive link (the ‘mesosystem’) between the ‘microsystems’ around a child, e.g. home and school. The article concludes by recommending appropriate recruitment of NG staff (‘committed, tolerant, strong and patient’), consistent staffing and flexibility in the provision of NG sessions. Through visits from head teachers, mainstream staff and additional parental involvement, NGs can help to develop the socio-emotional independence of young people. Finally this article also points to the ‘specific needs of children in secondary school NGs’ as an area for further research, identifying particular cases where the nurture group has and has not been beneficial. Once again, this study aims to address this issue directly through variable feedback from young people towards the efficacy of a secondary nurture group.

**2.4.3 Young people in research**

The current political agenda and subsequent policy places children and families at the centre of the new SEN and EHCP process. Yet if children and young people’s view are not captured in a full and impartial manner, one could question the true level of influence pupils have when determining their own futures. Research by Billington talks of five critical and reflexive questions that research professionals working with children should be asking themselves:

* *How do we speak of children?*
* *How do we speak with children?*
* *How do we write about children?*
* *How do we listen to children?*
* *How do we listen to ourselves (when working with children)?*

(Billington, 2012, p.8).

From a NG research perspective, answers to these questions were mixed. Research has predominantly sought parental and teacher reports to explore constructs of NG involvement and support. Despite being the primary stakeholders, the perspectives of the children attending NG provisions are heavily under represented within the literature. However, four studies were found to qualitatively explore the perceptions of the pupils attending NG provisions (Bishop & Swain, 2000; Cooper et al, 2001; Shaver & McClatchey, 2013; Griffiths, Stenner & Hicks, 2014).

Bishop & Swain (2000) retrospectively elicited the views of pupils who had previously attended a NG provision in order to gain evidence for reopening a closed NG provision. In this study the children identified the support they received, the activities they engaged in and the respite from being in a mainstream classroom as being beneficial.

As part of their research, Cooper et al. (2001) conducted a large number of individual interviews with children attending NG provisions across 25 schools in two local authorities. The children identified aspects of the nurture provision they perceived as beneficial, including the quality of the relationships with NG staff, the pleasant nature of the NG environment in respect to the physical attributes and the predictability of the NG routines. Though the large sample size is commendable the researchers themselves acknowledge the high level of demand characteristics (discussed further during the Discussion chapter) arising from the interview context as well as the lack of generalisability due to the different variants of nurture provisions the children had attended. A more naturalistic form of eliciting the child’s voice and acknowledging the variant of NGs may overcome some of these difficulties.

From a study by Shaver & McClatchey (2013), data was collected from 19 children and five staff members from three nurture groups. Boxall Profiles of 33 children across two of the NGs found 75% of items improved post-NG. Child views were obtained via a focus group and questionnaire, with one child reporting that ‘all schools should have them [NGs], it helps people’. When asked ‘does the NG make you feel happy?’, 17/19 children ticked ‘yes’. However, it is difficult to ascertain the amount of demand characteristics placed on children during the study. In addition, no control group was set up therefore it becomes difficult to separate NG effects from general improvements over time.

To conclude research involving the views of children and young people, a recent study by Griffiths, Stenner & Hicks (2014) gathered the views of two girls and six boys in KS2 (ranging from 7 to 11-years-old) in relation to their constructions of NG experiences. Use of a focus group and subsequent thematic analysis saw four themes emerge from qualitative data; environmental factors, relationships, self-regulation and learning (consistent with classic NG model). The methodology used by this research had an empowering effect, allowing young people to contribute to research and their own educational destiny. However, it could be argued that findings from the study are difficult to generalise due to the individual nature of studying one NG, the small sample size and the individuality of children’s responses. Researchers could have expanded on research by returning to the sample and exploring ideographic elements of elicited themes further, for example which areas of the NG promote self-regulatory skills.

The researcher acknowledges similar parameters within current research, which are identified during the following chapter (Methodology) and attempts to counteract a lack of generalisability made through the trustworthiness of design and potential for the study to act as a catalyst for further exploration in chosen research area.

**2.5 Objectives of research**

EPs are in a unique professional position, working not only with a child, but also having the ability to take a ‘meta-perspective’ and work collaboratively, with and within the systems that surround a child (Beaver, 2011). As per the newly reformed SEN policy relating to forthcoming Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans, the views and opinions of the child have never been more apposite when making decisions surrounding unmet social, emotional and developmental need. This research thus aims to elicit the views of pupils from a secondary school nurture group, but additionally to explore the experiences of parents and teachers in accordance with an eco-systemic perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

In order to supplement and enhance existing studies in this area, this research aligns itself with up-to-date policy and places the *pupil* as the central source of data, with the aim of exploring the meaning pupils attach to nurture groups. Secondary nurture experiences will situate and understand the young person in *their* own socio-cultural context. It is hoped findings can develop an in depth understanding of the factors that a) predispose a pupil to be included in a secondary nurture group and b) that may best facilitate full-time reintegration into mainstream classes, therefore preventing potential exclusion and increasing positive outcomes for children and young people.

**2.6 Research Questions**

This research will focus on the following central question:

***What are pupil’s experiences of a secondary school nurture group?***

In order to answer the central question, the following sub questions will also be considered from the perspective of young people with links to factors that tie in with SEBD:

1. How do young people experience the social aspects of a secondary school nurture group?
2. How do young people experience the emotional aspects of a secondary school nurture group?
3. How do young people experience the behavioural aspects of a secondary school nurture group?

**2.7 Summary**

This chapter has explored the theoretical stance of research, conducted both meta and micro analyses of relevant research bodies, stated definitive objectives of research and carried this over to three key exploratory research questions. The next chapter will entwine theory with epistemology and create a clear audit trail, enabling research to be replicated whilst also investigating the chosen method of analysis.

**Chapter 3: Methodology**

*“An existing individual is constantly in the process of becoming”*

Kierkergaard (1974)

**3.1 Chapter Overview**

This chapter provides an account of the methodology used in the research.

Section 3.2 explains the theoretical and epistemological underpinnings of the research, outlining the decision to adopt constructionism at a methodological level, and introducing Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as the analytical tool of choice. Section 3.3 covers the purpose of the research, research design and research technique. Subsections include ethical considerations, the role of the researcher, the location and context of the research and a pilot visit with participants. Section 3.4 describes the data collection stage. Section 3.5 focuses on the data analysis stage and its use of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to interpret the findings, with an exemplar included

These findings are presented in the next chapter and aspects of young people’s experiences of nurture groups are further interpreted in the discussion chapter.

**3.2 Ontology and Epistemology**

Paradigms serve as lenses through which we view the world. Each of these lenses contain philosophical assumptions that guide and direct our thinking and action (Mertens, 2005). Paradigms can also be broken down into three main questions that help to define the stance one may take (Lincoln & Guba, 2000):

1. The ontological question: “What is the nature of reality?”
2. The epistemological question: “What is the nature of knowledge and the relationship between the knower (researcher) and the would-be known (subjects to be researched)?”
3. The methodological question: “How can the knower go about obtaining the desired knowledge and understanding?”

Philosophical assumptions for this research are reviewed under four paradigms – positivist, post-positivist, critical realist and constructionist – reviewed on a continuum between a scientific objective and a socially constructed world view. Positivism positions itself as a wholly scientific paradigm, posing that there is only one objective reality that can be known; as straightforward relationship between objects, events and phenomena of the world is assumed (Mertens, 2005). Epistemologically, the assumption here is that valid quantitative methods are used to test hypothesis based on fact and establish causal relationships between variables (Furness, 2014). Should positivism be adopted, the researcher would then be obliged to focus on observable factors and outcomes of NGs, preventing young people from constructing a rich qualitative picture of their own lived experiences. Associated methods of data collection, such as random sampling or control groups were therefore not appropriate.

Positivism has received criticism from a number of researchers with differing philosophical stances. Robson (2002) feels that, in its pursuit of objectivity, the positivist approach treats participants as objects rather than partners in research and ignores social phenomena. Furthermore, positivist researchers are criticised for distancing themselves from subject matter and in doing so fail to acknowledge or reflect on their own position in research. The ethos of this research rejects positivism as a paradigm, as it proposes to look at several subjective meanings of reality and proposes realities to be jointly constructed; all individual perspectives of reality are deemed to have equal validity (Mertens, 2005).

The development of post-positivism has subsequently addressed some of these concerns. As an approach, it continues to support the view that there is one objective reality, yet acknowledges there may be no absolute truth, particularly when studying human behaviour (Creswell, 2003). Contrary to positivism, post-positivism accepts the beliefs and experiences of the researcher will invariably have an influence on research. However, as with positivism, it is a deterministic and reductionist philosophy, focused on finding causal relationships and minimising ideas to smaller testable variables. As a result, this poses a similar problem to positivism in terms of identifying, controlling and measuring variables in the current research. Little is currently known about the views of young people from the perspective of a secondary NG, therefore no related hypotheses exist to disprove, inferring the inappropriate nature of post-positivism as an approach.

In parallel, the critical realist ontology sits on the continuum somewhere between positivism and constructionism, offering researchers an understanding about the mechanisms through which an action (i.e. behaviour) can cause an outcome (e.g. inclusion in a nurture group) and allows discussions around the conditions that trigger these mechanisms (Mertens, 2005). This perspective allows for the empirical realities of lived experience and acknowledges power imbalances between different points of view. The critical realist researcher takes both an objective and subjective stance, using both inductive and deductive approaches. This presents the researcher as an interactive element in the relationship between themselves, the context and participants and is often represented by a mixed-methods design (Furness, 2014). Whilst accommodating lived experience, the foci of triggers and process in critical realism, as opposed to experience and meaning, prevent it from being the most suitable approach to adopt for the current study.

The ontology of the constructivist paradigm assumes realities are multiple and constructed socially. Meanings are constructed by groups of people through social interaction and the use of language, often in response to historical or cultural norms (Creswell, 2003). Furthermore, Eatough & Smith (2008) view lived experiences themselves as essentially linguistic and discursive creations, constructed by social, political, cultural, ethnic and gender-based assumptions. Hence, there is no one true reality but rather multiple perspectives.

Qualitative methodology can use broad questioning to explore and make sense of realities that have been socially constructed, with reflexivity playing an important role in understanding a researchers own constructs (Robson, 2002). In contrast to positivism, post-positivism and critical realism, constructionism is a deductive approach, in that it allows the data to ‘speak’ and develop patterns of meaning, rather than testing predetermined theory through hypotheses and experimental stages (Creswell, 2003). The focus of current research is around how young people interact with, experience and construct meaning from NGs, therefore the primary ontological underpinnings for this research can be found in constructivism.

**3.3. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)**

Several different methods of qualitative analysis exist, each appropriate to specific research environments. A phenomenological approach to data analysis is appropriate when the focus of research is to emphasise the individuals subjective experience (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003), through seeking the individuals perceptions and meaning of a phenomenon or experience (Mertens, 2005). The research aimed to understand the participants’ experiences of a secondary school NG, thereby a phenomenological approach was required.

**3.3.1 Theoretical basis**

IPA is founded on three key pillars supporting the philosophy of knowledge: phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography (Smith et al, 2009). These tenets will be explained respectively in terms of their origin and tenets, then linked back directly to the ethos of this research.

**3.3.2 Phenomenology**

Phenomenology focuses on the ‘lived experience’, in other words what a particular human experience is actually *like.* Four key philosophers feed into the concept of phenomenology from distinctively unique positions, all of which feed into creation of the above definition; Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and Sartre. Husserl (1927) argued that individuals come to know their own experience of a particular phenomenon through the identification of the essential *qualities* of that experience. By focusing on the experiential content of consciousness (that which Husserl described as ‘going back to the things themselves’), he argued these qualities may then illuminate a given experience for others too.

In his major work *Being and Time,* Heidegger (1962) moves away from Husserl’s notion of consciousness towards the ontological question of existence itself, in other words how the activities and relationships of life serve as windows through which we construct meaning. In Heidegger’s view, human beings are inadvertently thrown into a world of objects, relationships and language. As a result, our ‘Dasein’ (literally, ‘there-being’) is always in relation to something, and therefore the interpretation of how people make meaning (or ‘hermeneutic’, discussed in the next section of this paper) is an essential element of phenomenology.

As opposed to Heidegger’s ‘worldly’ view of our existence, Merleau-Ponty (1962) developed phenomenology by arguing the embodied nature of our existence; as humans, we see ourselves as different from everything else in the world. For example, a hand reaching out to touch a desk represents the meeting point of the self and the world, drawing the self *to* the world in the act of touching. It was Merleau-Ponty’s view that the human body shapes the fundamental character of knowing about the world. To unravel this further, practical activities and relations are more significant than abstract or logical ones (Anderson, 2003). Thus the element of the body as a physical means of interaction with the world is an important concept to consider in IPA research.

Finally, Sartre extends Heidegger’s existential view of phenomenology, arguing we have an ‘action-oriented, meaning-making, self-consciousness that engages with the world we inhabit’ (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). Sartre’s expression ‘existence comes before essence’ (1948) highlights that we as humans are always becoming ourselves, whilst also touching upon *nothingness*: things that are absent are as important as those present in defining who we are and how we see the world. Sartre’s perspective focuses on the phenomenological analysis of the human condition; the interpersonal and moral nature of our encounters with others form add to the creation of experiential meaning.

**3.3.3 Hermeneutics**

Put simply, Hermeneutics is the theory of interpretation (Smith et al, 2009), looking essentially at the purpose of interpretation, whether it is possible to uncover an author’s original meaning, and the relationship between a texts historical production and present-day interpretations. The field of hermeneutics was developed by three key philosophers; Schleiermacher, Heidegger (overlapping from Phenomenology) and Gadamer.

Schleiermacher (1998) suggests that writers use distinctive techniques and intentions which in turn impresses a particular meaning upon the text. This meaning is then open to interpretation from the reader, which then sit within the wider context in which the text was produced. Done correctly, Schleiermacher believes the interpretative process can result in ‘an understanding of the utterer better than he understands himself’ (1998: 266).

As we saw from his definition of ‘Daesin’, Heidegger connected saw phenomenology as an explicitly interpretative activity, in that the phenomena itself could be drawn from the detailed interpretation of meaning, examining that which might be latent or disguised behind text. Moran (2000) explains Heidegger’s notion of interpretative phenomenology as ‘seeking after a meaning which is perhaps hidden by the entity’s mode of appearing. In that case the proper model for seeking meaning is the interpretation of a text and for this reason Heidegger links phenomenology with hermeneutics’. Furthermore, Heidegger presents the theory of ‘fore-conception’; prior experiences, assumptions or preconceptions that may accompany a reader (or in this sense, a researcher), and not allowing these preconceptions to present an obstacle when interpreting phenomena.

Gadamer’s (1960) position on interpretation is rooted in history and tradition. He explores the ebb and flow between Heidegger’s concept of fore-conception, meaning and interpretation, agreeing with Schleiermacher that an author does not automatically ‘own’ the interpretations of a text. However, Gadamer argues that we need first to understand the content of what is being said before understanding another’s meaning. Essentially Gadamer’s philosophies helped add to an important mantra of IPA, in that the aim should not be to relieve the past but learn from it, in light of the present (Smith et al, 2009). Interpretation focuses on the meaning of text, which is strongly influenced by the moment at which interpretation is made.

Furthermore, one concept all philosophers of Hermeneutics agree on is the dynamic relationship between the part (e.g. a word) and the whole (e.g. a sentence), on a number of levels. For example, the meaning of a word can only become clear within the context of a sentence, yet the sentence itself only establishes meaning through the collection of individual words. IPA is essentially linear (i.e. step-by-step) in its general approach to qualitative analysis, yet this back and forth movement between levels of data, known as the ‘hermeneutic cycle’, is iterative and also allows for the researchers relationship with data to shift within the cycle. Both the notion of meaning from interpretation and the hermeneutic cycle are processes employed during the analysis and discussion sections of this research.

**3.3.4 Idiography**

As opposed to most ‘nomothetic’ psychology that looks to make claims at group or population level, idiography is concerned with the particular (Smith et al, 2009). The ethos of IPA operates on two levels; firstly, the concern with detail and therefore a systematic and thorough depth of analysis. Secondly, an attempt to understand how ‘experiential phenomena’ (events, processes or relationships) occur with certain people in particular contexts. Within the context of IPA, Idiography looks to establish a way of cautiously generalising *from* the particular; small, purposefully selected samples permit this level of detail, often presented best via individual case studies. This research utilises this approach, using ideographic techniques to analyse singular case studies, compare particular elements of meaning within each case and look to generalise without taking claims out of context.

Smith (2004) advocates the use of case studies as idiographic vehicles of data analysis. Within case studies, it should be possible to construe shared themes together with distinctive language of individuals within those themes. However, as an IPA researcher, the priority should be to provide a detailed analysis of actual life and lived experience, with the hope of connecting back to previous nomothetic literature and providing an element of theoretical transferability. As Warnock (1987) suggests, an insightful case study may take us into the universal because it touches upon what it is to be human at its most essential.

**3.3.5 Summary of the IPA Process**

IPA is concerned with the detailed examination of human experience (Smith et al, 2009). The realities of these experiences (or phenomena) are interpreted at several stages, including initially by the participants themselves (hermeneutic) through the process of recalling and articulating their experiences, and subsequently by the researcher (hermeneutic cycle) during the ideographic analysis of interview transcripts. Inductively, IPA looks to capture and explore the meanings that participants assign to their experiences.

Through IPA research, participants are experts on their own experiences and can offer researchers an understanding of their thoughts, commitments and feelings through telling their own stories, in their own words, and in as much detail as possible (Reid, Flowers and Larkin, 2005). It differs from analysis techniques such as Thematic Analysis (TA), as the larger sample size required for TA would remove the unique idiographic slant IPA provides on what is distinct in people, which is then balanced with a comparison of what is shared (in this case, amongst participants in a secondary school NG). Discourse Analysis was also rejected as a possible methodological approach, as it leans towards how language has a regulatory or constructive function, or how language functions in specific contexts. Research here is not concerned with every utterance, more so how language is one piece of a ‘meaning-making’ jigsaw for individuals:

Figure 3.1: Analytical Cycle of IPA

(Content drawn in part from Smith et al, 2009)

**3.4 Purpose of research**

The purpose of the research was exploratory; to seek new insights by assessing social, emotional and behavioural phenomena of secondary NGs from the perspective of young people themselves. Initially the researcher pursued an interest in triangulating data from staff, parents and young people from an evaluative perspective. However, existing studies around secondary school nurture groups already appear to gather evidence via focus groups (Garner & Thomas, 2011), reflections of school staff (Colley, 2012) or gathering quantitative data around group structures (Furness, 2014).

Todd (2003) advocates that if pupils are part of the decision making process, they can provide appropriate information about their skills and abilities and offer their views about possible interventions, enhancing the likelihood of successful outcomes. Therefore the focus of this study was to explore solely the views of young people involved in secondary school NGs, as currently no research exists that focuses specifically on this area.

The research also extends to take an eco-systemic perspective, inferring the need for young people to be viewed holistically within a set of societal systems. Stake (2000) conceptualises case studies not by a specific methodology, but by the object of study - the more this object is within a specific, unique, bounded system, the greater the rationale for calling it a case study. Secondary NGs are a prime example of a unique subsystem within a much larger whole-school systemic context, hence individual case studies will be considered within the context of the NG as a subsystem of the school as a whole.

**3.5 Research Design**

Qualitative research has enabled the development of professional interventions in special education that are responsive to the cognition and motivational interpretations of the world held by children, parents and professionals (Peck & Furman, 1992). Hence this research will use a multiple case study design to allow for an “in-depth, intensive and sharply focused exploration” (Willig, 2001) of pupils experiences when placed in a secondary school nurture group.

The case study design is a style of ethnographic research that has proved to play an important role in educational and psychological research, for example Koppenhaver & Yoder’s (1992) literature review of case studies related to individuals with physical disabilities and Gupta & Ferguson’s (1992) case study of six students with severe autism. The parameters set by IPA in terms of small sample size enabled each young person to be a ‘case’, whereby individual subjective experiences were analysed, cross referenced and discussed.

The multiple case study design of this research is also congruent with a constructivist orientation in that, through use of multiple data sources, the ‘whole’ shared meaning and experience of secondary nurture groups can be looked upon as greater than the sum of its parts. A positivist position would support the collection of quantitative data, yet enumerating a young person’s real-world experiences would counteract the purpose of research and would lose the rich picture provided by multiple qualitative perspectives.

**3.5.1 Research Technique**

The research used semi-structured interviews to obtain data and compliment the case study design, as they allow for a deep, ideographic exploration of experience. This flexible form of research affords the interviewee an uninhibited freedom when responding whilst the interviewer retains overall control (Drever, 1995). Furthermore, this technique also fits within a constructivist ontology as it allows for the acquisition of multiple perspectives of phenomena, whilst also attempting to understand the complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it (Schwandt, 2000).

The perceived goal for including a non-directive interview technique in this research is to facilitate a human-to-human relationship with respondents and to understand their perspective (Mertens, 2005). Therefore, Symbolic Interactionism (Blumer, 1969) is used as a theoretical justification for including predetermined interview questions within this model; humans act towards things on the basis of the meanings they ascribe to those things. These ‘meanings’ were elicited using unrestrictive questioning, explored, analysed and discussed in relation to theory and previous literature.

The interview schedule (Appendix 4) consisted of a relatively small number of open-ended questions that derive directly from the three original research questions, allowing for more flexibility, depth and detail of response from participants (Willig, 2001). The same interview schedule was used for each interview, with the language of questions adapted or omitted based on the researchers perspective of what is most appropriate for individual participants, and what will gather the most meaningfully rich data.

To provide a unique angle on capturing ‘lived experience’, second interviews were then conducted with each participant, this time with the young person guiding the researcher around their NG room whilst being interviewed. This aspect also serves to purposefully dovetail in with recent changes to the SEN Code of Practice and subsequent emphasis surrounding the importance of child-centred approaches and including the voice of the child within documentation such as Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).

Semi-structured interviews are thought to be more conducive to individual expression. Although inclusive of wider opinion, it was thought focus groups may inhibit the kind of sensitive discussion this research aims to evoke around social and emotional experiences. Furthermore, interview data was supplemented by descriptive case information and pen portraits of each young person, requested from schools before commencement of data collection and fully anonymised.

All interviews were audio-taped and transcribed. To prevent inconsistent eye contact, assist the flow of non-verbal communication and aid the development of a rapport (Mertens, 2005), hand written notes were not be taken during interviews, as it was thought this would aid communication and increase the authenticity and empirical ‘truth’ of pupil voice.

**3.5.2 Pilot Visit**

Once contact with the school SENCo had been established, the researcher considered steps that would allow for the collection of data rich in both content and meaning. Participants need to be comfortable with the researcher, to know what is required of them and for them to trust the researcher (Smith et al, 2009). Therefore a ‘pilot visit’ was arranged to enable the researcher to be included in a Breakfast Club (NG) session, meet and be familiar to all potential participants and begin building rapport.

During the visit the researcher joined the group in one of their nurturing environments (a food tech room), was introduced to all NG members and staff, and ate alongside all those present. This visitation gave both NG members and staff to ask the researcher questions about the project and his role in a relaxed and informal environment, but also allowed future participants to put context around requests for involvement/ informed consent letters they were to receive in the near future. Simultaneously the visit allowed the researcher to discuss participants with the SENCo, explore potential interview areas,

**3.5.3 Participant Recruitment**

The sample was identified via a multistage process:

1. Letters were sent to Head Teachers of all Local Authority maintained secondary schools currently running nurture groups (see Appendix 8), outlining the research and requesting their participation in the study. Telephone calls followed up and supported these letters to ascertain interest.
2. During the conversation, key contacts for consenting schools were established (e.g. Head Teacher/ SENCo/ INCo). These personnel were then contacted directly and a meeting arranged to discuss potential participant characteristics and any ethical issues that may influence pupil involvement.
3. Once numbers of nurture group children meeting the criteria had been confirmed, information and consent letters were sent to both parents and young people (see Appendices 6 & 7). In addition, these letters requested permission for the researcher to access the young person’s school file and contained permission slips (see Appendix 9).
4. Once informed consent had been received from all participants, times and dates were arranged to conduct case study interviews. Importantly, participants were provided with the opportunity to meet the researcher prior to each interview, allowing space to ask questions regarding the research, their involvement, details of the interview and use of data. This is particularly important with the young people involved, as it ties in closely with Mertens’ concept of building rapport.

In terms of the temporal span of research, an overview of research timelines can be seen in Appendix 5.

**3.5.4 Sampling and selection**

Participants required for this study were four pupils currently enrolled in a mainstream secondary school nurture group based around the six core principles of nurture, and who have been attending said nurture group for a minimum of six months.

Jonathan Smith, one of the founding members of IPA, suggests between three to six participants would be a reasonable sample size for a project using IPA (Smith et al, 2009). This allows for a micro analysis of similarities and differences across cases. However, Smith places particular emphasis on the number of interviews conducted as opposed to participants recruited, referencing an example of four participants interviewed twice each (eight interviews). In this instance, research follows these exemplified parameters.

The sampling method employed by this research was initially purposeful, as selections were made in accordance with criteria specified at the beginning of section 3.7.4. However, the availability of participants was such that sampling allowed for reasonable homogeneity, in that all participants were male, of the same school year group and had attended the NG for the same amount of time. There are of course interpretive issues that arise alongside attempts to select homogenous sample groups; in what ways do individuals differ from one another? How much variation can or needs to be contained to enable analysis of this phenomenon? However, by keeping the group as uniform as possible the researcher can then examine in detail the psychological variability within the group, analysing patterns of convergence or divergence that arise through autonomous, experiential meaning.

Previous research indicates nurture groups at Key Stage 3 (KS3) have made an impact on outcomes for children with SEBD. Cooke, Yeomans and Parkes (2008) recorded significant improvements for a Year 7 group over a one-year period where young people accessed nurture each afternoon. Furthermore, Steer (2009) reported that head teachers feel nurture groups at KS3 can support those most at risk. Given implications for transitional support in this age range, and with an emphasis on early intervention, this research focused on KS3 pupils.

As touched upon in the introduction, the length of time a nurture group has been in existence appears to have an authority on its impact; groups that have been in existence for more than two years have been the most influential (Garner 2010; Cooper & Whitebread 2007). Until recently, a local form of SEN funding for nurture groups had ceased, hence only a handful of secondary schools have had sufficient funds to keep nurture groups running from their own SEN budget. Both factors provide rationale for this research stipulating a minimum running period of six months for the nurture group from which participants will be selected.

**3.6 Ethical considerations**

It was important to acknowledge the need for ethical research to adhere to codes of conduct, designed to ensure the interests of those who take part are safeguarded (Robson, 2002). In this research, ethical consideration and risk assessment were designed in accordance with the Code of Ethics and Conduct followed by EPs (BPS, 2009), Guidance on Conduct and Ethics for Students (HCPC, 2012) and the University of East London’s Code of Good Practice in Research (UEL, 2010). The research proposal was therefore forwarded to the UEL ethics committee who decreed the research to be ethically sound in its design and purpose (see Appendix 11).

Informed consent was obtained from all participants (re-referral to Appendix 9) – the nature of research was outlined in initial information and consent letters but explained in detail during pre-interview briefing sessions. Letters were explicit regarding the confidential storage of any data obtained (in locked cupboards or encrypted files of non-shared laptop), how data will be fully anonymised and deleted/ destroyed once research is complete and the rights all participants have to withdraw from research at any point (Robson, 2002).

Furthermore, Fox, Martin & Green (2007) propose that it is the responsibility of the researcher to safeguard the interests of individuals involved in research and to ensure the physical and psychological wellbeing of participants is not adversely affected. The researcher conducted interviews in quiet locations co-defined with participants so as to minimise disruption and allow participants to feel comfortable and relaxed. In addition, it was acknowledged that interview topics may have been sensitive and could have been the catalyst for positive and/ or negative emotions that the participant may need support in managing. Consequently, time was factored in for a full debrief where participants could be signposted to or (with consent) referred to appropriate supporting agencies (Willig, 2001).

Should any level of risk be identified, the researcher was aware of their professional duty of care towards participants, and the process of making referrals to appropriate authorities (HCPC, 2012). Supervision from professional and academic tutors supported the management of any ethical issues that occurred throughout the research process.

**3.6.1 Role of the Researcher**

The researcher based decisions of role assumption on a model by Fine & Sandstrom (1988), who defined three possible roles that could be adopted when working with children as participants:

* *Supervisor*: Researcher assumes role of authority figure. Given research is ethnographic, this role was rejected as it could hamper any rapport and limit interview responses.
* *Leader:* Retaining authority, but from angle of positive affect. Again dismissed as it still focuses on adult control and as such is restrictive.
* *Friend:* Researcher exerts no specific authority over participant, establishes a positive relationship and establishes an equal attribution of respect.

The age of the participant is a crucial factor when deciding which role to adopt. In this circumstance, participants were young people in a secondary school setting who were selected to be part of a NG for reasons relating to social, emotional or behavioural aspects of their school life. It was therefore decided the *Friend* role would be the most prudent and appropriate role to assume. To begin these relationships of mutual respect, the researcher provided all participants with an explicit explanation of the researchers identity, researcher status and the aim/ purposes of the study, both in letter format and verbally during a pre-interview visit (pilot visit – see following chapter).

In qualitative research, the researcher is described as the *human instrument* of data collection (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003). Within this concept, data is mediated through the researcher, therefore it is important for researchers to be reflexive and describe any relevant aspects of self, biases, assumptions, expectations and experiences that may qualify their ability to perform such research (Greenbank, 2003). The researcher’s large family, personal interest in child development and supervisor background have also influenced the decision to explore this research area.

Finally the researcher was aware of being positioned across both subjective and objective stances, initially taking an ‘emic’ approach (as an insider, temporarily part of Breakfast Club) but latter an ‘etic’ perspective (as the researcher on the outside looking in). There is concurrence with these roles and that of an IPA researcher – according to Kottak (2010) the emic looks at meaning and particularity (i.e. the idiographic), whereas the etic takes more of a scientific approach, shifting from explanations to researcher interpretation (or in IPA terms, the hermeneutic cycle).

**3.7 Data collection**

Following the pilot visit, data was collected over a three-week period of a summer term. Initially four face-to-face interviews - one per participant - were held in a quiet, safe and comfortable room adjacent to participants’ Breakfast Club room. Informed consent was reconfirmed - via both parental signature and, after a simplified and brief reminder, verbal confirmation from the young person - and interviews were recorded through use of a digital Dictaphone (a copy of interview questions can be found at Appendix 4). The researcher then returned on two occasions over the following fortnight to interview the same participants, however on this occasion the young people were interviewed ‘in-situ’ whilst giving the researcher a guided tour of their Breakfast Club room.

Initial face-to-face interviews were semi-structured, with the second set of interviews unstructured. Prompts during second interviews were based around research questions, yet the aim of these encounters were to get physically and phenomenologically ‘close’ to the experience of Breakfast Club, affording the young people the ability to roam and express meaning through their own immersion within, or recollection of, experience as opposed to the less experiential process of interview elsewhere in school.

**3.8 Data Analysis**

Research used Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA, Smith 1996), thought to be an appropriate tool as it couples the participants ‘lived experience’ with a subjective and reflective process of interpretation, which the researcher explicitly involves in the research process. IPA allows participants to be experts in their own experiences (their phenomenological world), but also for the researcher to take a dynamic role in identifying how people make sense of their world, interpreting this for themselves through double hermeneutics (Osbourne & Smith, 1998).

Due to its inductive nature, research did not look to test predetermined hypotheses (Smith et al, 2009) but acknowledges the analytical process to be an interpretative relationship (without status of facts), transparent (grounded in examples from data) and plausible to all that may read the findings – participants, stakeholders, academics and members of the public. IPA is ideographic in format, focusing on what is distinct about individual experiences, but also what is shared as commonalities across groups (Smith et al, 2009). Ontologically, IPA fits with a paradigm of social constructionism (Mertens, 2005) but can also provide a meaningful analysis of psychosocial issues (Robson, 2002).

An extract of data analysis is illustrated in Table 3.2 below. Exploratory comments take the following forms:

* Descriptive comments (normal text): Key objects (e.g. ‘wheelchair’), lifeworld events, acronyms, figures of speech, emotional responses
* *Linguistic comments* (Italics): Pronouns, pauses, laughter, functional aspects, repetition, tone, fluency, metaphor
* Conceptual comments (Underlined): Interpretive, interrogative (further

questions), ‘meta’ view, double hermeneutic

Table 3.1: Extract of IPA Analysis

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Emergent Themes** | **Original Transcript** | **Exploratory Comments** |
| Social communication  Self-esteem | **R:** Ok, so….the first question I have is about…they’re people  questions really. So the first one is, what is it like being with  other young people in the Breakfast Club?  **I:** Erm…it’s, it’s nice I like it. And you get to erm interact with  others because I’m quite a quiet person, and I think I have talked a bit more, and….yeah  **R:** Fantastic, you get to interact with others. In what way?  **I:** I don’t know, just…I see other people talking and it’s makes me want to talk a bit more.  **R:** Ok so does that allow you…to talk more anywhere else?  **I:** Erm…I think I would talk a bit more at home, but I do talk a bit at school as well. [Ok]. Erm…it’s because, I think it’s because I just, like know the people and I’m comfortable talking,  and…yeah.  **R:** Ok, that’s great. Thank you. Ok next one of the people  questions is, how has being in the Breakfast Club affected your friendships?  **I:** Erm…what does that mean?  **R:** So, has it made you able to talk to other people more, or has it…has Breakfast Club helped you to make friends or has it not | +ve emotional response, opportunity to interact  Self reflection  Talking more is good?  Immersion/ observation prompts to join in  *‘I don’t know, just…I’ = difficult to explain*  Improves confidence?  Freedom, talking as a skill or tool to use in several environments  *Repetition of ‘because’ – first time he’s thought about rationale of why*  Familiarity breeds comfort/ confidence?  Language in question not understood – flaw in question design? |

**3.9 Quality and Validity**

Qualitative research can be judged according to the extent that it meets certain criteria, namely credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Mertens, 2005).

**3.9.1 General Qualitative Validity**

*Credibility*

Cho & Trent (2006) describe credibility as similar to validity in quantitative research. Interview questions and associated prompts have been designed with the aim of obtaining a sufficiently high level of data to enable a rich, in-depth analysis. The researcher attempted to build a pre-interview rapport with all participants, aiming to reduce potential barriers of trust or uncertainty. To provide descriptive validity, all interviews were audio-taped and transcribed verbatim (Robson, 2002).

*Transferability*

Transferability echoes external validity in quantitative research (Smith et al, 2009). Despite generalisations being limited, detail regarding participants, educational settings and nurture groups as an SEBD-related intervention provide the reader with enough information to make sufficient comparisons, thereby enhancing the theoretical transferability to similar research models. However, IPA necessitates a small sample size, therefore applicability outside the conditions of this study cannot be guaranteed.

*Dependability*

Alongside the methodological steps of this research, the researcher kept a research diary (see Appendix 3 for extract). The aim here was to keep a detailed account of how data was processed, for referral at a later stage and to aid interpretation. This diary also acted as an auditing tool, recording the step-by-step process of research. It is also recognised that there may be a bias towards extrapolating information from interviews that substantiate predefined themes from previous literature within the research questions (Sadler, 1981). In an attempt to counter this, negative cases analysis (Guba & Lincoln, 1989) was employed to actively seek out data inconsistent with previous themes and ensure alternative explanations are explored.

*Confirmability*

This research aims for the logical steps used to interpret data to be made explicit. The research diary helps to support this, recording all research oriented events, such as conferences, seminars and supervisions; knowing how, when and why relevant decisions about the research were made, the research process retains a quality of confirmability. The real-time documentation of research illustrates an explicit chain of events provides a transparent audit trail that would also enhance confirmability and satisfy an independent audit (Robson, 2002).

**3.9.2 Validity in IPA Context**

Two approaches to assessing the value of qualitative research that relate well to IPA are four broad principles by Yardley (2000) and the Independent Audit (Yin, 1989):

Yardley’s Principles

1. *Sensitivity to context* – The researcher demonstrated sensitivity to context through both a pilot visit to establish rapport and the adoption of an ‘in-situ’ interview aiming to help participants feel at greater ease by being interviewed within their nurture room
2. *Commitment and rigour* – The previous transcript extract (see under ‘3.9 Data Analysis’) shows the rigorous nature of IPA as an analytical tool, breaking meaning down to three levels; descriptive (literal), linguistic (type/ style of language used) and conceptual (interpretations and inferences of meaning behind comments)
3. *Transparency and coherence* – Displayed through the manner in which research is laid out, how themes hang together in a logical format and if research is presented in a clear and concise manner.
4. *Impact and importance* – Implications of the current study for EPs and for future areas of research are presented and emphasised in the Discussion chapter.

The Independent Audit

By involving an individual independent of research, Yin (1989) suggests they are able to check an ‘audit trail’; a chain of evidence leading from initial notes around research questions to the final report. Having adopted this process for current research, it allowed the rigour, plausibility and credibility of research to be checked. A peer from the same research cohort was asked to read through a final draft version of research and comment not on elements of proofing, but on the logical, sequential and ‘truthful’ nature of research layout, analysis and discussions. These elements were generally confirmed as having credibility, with one area of suggestion around the order of presentation during the methodology chapter, which was recognised and adhered to.

**3.10 Chapter Summary**

This chapter has looked at theoretical and epistemological frameworks for IPA, looked at research purpose, design and technique, considered ethical implications, gave an example of the method of data analysis and linked research to trustworthiness. The following Analysis chapter will focus on interpretations of data gathered from research, and will summarise these findings for further expansion during the Discussions chapter.

**Chapter 4: Analysis**

*“In any review and redesign, just as the system must listen to the experiences and views of the professionals working with children and families, so it must listen to the children themselves” –* Eileen Munro, 2011

**4.1 Chapter Overview**

Following on from methodology, this chapter completes an interpretive, ideographic, case-by-case analysis of the four participants in the study. Themes for each participant were analysed spatially, tabulated and finally compared across cases for convergence or divergence. Four main group themes emerged from this process; Home, Friendships, Communication and Emotional Regulation. These themes were then carried forward to the Discussion chapter, where relationships to original research questions were explored and themes compared with previous literature.

**4.2 Process of analysis**

Eight interviews were conducted in total - two per participant – firstly in face-to-face format and secondly during a walking tour of their nurture room. Transcripts for both interviews were conjoined and analysed together. Given the chosen method for qualitative data collection was via interview, direct quotations from transcripts served as phenomenological evidence, i.e. the lived experience of a secondary nurture group through the voice of the young person. To keep within the perimeters of IPA’s ideographic approach, ideas and emergent themes were ‘bracketed’ for the first case whilst working on the second, and so on for each of the four cases.

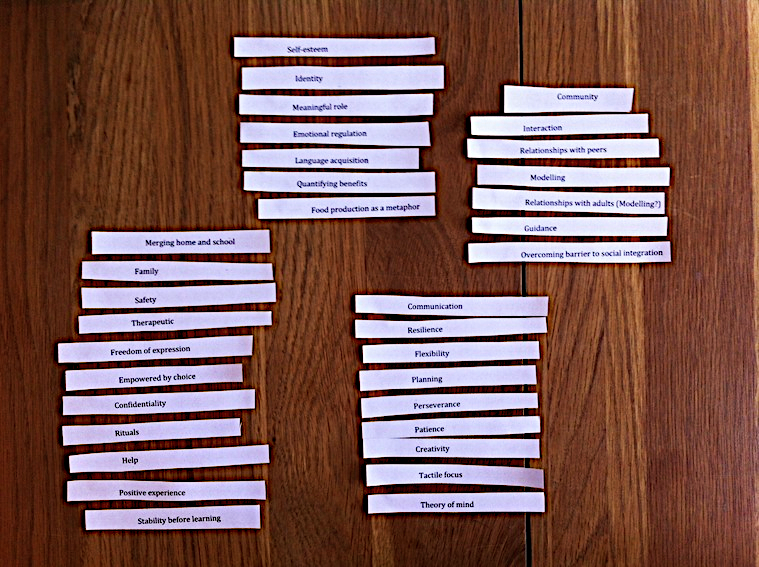
**4.3 Participant One: Bradley**

Bradley was a twelve-year-old boy in Year Seven (his first year of Secondary) at the time of interviewing. He was of White British ethnicity and made the transition to Secondary whilst under a behaviour management programme initiated by his previous Education Support Centre (also known as a Pupil Referral Unit, or PRU). Bradley was described by staff as being at ‘high risk of exclusion’ and school discovered he had Dyslexia, which was undiagnosed at the time of his transition from primary. From internal assessments, school staff reported his reading and spelling skills were the equivalent to that of a child aged six years. Bradley also had a stutter.

**4.3.1 Development of themes**

To briefly recap the methodological approach of IPA, this stage involved the close, line-by-line analysis of the transcript for the two interviews of each participant, looking particularly at experiential claims, concerns and understandings (Smith, 2009). An example of the depth of analysis employed at this stage can be seen from a copy of Bradley’s full transcript (see Appendix 10) whereby exploratory comments on the right hand side take a phenomenological approach and focus on textual analysis at three different levels; descriptive, linguistic and contextual. These comments formed the basis of identifying emergent patterns (or themes) written on the left hand side of the transcript, which were subsequently typed up, printed and individually cut out. Relationships between emergent themes were represented spatially, moving and grouping themes together, and exploring how these ideographic ‘parts’ related to the phenomenological ‘whole’ of each participants lived experiences (see Figure 4.1 overleaf):

Figure 4.1: Spatial orientation of Bradley’s emergent themes



Application of the hermeneutic cycle (revisiting emergent themes for deeper meaning) and the process of abstraction eventually lead to a finalised set of emergent themes for each participant, grouped together under four separate super-ordinate themes. The first example of this process is illustrated in Table 4.1 below:

Table 4.1: Bradley’s super-ordinate and emergent themes

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Super-ordinate Themes | Line(s) | Key words |
| **Social skills**  Communication  Patience  Flexibility  Theory of Mind | 181-182  358/ 594  610  415 | Associating/ talking  Wait  I have/ someone else has  Took time off |
| **Group as sanctuary**  Extension of home  Safety  Confidentiality  Therapeutic  Freedom of expression  Empowerment through choice  Rituals | 392-393/ 630-638  467  7-8  383-386/ 401  5-7/13-14/97-98  375-376  220-221/ 406-407 | Room in house/ kitchen at home/ same thing  Not even threatening  Stays in room  Relax/ calm  Can just say it  Choose what to do  Shook hands/ normally |
| **Construct of self**  Identity  Self-esteem  Meaningful role  Emotional regulation  Quantifying experience | 65/ 261  200/ 450/ 617  152-153  70-71/ 271/ 281-282  54 | Friends/ Dyslexic  Proud/ Confident  Team work  Temper/ nerves/ five mins out  Million |
| **Interpersonal relationships**  Family  Community  Relationships with peers  Modelling | 303  356  40/ 222-227  134-135/ 288-290 | Home with family  Round a table  Hard/ Friends  Like Miss said |

For each participant, super-ordinate themes such as those listed above (e.g. Interpersonal Relationships) were explored through a selection of their most pertinent emergent themes, supported by an idiographic analysis of quotations that pertain to each.

**4.3.1.1 Super-ordinate Theme 1: Exposure to social skills**

Interpretations of particular segments of Bradley’s transcript lead to the formation of super-ordinate theme one; the opportunity for Bradley to be exposed to and utilise certain social skills during Breakfast Club (namely Communication, Patience, Flexibility and Theory of mind).

*Communication*

A constant throughout Bradley’s narrative was communication, or more specifically, the ability to *talk* with peers and adults in an effective manner. Through the process of numeration, verbal communication was picked up on as an emergent theme; Bradley mentions the ability to talk, chat or speech twelve times over two interviews:

*“You can talk to them [peers] a lot”* (Appendix 10, Line 22)

*“It’s easier, cos it’s like, you can speak in one group”* (Appendix 10, Line 80)

*“I don’t know, it’s like associating with people, it’s like talking to them and stuff”* (Appendix 10, Lines 173-174)

*“Yeah it feels like nice like to talk to them [teachers]”* (Appendix 10, Line 423)

An initial level of interpretation for this is that Bradley is a sociable boy who likes to talk and is relishing the opportunity to do so more frequently in a smaller group. However, a further level of interpretation would include Bradley’s speech disorder. He himself explains how he lacked the confidence to talk to those he didn’t know before Breakfast Club:

*“I had to walk past them because of my stutter and I had to [stutters, indecipherable] they end up taking the mick out of my stutter or something”* (Appendix 10, Lines 82-84)

It would therefore be plausible to suggest that verbal communication holds significant meaning for Bradley, which may in part be linked to his dyslexia and difficulties with expressing himself through written text. Despite issues with his speech, Bradley feels more able to express himself verbally within the safe space of Breakfast Club without fear of mockery or recrimination. One level of criticality to this could be that, through regular removal from mainstream class into Breakfast Club, Bradley may inadvertently be ‘conditioned’ into only feeling able to talk within supported, small group environments. Issues such as this are explored further within the discussion chapter.

*Patience and Flexibility*

Twice during his two interviews, Bradley described the necessity for the group to ‘wait’ before certain events could begin:

*“…and we just [stutters]…wait till eight fifteen and then we can all come in and then [stutters] we can eat”* (Appendix 10, Lines 348-349)

*“You have all the ingredients laid out and then wait for Miss’ instructions to go”* (Appendix 10, Lines 579-580)

Bradley describes both acts of waiting as ‘cause and effect’: if I wait now, then I will be able to eat/ begin cooking. Moreover, the repetition of ‘then’ during the first extract act as verbal markers or milestones illustrating how, for Bradley, waiting (patience) is a skill that forms part of a wider linear process of an activity that he likes to think of and conceptualise in terms of steps. Given his previous history of difficulties with emotional regulation, it may be easier for Bradley to employ patience if it is broken down or ‘chunked’ into smaller steps in this way, so that he understands patience has positive consequences.

During discussions around cooking and roles during Breakfast Club, Bradley spoke about his adaptability when it came to cooking certain breakfast items:

*“…like other people cut the mushrooms you’ll stick the bacon on, and then I have the mushrooms, someone else has the bacon”* (Appendix 10, Lines 590-596)

Initially Bradley describes assigned tasks for food preparation (cutting and frying bacon) but a deeper level of interpretation comes when considering the co-operative nature of the experience; Bradley feels able to switch responsibility freely between different cooking tasks during Breakfast Club. The fact that he feels confident enough to do this may relate back to the principles of the group as a safe base, and there are implications for the differentiation of tasks and the transferability of patience as a social skill to other mainstream environments.

*Theory of Mind*

During a conversation around Bradley’s feelings, he described a recent time when teachers from their mainstream classes joined them in Breakfast Club:

*“So we had to write out an invitation, so they could took time off for their form, so they have a supply teacher that comes, and then they like come”* (Appendix 10, Lines 399-405)

Interpretations here were that, through Bradley’s articulation of the four-step process that enabled teachers to attend their Breakfast Club, he was showing the beginnings of understanding of how *other* people think and can be affected by actions. Inviting others to share their Breakfast Club experience wasn’t simply a case of asking teachers verbally and they appear, but a series of well planned steps. The formal invitation acts as the catalyst for a chain of events that Bradley may not have realised were necessary prior to this occurrence. Interpretations of language are also interesting and serve to reinforce the notion that Bradley creates meaning around the concept that he has the ability to ignite a chain reaction of events in others; the shift from ‘So we’ to ‘so they’, repeated three times.

**4.3.1.2 Super-ordinate Theme 2: Group as sanctuary**

The Oxford English Dictionary defines ‘sanctuary’ as ‘Refuge or safety from pursuit, persecution or danger’ (OED, 2015). Bradley’s second super-ordinate theme encompasses those emerging themes that relate to and describe the group itself: safe, therapeutic in nature and with close ties to the concept of family.

*Extension of home*

During his second interview Bradley was asked a question linked directly to the research question around the emotional effects of the nurture group and how it feels for him to be back in his nurture room, to which his response was:

*“It’s just like my house really, it’s just like some room in my house” (*Appendix 10, Line 381-382*)*

Linguistically, repeats the word ‘house’, reinforcing the message that to Bradley, the concept of Breakfast Club is almost a literal physical extension to his own home. Another interesting contextual interpretation here is how Bradley goes deeper into what is already a powerful metaphor. He starts with the more generic idea that the Breakfast Club room is ‘like his house’, then develops it further and becomes more specific as the Breakfast Club room becomes ‘some room *in* his house’, accepting it as an internalised component of the secure physical and emotional structure he calls ‘home’.

Later when the interview moves to a kitchen area used for Breakfast Club, Bradley is again asked what it feels like for him to be in that environment again:

*“I: It feels like I’m in my kitchen at home*

*R: In your kitchen at home? Ok…*

*I: Yeah, well it’s all the same thing*

*R: Uh huh*

*I:…yeah it’s all the same thing”* (Appendix 10, Lines 615 - 623)

Not only is this the second time Bradley makes the connection between his surroundings at school and his home, but when employing the hermeneutic cycle and looking contextually, interpretations were drawn that Bradley feels he receives similar forms of emotional input across both spaces. The physical environment is similar in the sense that both kitchens may possess similar utensils and apparatus, yet Bradley’s repetition of the kitchen’s being the ‘all the same thing’ seems almost an affirmation that he feels the same kind of structure, safety and support during the Breakfast Club kitchen sessions as he does when cooking at home with his family.

*Safety*

This notion of safety, included in one of the six principles of nurture (the classroom offers a safe base), is another theme that emerged from a question focused on how Bradley feels like behaving when he returns to the Breakfast Club kitchen:

*“Mate it’s unbelievable, it’s like well good…everyone’s not even, not even threatening or anything it’s just like, friends and stuff”* (Appendix 10, Lines 453 - 455)

The linguistics of Bradley’s comments (‘unbelievable/ well good’) would indicate he was somewhat surprised and pleased at either his own behaviour and/ or the behaviour of others. However if we deconstruct the quotation and read the second section first, the context for this reaction becomes clearer; Breakfast Club is a friendly, calm environment where peer and staff are ‘not even threatening’, which surprises Bradley, as this indicates his environment outside of Breakfast Club is intimidating and does pose a threat. The locus and of this perceived threat (and its transferability to other forms of research) is an interesting topic to explore – is this a physical threat, given Bradley is relatively small in stature? A threat of testosterone levels or concept of masculinity, given Bradley’s pre/ pubescent peer group? Or perhaps a verbal threat, given many of his peers are able to articulate themselves at a faster pace and without the pauses or delays Bradley has to manage.

*Confidentiality*

At the beginning of Bradley’s first interview, when asked an initial question linking to the social effects of being with other young people in Breakfast Club, his response included a comment around the privacy of Breakfast Club:

*“…like Miss V said, [stutters] what says in the room stays in the room, like it don’t leave the room”* (Appendix 10, Lines 7-8)

Language at the start of this quotation was interpreted as meaningful to Bradley, as he defines the source of the maxim as his Breakfast Club teacher, which holds with it the evidential implication of respect and truth. The triple repetition of the word ‘room’ can also be interpreted as symbolism towards containment; the walls of the Breakfast Club room keep the utterances, honesties and vulnerabilities of its members safely guarded from the judgements or interpretations of others.

*Therapeutic*

The cathartic, almost analgesic nature of the group was also interpreted as a frequent theme during Bradley’s interviews, occurring seven times throughout both transcripts. Three of these seven occurrences are outlined below:

*“it’s like relaxing, like there ain’t no talking, like at the start it was all major, like all hectic ‘whheeeyy class seven’ and all that, and then through the year we like calmed down and sit and ch[stutters]at”* (Appendix 10, Lines 372 - 375)

*“Cos it’s so like, quiet and not like a whole class”* (Appendix 10, Lines 298 - 299)

*“Yeah you get relaxed and stuff, you relax and chill out you have a little chat then you eat”* (Appendix 10, Lines 309 - 391)

The quotations encapsulate three areas that relate to therapeutic principles; relaxation, quietness and intimacy. Bradley mentions relaxation three times throughout these quotes, hence initial interpretations were that Breakfast Club was somewhere Bradley used to de-stress and unwind from mainstream school life. Bradley’s linguistic descriptions of the start of secondary school life as ‘major’ and ‘hectic’ also serve as a meaningful juxtaposition against words like ‘calmed’ and ‘sit’ later in the quotation, presenting a stark contrast between the frantic nature of mainstream school versus the tranquility of Breakfast Club through Bradley’s eyes. In addition, when asked a question about his behaviour, Bradley explicitly states that Breakfast Club is ‘not like a whole class’, which through interpretation implies it is easier for him to manage his behaviour in an environment with reduced personnel and lower levels of external stimulation.

**4.3.1.3 Super-ordinate theme 3: Reconstruction of self**

Several themes emerged from Bradley’s own lived experiences of the Breakfast Club that relate to the way in which he perceives himself as a young person and how this view has an interpretive shift through themes of identity, self-esteem, and emotional regulation.

*Identity*

A picture of how Bradley viewed himself was painted through two quotations, firstly around friendships and secondly his learning difficulty:

*“Cos like I said it’s hard to make friends like with me”* (Appendix 10, Lines 64 - 65)

*“Yeah, and I’m [stutters] dyslexic as well”* (Appendix 10, Line 252)

To provide perspective, the first quotation came from Bradley’s response that Breakfast Club had helped to improve his friendships, yet the positioning of his language here infers that others find it difficult to initiate friendships with him, as opposed to him struggling to connect to others. The nexus of the self is explored here, as the quotation could be interpreted as having a homonymic effect; Bradley empathises with others who find it difficult to tolerate his temper (later explained in the interview), but the comment also evokes empathy from the listener or reader towards Bradley’s difficulties making friends.

The second quote stems from a question looking to explore Bradley’s emotions before the inception of Breakfast Club. Prior to this quotation he had explained how maths can act as a catalyst for his anger and frustration, then by adding in his diagnosis of dyslexia it again serves a function in eliciting empathy and understanding from the listener. Bradley has received higher levels of criticism and negative input than many of his peers, therefore interpretations here were that Bradley uses his diagnosis to evoke positive affect, therefore indirectly building up his own levels of self-esteem.

In terms of identity, this diagnosis is relatively new to Bradley and so it would be interesting to explore exactly what ‘dyslexia’ means for him at this stage. One interpretation is outlined above; for Bradley it is the linguistic key to emotional and academic support.

*Self-esteem*

An emerging theme that occurs close to that of identity is Bradley’s references to the manner in which his self-esteem has been affected by being part of the Breakfast Club:

*“R: Ok, and how does that feel, making things for other people…*

*I: Yeah I feel like happy and proud of myself for making them”* (Appendix 10, Lines 189 - 193)

*“I: Yeah so…I was proud of myself like making friends”* (Appendix 10, Line 437)

Both quotations mention ‘pride’ but in two different contexts, firstly pride through the acts of making and giving. This statement was induced by a question relating to how the lived experience of making things for others felt for Bradley, to which he said he was happy (emotional response) and proud of *himself,* a more introspective response interpreted as Bradley beginning to emotionally invest in himself and grow organically as a person. He uses the same concept of self-nurturing when describing his feelings towards being able to make friends. Looking at self-esteem as a component of the case as a whole, he refers to teachers and his mother as guiding figures (see subheadings ‘Family’ and ‘Modelling’ under the super-ordinate theme of ‘Interpersonal Relationships’). It could therefore be interpreted that Bradley has either been taught to acknowledge his own emotional strengths, or this notion of understanding the self has been modelled well for him.

**4.3.1.4 Super-ordinate theme 4: Interpersonal Relationships**

Throughout Bradley’s interviews, several themes surfaced that pertained to relationships he has with his family, peers and teachers. Interpretations were that these relationships all held idiosyncratic meanings for Bradley, and a selection of these relationships are outlined below.

*Family*

*“the start of school my Mum was like, [stutters] stick your head up and then, [stutters] try your hardest”* (Appendix 10, Lines 83 - 85)

*“Yeah, it’s like…[stutters] being at home really with my family”* (Appendix 10, Lines 289)

*“And weighed all the things at home, and that’s that…my Mum taught me that”* (Appendix 10, Lines 561 - 562)

The first of these quotes relates to the emotional support Bradley receives from his mother in the face of adversity, in this context potential mocking from peers around his stutter. Interpretations linked this closely with Bradley’s self-esteem through the analogy of a car; Bradley as the whole car, with his family acting as supportive ‘petrol’, filling him up with advice and encouragement whilst in the ‘garage’ of home so he can continue on his experiential journey.

Continuing the analogy, Bradley feels the Breakfast Club also acts as a secondary ‘garage’, with bonds and interpersonal relationships reaching a level comparable to those of his own family. Finally in the last quotation, Bradley describes how weighing was a cooking skill taught to him by his mother, but one he could employ during Breakfast Club. This presents a different dynamic of how Breakfast Club and family interact in Bradley’s world; one as instructional and the other practical.

*Relationships with peers*

*“…at the start of the school, like it was quite hard to kind of make friends, and then now I’ve made loads of friends like from Breakfast Club”* (Appendix 10, Lines 38 - 40)

*“Like the people who I was with, I didn’t know them at the time, so if I wanted to say something it was quite hard…”* (Appendix 10, Lines 112 - 113)

*“No, really I only knew about three four [stutters] people, and now I know like most of the year sevens”* (Appendix 10, Lines 121 - 122)

It is interesting to note the temporal theme that runs through all three of these quotations – they all begin at the start of Bradley’s academic year and all describe difficulties with forming friendships. The first and third quotes then make a temporal shift, from then to now, alongside a change in his narrative – ‘hard’ to ‘loads’ and ‘three four’ to ‘most’, helping to illustrate a social evolution for Bradley. Bradley cites the reasons for his improved friendships as ‘from Breakfast Club’. Given the qualitative nature of research it is difficult to define the extent to which these improvements were as a result of Bradley’s attendance at Breakfast Club, and the context of an interview around the effects of Breakfast Club may of course be influencing his choice of semantics. However, Bradley has voiced his own opinion that his lived experience of Breakfast Club has in turn created meaning for him around initiating, developing and maintaining friendships.

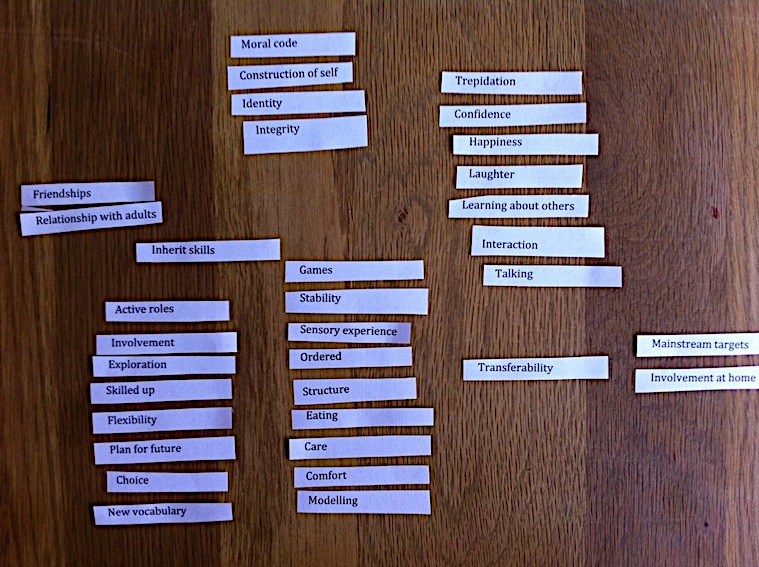
**4.4 Participant Two: Abdul**

Abdul was a 12-year-old British Indian boy also in year seven when the interviews took place. Staff reported that Abdul lost contact with his father due to safety issues around his father’s family. Abdul’s mother then suffered two brain tumours, so the family moved back in with Abdul’s grandparents who were particularly strict with Abdul. Staff also reported that Abdul found it difficult to meet the expectations of his grandfather and coming to terms with his mother’s illness.

**4.4.1 Development of themes**

Following ideographic analysis of Abdul’s transcripts, emergent themes were also typed up, printed, cut and organised spatially, whereby themes with similar understandings were placed together. In this case, themes such as ‘Identity’ were magnetic, pulling other themes towards them, with others connected but more spatially peripheral, for example ‘Relationships with adults’ (see Image 2 below). Through this process of abstraction and polarisation, four distinct super-ordinate themes were developed; Personal Growth, Humanity, Integrity and Generalisable Skills (see Table 4.2 below).

Image 4.2: Spatial orientation of Abdul’s emergent themes



As themes began to converge and diverge, two to three of the most pertinent emergent themes were selected as representations for each list. These were chosen through either numeration (frequency of emergence throughout the transcript), function (themes that illicit a positive or negative response from the researcher) or polarisation (oppositional relationships, looking at difference as opposed to similarity). These two to three themes were then compared, interpreted, and super-ordinate themes were created, serving as summaries of interpretations for each.

Table 4.2: Abdul’s super-ordinate and emergent themes

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Super-ordinate Themes | Line(s) | Key words |
| **Personal Growth**  Exploration  Involvement  Talking | 84  61  9/23-24 | Things I haven’t done  Do what is happening  People/ to get friends |
| **Humanity**  Friendships  Learning about others  Interaction | 22-23  38-39  143-144 | Bit more friends  Know others  Talk/ contribute/ commununicate |
| **Integrity**  Moral code  Identity | 240  4 | Do the right thing  Quiet person |
| **Generalisable skills**  Mainstream targets  Involvement at home | 110-111  164-165 | Putting my hand up  Helping my family |

**4.4.1.1 Super-ordinate theme 1: Personal growth**

The interpretations of three emergent themes formed a metaphorical pathway towards Abdul’s own personal growth and development as an individual; Exploration, Involvement and Comfort.

*Exploration*

From transcripts of the two interviews, Abdul twice mentioned how Breakfast Club had encouraged him to venture into areas he was less familiar with, in the first instance describing this process in generalised terms but secondly he describes an area of learning specifically targeted for him to explore:

*“Um, doing other things that I haven’t done before”* (Appendix 12, Transcript A, Line 84)

*“I think it was to read more books, like different types of books”* (Appendix 12, Transcript A, Lines 120-121)

To provide context to the first quotation, Abdul had just responded that he was ‘happier’ as a result of the Breakfast Club. This quotation was drawn from the following question that relates directly to the research question around *how* he experiences the emotional aspects of Breakfast club, asking which ‘things’ (purposely ambiguous) in particular make Abdul happier. Abdul then provides us with a link between the emotion of happiness and his experience of ‘doing other things’, inferring that it actually makes him happy when he challenges himself and takes new risks, and Breakfast Club provides him with the safe and emancipatory platform from which his exploratory needs can be met.

In relation to the second quotation, Abdul had mentioned Breakfast Club ‘targets’ he had been set, and one of these was to ‘read more books, like different types of books’ (Appendix 12, Transcript A, Line 115). Here we see exploration through a different lens; there is a more formalised, measured impetus for Abdul to expand his learning. From Abdul’s comments around fresh experiences leading to his happiness, this format could work well. However, there are implications around the nurture group teacher working with the child or young person long enough to know areas that may inspire or promote their development, creative or otherwise.

*Involvement*

Inspired by a question that referenced the social aspects of Breakfast Club, Abdul’s second emergent theme centred around his impetus to be involved in activities with others. Abdul was asked how being with others around the table at Breakfast Club or cooking with his peers makes him feel:

*“..like I want to do what…umm, I want to do what is happening there”* (Appendix 12, Transcript A, Line 61)

Here Abdul touches upon an area that could be interpreted as key to nurture groups in general; immersion in the present. Analysis of the linguistics helps to explain this hypothesis: Abdul wishes to ‘do’ (take an active part in) what is ‘happening’ (any event or activity) ‘there’ (in Breakfast Club). Mindfulness tells us to be present and aware of the ‘now’; inferences from this quotation are that Abdul seems open to taking on these principles, showing a willingness to be involved in real-time experiences as opposed to, for example, thoughts of the past or worries regarding the future. Through the dimensions of IPA, the hermeneutic cycle see this nuance of real-time involvement as a smaller part of a greater whole in relation to participation; do secondary nurture groups help young people to focus on the present?

*Talking*

The ability to talk more frequently emerged as a strong theme for Abdul, as underlined by the following quotations:

*“I see other people talking and it’s makes me want to talk a bit more”* (Appendix 12, Transcript A, Lines 8-9)

*“I think I would talk a bit more at home, but I do talk a bit at school as well.”* (Appendix 12, Transcript A, Line 11)

The first aspect immediately apparent about these quotations is that they both occur within the first thirteen lines of Abdul’s first interview – the chronology of responses is a topic expanded upon later during the Discussion chapter.

The first quotation was inspired by a question intended to draw out the social aspects of Breakfast Club for Abdul; through interpretation, it seems communication is a meaningful aspect of social communication for Abdul. However, looking deeper at the nuances of the language Abdul uses in both quotations (‘makes me’, ‘I would talk’), it offers questions around the source of this meaning. Does Abdul himself want to talk more, or is it the adults around him (family, teachers, Breakfast Club staff) that build the notion that talking more frequently is a) important and b) that Abdul should therefore verbalise his thoughts more often? However, by repetition of a ‘bit’, it is clear Abdul doesn’t wish to over-emphasise the impact of Breakfast Club on his friendships.

The context of Abdul’s family background also provides some rationale for interpretation; the loss of his father and illness of his mother are significant life events that contribute to Abdul’s quieter nature, establishing a link between emotion and communication, and the discipline of his grandparents may reinforce his difficulty to verbalise his thoughts, feelings or opinions.

**4.4.1.2 Super-ordinate theme 2: Humanity**

During the process of spatial orientation of emergent themes, three words used to describe elements of Abdul’s transcript seemed to dovetail naturally; Friendships, Learning about others, and Interaction. The initial title for this super-ordinate theme was ‘Relationships’, yet this seemed too prescriptive. There was something more anthropological about these traits – how Abdul is learning more about what it is to be human – that provoked this shift of title. Descriptions of the individual emergent themes go some way to describing the essence of ‘humanity’ as a conceptualised theme.

*Friendships*

*“I have got a bit more friends. Because, at the start I didn’t have much friends and…I didn’t….talk much to get friends, and….yeah”* (Appendix 12, Transcript A, Lines 23-24)

The first point of note is linguistic – Abdul repeated the word ‘friends’ three times throughout, inferring a subtle subtext of meaning towards friendships. Next, his temporal references begin by citing the present and the fact that he has now acquired friendships via involvement in the Breakfast Club (‘I have’), then referring back to past tense and how he was not ‘in possession of’ many friendships prior to the club (‘at the start I didn’t have’), creating thoughts of friendships like protective articles, or bricks in a wall of emotional solidarity. Finally, an element that ties back to previous extrapolations around the concept of talk for Abdul; he feels his frequency of talking is directly proportional to ‘getting’ friendships.

*Learning about others*

During the earlier stage of his first interview, Abdul was asked if he found it easier, about the same, or harder to speak to new people since the inception of Breakfast Club:

*“Probably easier, umm…because we get to interact more, and you get to know others more”* (Appendix 12, Transcript A, Line 38)

An interesting interpretation to consider here is Abdul’s switch of pronouns, firstly looking at interpersonal communication from a communal perspective (‘we’), followed by the second-person pronoun use of ‘you’ to describe how Breakfast Club provides Abdul himself with a deeper understanding of others. The repetition of ‘more’ as the respective adverb to ‘interact’ and ‘know’ also provides an interpretation of the increasing levels of exposure to social situations that Abdul is offered.

*Interaction*

*“I talk more, contribute more, things like that, communicate to others but umm…yeah”* (Appendix 12, Transcript A, Lines 144-145)

In response to a question designed to tap into the emotional aspects of Breakfast Club – what it was about Breakfast Club that made Abdul *feel* comfortable – he groups three areas of interaction together; talking, contributing and communicating. Interpretations of these areas relate back to the dimension of research questions; talking (personal/ emotional), contributing (behavioural) and communicating (social), providing another example of how the three aspects are closely interrelated within a secondary nurture group scenario.

**4.4.1.3 Super-ordinate theme 3: Integrity**

Close interpretations of Abdul’s own verbalised perspective on his lived experience of Breakfast Club drew together two areas personal to Abdul’s own individuality – emergent themes described as ‘Moral Code’ and ‘Identity’:

*Moral code*

*”I want to do the right thing, to be with the other people but like I don’t know much about cooking”* (Appendix 12, Transcript A, Lines 240 – 241)

Abdul was asked how he felt when he and fellow club member were all working towards the same goal. The quotation above was included within the context of this super-ordinate theme due his opening sentence of wanting to ‘do the right thing’ by being with others, as if he feels an ethical responsibility to be integrated into activities, which may be drawn from his background. However, Abdul feels his inclusion within the group is jeopardised by his perceived lack of knowledge around cooking. This could be interpreted as an example of Abdul’s humility, as throughout his second interview he demonstrated a sound knowledge of cooking utensils, ingredients and recipes.

*Identity*

*“…because I’m quite a quiet person”* (Appendix 12, Transcript A, Line 4)

It is interesting and perhaps indicative of the continuing convergence of social, emotional and behavioural factors that Abdul refers to his own personality following the first question of his interview around the experience of being with others. It is difficult to interpret as to whether Abdul has a naturally introspective nature (again perhaps as a result of his emotionally challenging background) or if this is a form of emotional intelligence encouraged and/ or reinforced by Breakfast Club. Resultant implications can be drawn for secondary nurture groups as environments that may foster an ability to be self-reflective. However, interpretations here go further, insofar as the inclusion of young people who have an innate understanding of themselves within nurture group creating an equilibrium and modelling an understand of themselves which other members of the group may find challenging.

**4.4.1.4 Super-ordinate theme 4: Generalisable skills**

Abdul’s final super-ordinate theme was formed through interpretations of a relationship between two emergent themes – ‘Mainstream Targets’ and ‘Involvement at Home’ – two themes that indicate Abdul is beginning to generalise his use of skills developed during Breakfast Club in other environments.

*Mainstream targets*

In response to a question relating to behavioural aspects, or more specifically if he had been inclined to put his hand up in class before Breakfast Club, Abdul referred to a goal he had been set:

*“Putting my hand up was one of my targets”* (Appendix 12, Transcript A, Line 110)

This notion of goal setting within Breakfast Club provides an example of a bridge between Breakfast Club and Abdul’s regular school life, or furthermore how secondary nurture groups can actively influence a young person’s participation and engagement in the mainstream curriculum. From an analytical perspective, interpretations are that Abdul’s lived experience of Breakfast Club would need to (and perhaps does) provide safe foundations for him to build up his confidence and self-belief that putting his hand up will lead to positive feedback before it can be used as an external target. Although the creation of mainstream targets is a secondary nurture concept that could encourage creation of more groups within secondary provisions, this places greater importance on nurture groups themselves providing the opportunity to explicitly practice these targets for each young person in a small group setting before they are applied in a wider context.

*Involvement at home*

*“…it’s made me like, want to do more things at home and, yeah…and helping my family as well”* (Appendix 12, Transcript A, Lines 164 – 165)

To extend this concept of ‘bridging’ between environments and systems within which young people operate, the quotation above indicates Breakfast Club has encouraged Abdul to have more of an active participatory role within his family. The iterative process of analysis lead to interpretations that Abdul’s enthusiasm to ‘do more things at home’ is an approach he has transferred from Breakfast Club to home with relative ease. The second section of the quotation talks of Abdul ‘helping’ his family; interpretations from his background (i.e. the removal of his father from the family dynamic combined with his mother’s illness) may mean Abdul feels a responsibility to take on the

role of ‘provider and carer’. Practical skills of cooking and interaction appear to be assisting with this process, yet if this was the case, the element of emotional support provided by Breakfast Club could be key to reminding Abdul of his role within his family unit.

**4.5 Participant three: Gary**

Gary was also a 12-year-old boy in year seven at the time of interviews. He was of White British ethnicity, from a Christian background and had previously been referred by school to external support services for assessment of suspected Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC) earlier in the academic year. Staff report Gary had difficulty managing his transition from primary to secondary and had difficulties with friendships, at times becoming very distressed.

**4.5.1 Development of themes**

Spatial management of Gary’s themes proved a little more complex. From a deeper iterative analysis of his two transcripts, thirty seven separate themes came to light, with the spatial convergence of themes such as ‘Self-esteem’ and ‘Comfort Zone’ and divergence of themes with a more negative connotations, such as ‘Judgement’ and ‘Annoyance’ (see Figure 4.3 overleaf).

Figure 4.3: Spatial orientation of Gary’s emergent themes



The convergence of ten themes (bottom left of picture) appeared to symbolise the freedom, or Emancipation, of being part of the Breakfast Club. A series of emergent themes followed a divergent course (bottom right of picture) and group learning ethos of Breakfast Club. Other super-ordinate themes included ‘Home’ and ‘Self-Concept’.

Table 4.3: Gary’s super-ordinate and emergent themes

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Super-ordinate Themes | Line(s) | Key words |
| **Emancipation**  Independence  Safe variation | 496  404 | Just be myself  Different things |
| **Conflict of interests**  Judgement  Directive | 265-266  5 | Comment  Bossy |
| **Self-concept**  Self-esteem  Comfort zone | 491/ 533  458-459 | Useful/ enjoy watching  Comfortable |
| **Home**  Family | 477 | Mothers Day |

**4.5.1.1 Super-ordinate theme 1: Emancipation**

The first of Gary’s emergent themes that appeared to naturally gravitate towards one another during the visual manipulations photographed above were two that contributed, both directly and indirectly, to his sense of feeling emancipated by Breakfast Club.

*Independence*

During Gary’s second interview - within the Breakfast Club kitchen area - he was asked how being back in the same room made him feel like behaving:

*“I: Just be myself.*

*R: Yeah? Ok, in what way can you be yourself in here?*

*I: I dunno I just…I don’t actually know.”* (Appendix 12, Transcript B, Lines 496-500)

Linguistically, the short, punchy nature of the first statement provides added emphasis and meaning; Breakfast Club has provided Gary with a platform from which he can express himself and be true to his own values. However, when prompted, an explanation of this process proves difficult for Gary to articulate. Interpretations of the ‘phenomenon’ (or direct quotation) here are that Gary may not feel as though he can be himself in other situations, yet Breakfast Club provides him with an environment where Gary can behave it a manner that is genuine and befits his true personality. It is interesting that being ‘in situ’ (i.e. in his Breakfast Club environment) inspired this statement regarding the independence of the self.

*Safe variation*

*“Umm yeah we always cook different things, like one day we did pancakes, and the other day we did a full English, then we did bacon and eggs”* (Appendix 12, Transcript B, Lines 404-406)

This quotation stemmed from a question around the range of activities Gary is involved in during Breakfast Club and a prompt towards cooking. Gary’s remark that they ‘always cook different things’ lead directly to the naming of this emergent theme as safe variation; young people can explore cooking new food groups within the safe confines of Breakfast Club. Further interpretation could develop this idea, in that the ability to cook a range of food types symbolises the ability to tackle new challenges with optimism. This may be particularly relevant for Gary, who according to staff has faced particular challenges with transition and friendships.

**4.5.1.2 Super-ordinate theme 2: Conflict of Interests**

Several of Gary’s themes appeared to converge under a theme that highlighted the more negative lived experiences of Breakfast Club for Gary. Given his inclination to be independent, two themes that were interpreted as a threat to this were firstly being judged by others and secondly taking directions from others.

*Judgement*

Gary had been asked if he enjoyed the experience of eating with others around a table, to which he responded ‘not really’ and continued:

*“Cos they normally, they normally umm..like they always comment on my umm..just cos, like on my manners at the table”* (Appendix 12, Transcript B, Lines 268-269)

Initial observations of the language at the beginning of the quote indicate an emotive response; his repetition of ‘they normally’ and ‘umm’ show Gary is struggling to manage his feelings of discomfort whilst searching for words to describe the situation. Further interpretation looks at this nuance of peer judgement as part of the whole phenomenon of secondary nurture groups in the context of appropriate participant selection. From his background profile, school staff have recognised traits in Gary that may be consistent with autism, therefore this raises issues around the necessity to be carefully selective of those for inclusion within a nurture group for students with social and emotional issues.

*Directive*

*“Well sometimes it can be annoying, and, bossy, and…yeah”* (Appendix 12, Transcript B, Line 5)

The quote above is in response to his first interview question asking what it is like for him to be with other young people in the Breakfast Club. The two descriptions Gary gives could be seen as reflexive, in that he is annoyed *because* of certain bossy elements of the group. Temporal context becomes an important element of hermeneutic interpretation here; this quote comes at the very beginning of Gary’s interview process, hence it is difficult for the reader to understand the rationale for his discontent, or if he dislikes adult or peer direction. However through further reading of the transcript we understand his peers to be the source of Gary’s angst (e.g. Line 140). Wider implications exist here in that the ethos of secondary nurture groups should promote social values and learning through equality and parity, dissipating any need for the internal ‘hierarchies of power’ Gary’s peers attempt to form in this example.

**4.5.1.3 Super-ordinate theme 3: Self concept**

*Self-esteem*

Looking at the emotional aspects of Gary’s lived experiences, he was asked how cooking for his Mum on Mothers Day made him feel:

*“Umm makes me feel better. It makes me feel useful.”* (Appendix 12, Transcript B, Line 491)

A first point of interpretation here is that a practical element of Breakfast Club has directly influenced Gary’s emotional self; skills he has learnt or consolidated during the club have enabled him to feel ‘better’ and ‘useful’. The repetition of sentences (‘makes me feel’) before each gives these adjectives an extra potency, connecting Gary’s feelings and the phenomenon of language used to describe them. ‘Better’ could also be interpreted as an improvement from a previous emotional state; by having both the skills and confidence to cook for his mother, Gary feels he has ‘bettered’ himself. Again, the reflexivity of these sentences may help us to understand why he feels better – Gary feels he can be of ‘use’, that his skill in cooking provides a new role or purpose, which may in turn be indicative of a previous mindset in which he felt he was of less use.

Towards the end of his second interview, Gary was asked a concluding question regarding his thoughts or feelings towards the Breakfast Club room in which the interview took place:

*“Well I like watching other people enjoy the food that we make”* (Appendix 12, Transcript B, Line 533)

The quotation evidences the manner in which Gary links a question around thought and feeling to the lived experience of observing others enjoying food that the Breakfast Club members have produced together. In terms of self-concept, it could be interpreted that Gary’s levels of self-esteem are boosted by both the act of producing and giving food, but mainly through positive affirmation from others that his investment is ‘enjoyed’ and holds value.

*Comfort Zone*

During Gary’s second interview, dialogue moved towards the cooking element of Breakfast Club, which Gary explained was part of Breakfast Club he enjoyed:

*“Because…I dunno I just like cooking food cos it makes me feel comfortable”* (Appendix 12, Transcript B, Lines 458-459)

The explicit relationship Gary outlines between the activity of cooking food and the feeling of comfort is perhaps symbolic, as this method of stability through active participation could be considered part of the second and third principles of nurture; the classroom offers a safe base, and the importance of nurture for the development of self-esteem. The Breakfast Room provides Gary with safety for him to cook within measured and secure parameters, which in parallel provides Gary with a feeling of comfort.

**4.5.1.4 Super-ordinate theme 4: Home**

*Family*

Gary’s final emergent theme centred around cooking for his mother at home:

*“Umm yeah breakfasts cos normally when it’s Mothers Day, well it’s self-explanatory and yeah…so, cos last cos last um year, well this year when, when I didn’t learn how to make like, bacon and stuff like I didn’t really know how to make loads of stuff so I just made her tea”* (Appendix 12, Transcript B, Lines 477-480)

Prior to this quotation, Gary had been asked if he felt cooking in Breakfast Club helped him with cooking at home. He response that Mother’s Day was ‘self-explanatory’ displays firstly a sound grasp of English, but also the assumption that the researcher would understand his inference that he cooks for his Mother on Mother’s Day. Temporality then moves into focus, where Gary cites a time prior to Breakfast Club when he ‘didn’t learn’ how to make bacon and so ‘just made her tea’. Here we get an indication of how Breakfast Club has provided Gary with a transferable skill, but that he is no longer feeling inferior and *just* making tea, but is now able to ‘make loads of stuff’.

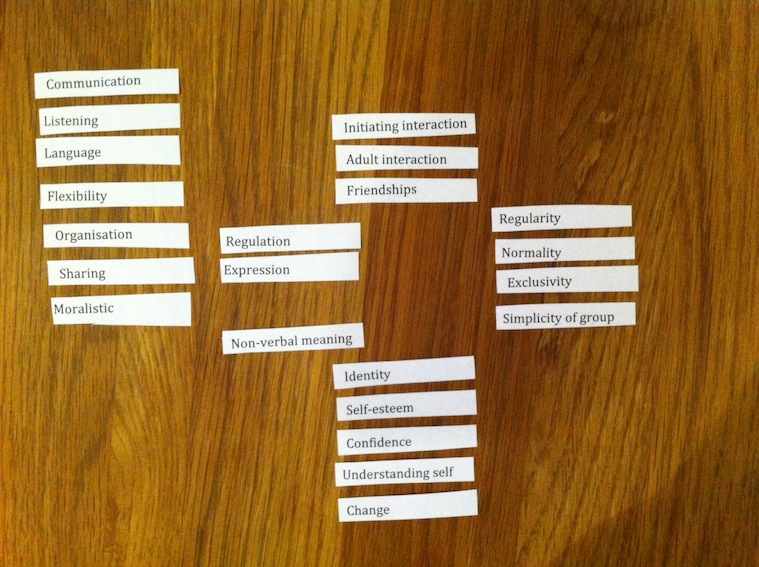
**4.6 Participant four: Jack**

Finally Jack was a 12-year-old British Indian boy also in year seven when the interviews were conducted. Staff reported that Jack’s father had died when he was nine years old, and as a result Jack had he suffered from depression. Staff also reported that a Common Assessment Framework (CAF) was in place for Jack’s brother

**4.6.1 Development of themes**

Twenty-two emergent themes were interpreted and drawn from Jack’s interview transcripts. Spatial orientation allowed themes to converge further to form four main super-ordinate themes:

Figure 4.4 Spatial orientation of Jack’s emergent themes



Using the iterative process encouraged by IPA analysis, emergent themes from each of the above lists were revisited and those with the most intepretive poignancy (defined through IPA analysis techniques of abstraction, numeration or function) were selected from groups to form four main super-ordinate themes:

Table 4.4: Jack’s emergent and super-ordinate themes

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Super-ordinate Themes | Line(s) | Key words |
| **Personal development**  Communication  Empathy  Moral compass  Organisation | 41 - 44  78 - 79  431  27 | Wanna talk  Speaking more  Tell the truth  Early to school |
| **Identity**  Self-esteem  Pride | 185 - 188  149 – 150 | Couldn’t talk  Just leave |
| **Relationships**  Togetherness  Interactive bonding | 96 – 98  119 – 120 | You/ with them  Games/ talk |
| **Special place**  Exclusivity | 133 - 134 | Our own place |

**4.6.1.1 Super-ordinate theme 1: Personal Development**

In the case of Jack, research questions were resonant. Interpretations of four emergent themes that gravitated towards one another all appeared to link to social, emotional and behavioural aspects of Jack’s own personal development:

* Communication – Social
* Empathy – Emotional
* Moral Compass – Emotional
* Organisation – Behavioural

*Communication*

One section of Jack’s interview was focused on the social aspects of Breakfast Club and if being part of Breakfast Club had affected Jack’s friendships in any way. Jack responded positively, hence he was then asked *how* he thought Breakfast Club had helped him make more friends in school:

*“Well, like….there’s others to talk to like that you’ve never seen and that and, it makes you feel like you wanna talk to other people that you don’t know”* (Appendix 12, Transcript C, Lines 41 – 44)

Iteration and interpretation of Jack’s response lead to the formation of thought that, for Jack, Breakfast Club serves as a social ‘blueprint’ for initiating interaction with unfamiliar peers. Breakfast Club gives Jack a sense of stability from which he can ‘test’ talking to strangers, receiving positive feedback, which he then feels like transferring to environments outside of Breakfast Club.

*Empathy*

When asked a question relating to friendships and if he found it easier or harder speaking to new people, Jack began referring to Abdul, a fellow Breakfast Club member as someone who ‘didn’t really talk’. Jack was asked if he thought Breakfast Club would help Abdul:

*“Er, it’s gonna help with that, he’s started speaking more since her came here…”* (Appendix 12, Transcript C, Lines 78 – 79)

In a literal, descriptive sense, Jack feels the Breakfast Club will help Abdul to speak more, evidenced by the fact that Abdul has already ‘started speaking more’. Yet looking on a more contextual level, researcher focus looked Jack’s cognitive switch from himself to Abdul. This process was a good example of the hermeneutic cycle in motion; initially the switch of subject matter was interpreted as Jack’s strategy to distract the focus from himself, yet thoughts concluded that actually Jack was a) purposefully aware of differences in others and b) empathetic in his reaction to these differences, inferring that Abdul is now getting ‘help’ to express himself verbally.

*Moral Compass*

In the final section of his second interview, Jack mentioned that he felt Breakfast Club has helped him to ‘talk more’, so as a subtle IPA related prompt for more context or meaning, he was then asked if there was anything else Breakfast Club had helped him with:

*“Listen, umm….tell the truth”* (Appendix 12, Transcript C, Line 431)

Initial interpretations focused in on Jack’s response that Breakfast Club had taught him the reciprocal skill of listening as well as helping him talk to new people. However, the revelation that Breakfast Club had helped Jack ‘tell the truth’ brought with it the new phenomenological dimension that Breakfast Club also provided Jack with a moral compass and encouragement to ‘tell the truth’ as opposed to time before the Breakfast Club when his conscience might not have prompted him to do so.

*Organisation*

During a section of interview discourse designed to draw out the social experiences of Breakfast Club, Jack was asked a question around friendships (‘I got more friends, and could talk more’, Lines 22 – 23) and how Breakfast Club had helped him:

*“And, helped me come early to school as well”* (Appendix 12, Transcript C, Line 27)

Jack responds to the initial question around friendships with associated answers, yet listing these benefits appears to trigger another more practical purpose of Breakfast Club for Jack; getting him to ‘come early’ to school. Further interpretation here emerges from the inference that Jack previously struggled with getting to school on time, however Breakfast Club established at first a requirement but later perhaps also motivation for Jack to be organised, planned and make it into school early.

**4.6.1.2 Super-ordinate theme 2: Identity**

Jack’s second super-ordinate theme contains two related emergent themes – self-esteem and pride – both of which were seen to contribute to the development of Jack’s emotional identity.

*Self-esteem*

During a final set of questions intending to explore the behavioural experience of Breakfast Club for Jack, he was asked how he felt he behaved before Breakfast Club began:

*“Like I’d be shouted at for not speaking and, if I didn’t say ‘ok’ or something like that I’d be in big trouble and I didn’t, so I couldn’t talk”* (Appendix 12, Transcript C, Line 185 – 188)

On a linguistic level, the first point that stood out was the frequency of negative references - ‘not’, ‘didn’t’, ‘didn’t’, ‘couldn’t’ – which provides an indication that Jack absorbed and embodied the negativity around him at the time. From a phenomenological perspective, Jack perceived his lack of talk in class as leading to ‘big trouble’, yet by coercing Jack to speak in class against his own will his teacher appears to have convinced Jack into thinking he was mute and ‘couldn’t talk’. Implications here lie in efficient communication and ensuring mainstream teachers are made fully aware of children experiencing social or emotional challenges.

*Pride*

*“Yeah, I wouldn’t even say one word. I would just probably just leave.”*

(Appendix 12, Transcript C, Lines 149 – 150)

As the central section of Jack’s interview developed, he was asked a question around his emotional experiences and how he would feel if he didn’t have Breakfast Club. His above response, relating to the process of being interviewed, was powerful and evocative of a boy who felt an overwhelming sense of fear relating to social interaction. However, this extract was also interpreted as pride; Jack setting a marker for how far he has progressed since the days when he would dread being in the same room as someone he was unfamiliar with.

**4.6.1.3 Super-ordinate theme 3: Relationships**

Jack spoke several times about the manner in which he relates to his peers in Breakfast Club. These interactions were interpreted as meaningful to Jack in two ways; ‘Togetherness’, and the notion of ‘Interactive Bonding’.

*Togetherness*

As Jack’s first interview progressed, he was asked a question that explored his lived social experiences, and what is was about Breakfast Club that meant he was able to speak more:

*“…well you talk to people you don’t know, you play games with them, you laugh with them, you eat with them…it’s really good”* (Appendix 12, Transcript C, Lines 96 – 98)

Linguistic interpretations of the text focused on the idea of Jack being on the inside and ‘part’ of a greater whole; the repetition of ‘you’ and ‘with them’ gives an inference that he is happy to be included in a group. In addition, Jack highlights four key areas that have contributed to him ultimately feeling ‘really good’ about Breakfast Club – talking, playing, laughing and eating. Several iterations of the text brought about interpretations of Breakfast Club as a holistic, multi-sensory, experiential intervention that has helped Jack to communicate, interact, be comfortable showing emotion and sharing with others respectively.

*Interactive bonding*

During the mid-section of Jack’s first interview, he was asked questions aimed at tapping into his emotional experiences of Breakfast Club. When Breakfast Club first started, Jack explained that he would ‘sit down, eat and not even talk at all’ (Line 114 - 115):

*“Yeah but when we played games and that we used to talk to each other”* (Appendix 12, Transcript C, Lines 119 – 120)

Within the quotation, Jack tells us his concept of how Breakfast Club facilitates verbal communication by non-verbal interaction. Jack’s interpretation of this phenomenon lead to the researcher’s double hermeneutic notion that the very process of engaging in an activity eases any anxiety or pressure around feeling the need to communicate. Any resulting verbal exchange is therefore more relaxed and natural, making for more genuine foundations to a potential friendship.

**4.6.1.4 Super-ordinate theme 4: Special place**

Jack’s final super-ordinate theme centred around one particular emergent theme, occurring twice, but with a strong inference that Breakfast Club was somewhere unique and important, both for Jack himself and (through the lens of his own interpretations) also for his peers.

*Exclusivity*

Following on from questions around social aspects, Jack was then asked how he felt being in Breakfast Club with his peers:

*“Like, it’s like our own place where like, no one else would like, join in just spoil it, if someone else joined in we wouldn’t even talk”* (Appendix 12, Transcript C, Lines 133 – 135)

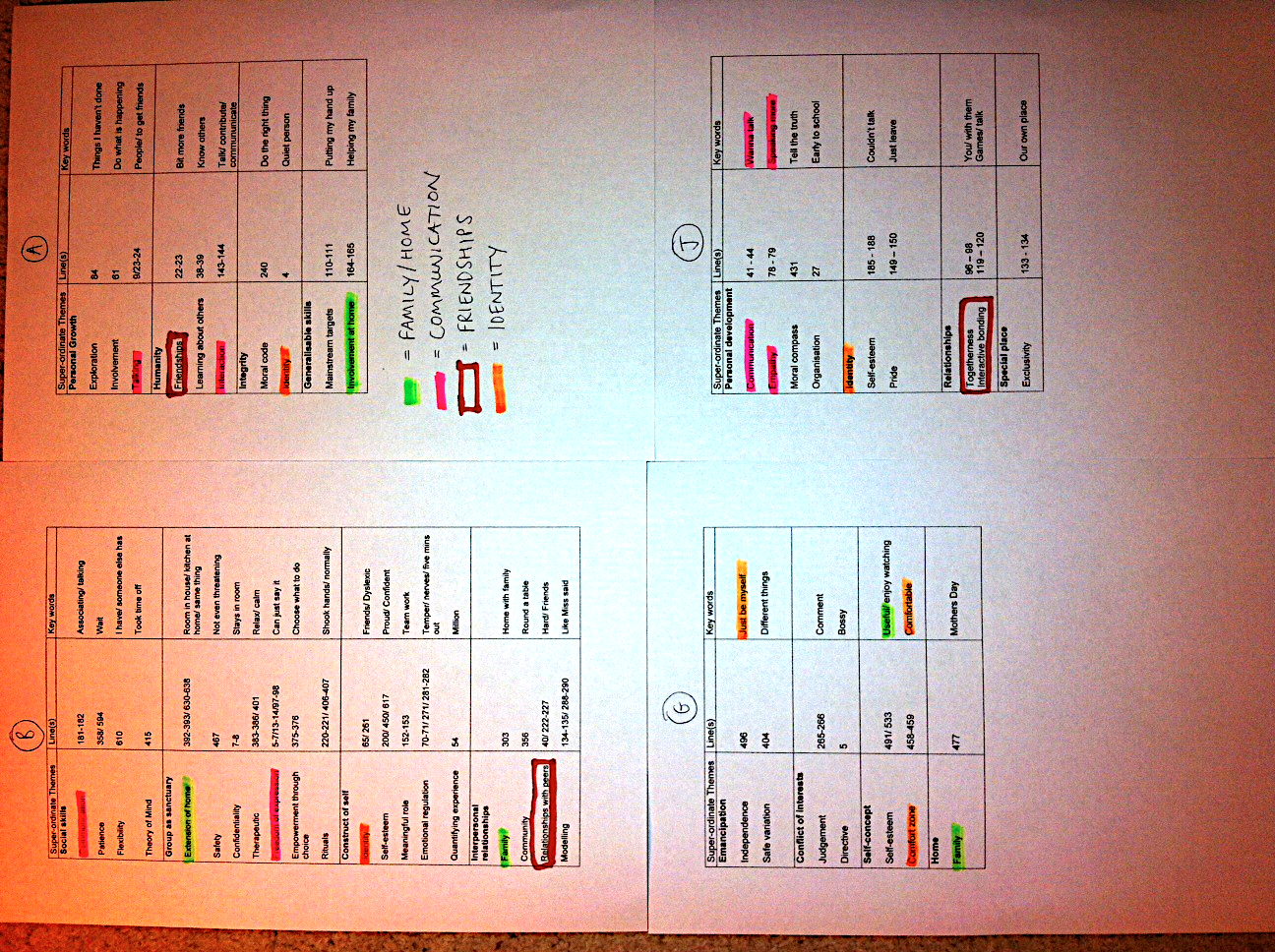
Two levels of interpretation were drawn from this final piece of phenomenological narrative; firstly that Jack feels Breakfast Club is a protected space (‘it’s like our own place’), which would tie in with the third principle of nurture; the classroom offers a safe base. The second point here is that Jack feels Breakfast Club is exclusive to the current cohort of members, as anyone else joining would ‘just spoil it’. Jack’s passionate desire to keep with the current status quo shows the cohesion Jack feels has been achieved within Breakfast Club, but may also be an indicator of Jack’s social inflexibility and a wider issue around the levels of emotional dependence created by regular, intimate groups.

**4.7 Group Themes**

The above text has taken us on an ideographic journey of analysis, case by case, looking particularly at both participant and researcher interpretations of the *lived experiences* of the Breakfast Club. Within these cases, the ‘phenomena’ (or quotations, drawn directly from transcripts) were grouped together as emergent themes, then as super-ordinate themes according to each case.

However, the final stage of analysis looks at patterns across cases. The principal of the hermeneutic cycle – moving from the individual to the shared – acted as a catalyst for using a similar visual spatial technique as the analysis of case subthemes. Tables of themes and subthemes for each case were placed side-by-side, compared and eventually colour-coded based on four generic themes; Home & Family (green), Communication (pink), Friendships (red) and Identity (in orange)

Figure 4.5: Cross-case analysis of super-ordinate themes



During the process of theme comparison, some participants represented unique idiosyncrasies (e.g. Gary’s theme of ‘Judgement’), yet other shared higher order qualities were recognised and came to the fore, superseding other generic themes. For example, although prevalent throughout, this ‘wide lens’ perspective of all case themes eventually lead to the theme of ‘Identity’ being succeeded by ‘Emotional Regulation’, as interpretations were seen as more potent and contained greater meaning *for* the participants and *to* the researcher.

As per the introduction to this section, group themes are clustered together in the table below and reinterpreted through a series of visual models in the following chapter, linking analysis with both the original three questions for research and previous/ contemporary literature.

Table 4.5: Master table of group themes

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group Themes** | **Phenomenological Evidence** | **Appendix** | **Lines** |
| ***Home***  Extension of house  Increased family involvement  Invitations to home  Reciprocity of care | **Bradley**: ‘It’s just like my house really, it’s just like some room in my house’  **Abdul**: ‘…it’s made me like, want to do more things at home and, yeah…and helping my family as well, doing things.’  **Jack**: ‘I told him to come to my house and then think it turned out to be my enemy, and he was my friend, now’  **Gary**: ‘Umm yeah breakfasts cos normally when it’s Mothers Day, well it’s self-explanatory’ | 10  12 A  12 B  12 C | 392 – 393  164 – 165  239 - 240  477 - 478 |
| ***Communication***  Freedom of speech  Modelling  Template for introductions  Deeper understanding | **Bradley**: ‘Like…like we can talk to each other, we don’t have to [stutters] keep something on our mind we can say it.’  **Abdul**: ‘I see other people talking and it’s makes me want to talk a bit more.’  **Jack**: ‘it makes you feel like you wanna talk to other people that you don’t know’  **Gary**: ‘Well it teaches you how to socialise really’ | 10  12 A  12 B  12 C | 97 – 99  8 – 9  42 - 43  24 |
| ***Friendships***  Social support  Talking to others  Holistic interaction  Social exclusion | **Bradley**: ‘…at the start of the school, like it was quite hard to kind of make friends, and then now I’ve made loads of friends like from Breakfast Club’  **Abdul**: ‘…at the start I didn’t have much friends and…I didn’t….talk much to get friends’  **Jack**: ‘you play games with them, you laugh with them, you eat with them…it’s really good’  **Gary**: ‘I was gonna say we socialise, but, not really cos the other people don’t really like me much’ | 10  12 A  12 B  12 C | 39 – 42  23 – 24  96 - 98  127 - 128 |
| ***Emotional Wellbeing***  Calm stability  Familiarity  Protection  Comfort | **Bradley**: ‘Yeah you get relaxed and stuff, you relax and chill out you have a little chat then you eat’  **Abdul**: ‘I think it’s because I just, like know the people and I’m comfortable talking’  **Jack**: ‘ it’s like our own place where like, no one else would like, join in just spoil it’  **Gary**: ‘I dunno I just like cooking food cos it makes me feel comfortable’ | 10  12 A  12 B  12 C | 401 - 402  12 – 13  133 – 134  459 |

**4.8 Chapter Summary**

This chapter has presented IPA analysis and subsequent emergent and super-ordinate themes for each of the four participants. These themes were collated, compared across cases and four overarching group themes were coined. The final Discussion chapter sees these themes discussed in relation to research questions, evaluates limitations, ethical issues and proposes implications for EPs and future research.

**Chapter 5 - Discussion**

“I come from a great family. I've seen family life and I know how wonderful, how nurturing, and how valuable it can be.”  
 Sidney Poitier, 2009

**5.1 Chapter Overview**

This chapter initially discusses findings from the previous research analysis chapter in relation to the three original research questions, whilst concurrently linking questions back to previous research. Implications of the research within the relevant research area are then discussed, together with implications for Educational Psychology practice. Furthermore, ethical considerations and limitations of research are discussed. Finally, reflections regarding the role and position of the researcher throughout this study are considered and the researchers own positioning within the context of research is discussed.

**5.2 Discussion of Analysis**

The aim of this research was to explore the lived experiences of young people within a secondary nurture group. Following a review of literature and guided by the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (DfE, 2001) in pinpointing social, emotional and behavioural factors as key to pupil wellbeing, three main research questions were developed:

* RQ1: How do young people experience the social aspects of a secondary school nurture group?
* RQ2: How do young people experience the emotional aspects of a secondary school nurture group?
* RQ3: How do young people experience the behavioural aspects of a secondary school nurture group?

The main points of analysis are now discussed in relation to the research questions and in the context of previous research and theoretical frameworks.

**5.2.1 RQ1: How do young people experience the social aspects of a secondary school nurture group?**

Figure 5.1: Group themes 1 & 2: Friendships & Communication

The above models provide visual representations of the first and second group themes – Friendships and Communication – established during concluding sections of the Analysis chapter, complete with subthemes encircling the central theme. The overarching purpose of these models here is to represent two distinctively social aspects of a secondary nurture group from the perspective of young people. In addition they serve to emphasise the insight young people had into their experiences and their ability to express what worked for them, what helped, and why. These two themes are now discussed individually in relation to their contributory elements and related research.

**5.2.1.1 Friendships**

Throughout interview transcripts, researcher interpretations found that participants placed a palpable value around friendships, or more specifically the manner in which Breakfast Club has supported their ability to make friends. Participants spoke of being able to ‘talk more’ to peers how Breakfast Club had been the catalyst for ‘loads more friends’, and somewhere they can experience ‘playing, laughting and eating’; a more holistic process of peer interaction. These examples illustrate how secondary nurture interventions can be a catalyst for building positive relationships; the facilitation of secure, healthy relationships with both peers and adults is a primary aim of nurture group interventions, underpinned by attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969) and Social Learning Theory (Vygotsky, 1978), suggesting theoretical transferability from primary to secondary nurture settings.

As highlighted during the literature review, there are currently very few studies in existence that include the qualitative views of young people themselves towards the perceived benefits or constraints of nurture groups. However, findings are concurrent with research by Bishop & Swain (2000), who elicited the views of children involved in a primary nurture group setting and heard particular social benefits around the support they received, the activities they engaged in and respite from being in a mainstream classroom. The same research goes on to suggest that pupils with social and emotional difficulties have issues that are being ‘contained’ as opposed to being ‘responded to in a more holistic approach’, which appears to chime with the ‘holistic interaction’ subtheme spoken of by young people in this research.

**5.2.1.2 Communication**

In addition to friendships, communication stood out as a theme consistent throughout young people’s recollections of lived Breakfast Club experiences. The club provided the platform for young people to ‘just say’ things, as opposed to the restrictive nature of mainstream class where young people felt they were frequently in ‘big trouble’ for speaking. The concept of modelling communication (‘I see others talk and that makes me want to talk more too’, Appendix 12, Transcript A, Lines 8-9) appears to support research by Sanders (2007) who felt nurture groups should model positive interactions through sharing, discussing, cooperating and being consistent. Despite the caveat that Sanders’ research focused on adult modelling within a ‘classic’ primary nurture group setting, implications suggest peer modelling may be conducive to promoting positive socio-emotional outcomes for young people in secondary nurture settings.

In addition, it could be argued that young people’s self-perceived benefits in areas of friendships and communication correlates with previous research suggesting nurture group participation promotes and develops young people’s self-awareness and social skills (Cooper & Whitebread 2007), such as active listening (Lyndon 1992) and ability to initiate conversations with peers (Cooper & Tiknaz 2005). Whilst these research findings hold some limiting factors towards their application in a secondary nurture context – for example in the case of Cooper and Whitebread, only three secondary schools were included in their sample of 34 schools – evidence towards the social benefits of secondary nurture groups seems promising.

**5.2.1.3 Social ‘Exclusion’**

The inductive nature of IPA analysis meant that research captured and explored a wide range of meanings assigned to individual experiences, including meanings that were less positive. One participant (Gary) expressed negative views towards his social experiences of Breakfast Club, in that other members ‘didn’t really like him’ (Appendix 12, Transcript C, Line 128) and that he felt the club could sometimes be ‘annoying and bossy’ (Appendix 12, Transcript C, Line 7). Although Gary expressed a natural preference for autonomy (‘I don’t really like teamwork much I like working independently’ Appendix 12, Transcript C, Lines 37-38), interpretation positioned him as slightly excluded from the group of four participants.

It could therefore be argued that nurture group members like Gary have a need for more individualised social support, which correlates with previous research exploring the supportive conditions necessary for nurture group success within secondary settings. Kourmoulaki (2013) argued that conditions such as caring relationships between teachers and young people and positive peer relations appeared more difficult to achieve and maintain in secondary nurture contexts, due to factors that included large secondary mainstream class sizes and the lack of teachers’ time for individual attention due to the focus on teaching the curriculum. Implications that occur from this triangulation of evidence from young people, researcher interpretation and previous research would suggest that certain young people within secondary nurture groups may require more frequent, personalised monitoring from nurture group staff (for example, termly reviews and updates of The Boxall Profile for Young People) to ensure they feel appropriately integrated and that their social needs are met.

**5.2.2 RQ2: How do young people experience the emotional aspects of a secondary school nurture group?**

Figure 5.2: Group theme 3 – ‘Emotional regulation’

The model above is a third visual representation, in this case depicting how young people experienced emotional aspects of Breakfast Club. Four key subthemes drawn from each of the four participants – calm stability, familiarity, protection and comfort – all intersect with the main group theme of ‘Emotional Regularity’, offering an opportunity to explore how the second research question was answered.

**5.2.2.1 Emotional regulation**

Having the opportunity to play a central role in the regular process of cooking created meaning for one participant, as this type of active involvement made him ‘feel comfortable’. A second young person spoke of familiarity and how knowing the individuals in Breakfast Club in turn made him feel comfortable in communicating with others. These findings are consistent with recent research by Griffiths et al (2014) – the first piece of published nurture research to focus solely on the voice of the child – from which an overarching theme of ‘the environment’ was generated. This theme illustrated children’s positive regard towards the sharing of food and the comfortable and familiar surroundings within a KS2 nurture group setting. It was suggested these findings were attributed to the theoretical position of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow, 1948), which is recognised as underpinning the ethos of nurture groups (Cooper & Whitebread, 2007). Therefore it could also be proposed that theoretical elements of the ‘classic’ primary nurture group model can also be applicable in secondary settings.

**5.2.2.2 Protection & Calm stability**

The subthemes of ‘protection’ and ‘calm stability’ point to the nurture group as a place of safety and an emotional sanctuary. Research by Kourmoulaki (2013) supports this concept from a secondary perspective; two Scottish secondary nurture groups helped foster feelings of trust and acceptance which enabled young people to understanding their own difficulties and those of others. Concurrent with previous literature, research also suggested the two nurture groups supported young people to be more confident in social situations and with new people, more expressive of their needs and wishes, calmer and more focused in class (Cooper and Tiknaz, 2005; Cooper and Whitebread, 2007).

Feelings of emotional stability reported by young people in current research may in part be the consequence of adaptations made to the nurture group structure to fit with their needs. Cooper, Arnold and Boyd (2001) note that an emphasis on early experiences and activities aimed at early development are clearly not appropriate for young people within secondary settings. Further research suggests that young people in secondary schools require age appropriate strategies for meeting their social, emotional and psychological development needs (Cooke et al, 2008).

**5.2.2.3 Dual nurture room and staff**

As of November 2013, Breakfast Club ran twice weekly throughout the first year of secondary school for all young people involved, providing opportunities to be responsible for cooking (Thursday mornings) and creative and/or interactive activities (Friday mornings) in two different rooms. This ‘part-time’ structure is a significant adaptation from the ‘classic’ nurture group model seen in primary settings, yet appeared to a) fit well within the complexity of mainstream timetabling and b) provide a consistent ‘safe base’ for young people to rely upon for emotional support. It could also be argued that the ‘dual nurture room’ model goes against the principles of nurture, however, in practice this flexibility is potentially beneficial in helping nurture permeate throughout the school as a whole (Colley, 2009).

Nurture group staff having a comprehensive understanding of young people can play an important role in helping a young person to self-regulate their emotions, through techniques such as guidance, modelling and encouragement. Indeed, one young person cited coping strategies suggested to him by a nurture group assistant for use when he becomes angry or distressed. Research by Cooper and Tiknaz (2007) investigated the views of young people in KS3 nurture groups, and found key areas of support reported to be around anger management and developing coping strategies. Therefore it could be suggested that the role of staff is crucial in understanding the difficulties of a young person, but also providing a role model from which they can base their skills of regulation.

**5.2.2.4 Emotion and adolescence**

The background information provided by school based staff at the outset of the study revealed how the students’ life experiences are also significant in their variety, depth and difficulty. Colley (2009) acknowledges that, although attachment difficulties may be central to how young people cope with changes and difficulties that occur during adolescence, life experiences themselves can be more complex than those experienced by children in primary settings and this should be understood through the support given by a nurture group. As explored during the earlier research question around social experiences, one participant was selected for inclusion within the nurture group due to difficulties in establishing friendships, yet this issue appeared to be carried over and magnified within the intimacy of a nurture group. This raises implications around participant cohesion for secondary nurture groups; given the wider pool of potential group members, nurture group teachers may be challenged to consider the emotional compatibility of nurture group members before selection, and may therefore find the neutrality and objectivity of EP involvement helpful during selection (see 5.7 Implications for Educational Psychology).

**5.2.2.5 Emotional support during transition**

Consistent with previous research, interpretations of Breakfast Club participants gave weight to secondary nurture groups as an intervention to support primary to secondary transition. West, Sweeting and Young (2010) found that nurture groups played an important role in alleviating young people’s transition anxieties at the beginning of secondary school, which coincides with research by Kourmoulaki (2013) who found that NGs in a secondary setting facilitated a smooth transition from primary to secondary school, supported development of social skills and prepared young people physically and emotionally for learning (Furness, 2014).

Several young people spoke of being nervous and shy before Breakfast Club began, with the club providing a calm platform from which they could hone their skills of emotional regulation for use in the busy mainstream environment. This notion of transitional support links back to the sixth principle of nurture as outlined earlier, ‘The importance of transition in children’s lives’ (Lucus et al, 2006) and provides substance for the transference of these principles to secondary settings. Implications here are not only for the adaptation of nurture groups as early intervention strategies within secondary settings, but this also supports the view that early adolescence is not too late to provide effective intervention to meet the emotional and learning needs of vulnerable pupils (Schore, 2005; Cooke, Yeomans and Parkes, 2008; Furness, 2014).

**5.2.3 RQ3: How do young people experience the behavioural aspects of a secondary school nurture group?**

The four research participants experienced behavioural aspects of Breakfast Club in a variety of ways, some of which were interpreted as having intrinsic links back to home life. The final group/ subtheme model (see Figure 5.3 overleaf) illustrates ‘home’ as a generic theme across the four cases, with several behavioural subthemes around the perimeter, all of which will be discussed in relation to the research question and within a wider context of research.

Figure 5.3: Group theme 4 – ‘Home’

**5.2.3.1 Extension of house**

With regard to the first subtheme ‘Extension of house’, Bradley made two separate references to Breakfast Club rooms as metaphorical extensions to his own home, stating that home and Breakfast Club rooms were ‘basically the same thing’ (Appendix 10, Line 638) whilst simultaneously speaking of how Breakfast Club regulates his emotions. Not only does this resonate with the notion of secondary nurture settings as a safe base, but also that Bradley views staff and pupils from Breakfast Club as substitutes for his own family, which he describes as having a cathartic impact on his resulting behaviour: ‘We just chill out’ (Appendix 10, Line 401)

Research from Cooke, Yeoman and Parkes (2008) investigates the shift in psychological thinking during adolescence, defining the process of change as ‘a social construction attuned to the development of a new psycho-social

identity’. During the formation of this new identity, the young person is required to turn away from their early attachment figures and towards a peer group, which provides a sense of belonging initially lost on separation from parents. In Bradley’s case, it could be suggested that Breakfast Club provided him with this sense of belonging, which felt to him as if concept of ‘home’ had been extracted and placed within his educational setting.

**5.2.3.2 Increased family involvement**

A key piece of phenomenological evidence relating to the second behavioural subtheme occurred when Abdul spoke of his wish to ‘help out and do more things’ (Appendix 12, Transcript A, Line 164) with his family. Abdul’s difficult family circumstances (the absence of his father and life-threatening illness of his mother) provide rationale as to why Abdul may have experienced poor attachment, which could be alleviated by the provision of a secure base and a nurturing environment (Cooke et al, 2008). Both the circumstances of his mother and input from Breakfast Club appear to have contributed to Abdul’s wish to develop a greater sense of active care towards his family.

Drawing on theories of attachment and socio-emotional competence, Chase-Lansdale & Brookes-Gunn (1995) link notions of nurture and attachment to caring behaviour, identifying caring with characteristics such as empathy and a sense of responsibility. It could be argued that these characteristics are developmentally sophisticated and therefore somewhat beyond the realms of young people with social, emotional and/ or behavioural issues. Nevertheless, in this case evidence suggests that a) early attachment difficulties can have an effect on the psychological wellbeing of young people in secondary schools and b) nurture groups can support these same young people to develop characteristics linked to behaviours that result in positive outcomes.

**5.2.3.3 Reciprocity of care**

A further subtheme emerging from the generic group theme of ‘Home’, entitled ‘Reciprocity of care’, links to behavioural experience through a gesture that was interpreted to symbolise the ‘giving back’ of care previously received at home. The preparation, cooking and presentation of food serve as regular, integral nuances of the functioning ‘whole’ that Breakfast Club represents. Gary spoke of how he had taken these nuanced skills and used them to prepare food for his mother on Mother’s Day, also stating that his mother ‘likes it when he is helpful’ (Appendix 12, Transcript C, Line 81). A plethora of research exists that serves to support parental links to nurture groups. Two examples come from Colley (2009), who notes that relationships with parents can be significantly enhanced through the provision and support offered by secondary nurture groups, with parents often valuing the support they received from nurture group staff (Garner & Thomas, 2011). Implications of Gary’s gesture to his mother were that, though cooking, Breakfast Club has indirectly influenced the dyadic nature of his relationship with his mother and therefore his behaviour towards her. However, despite recent published evidence around parental involvement in primary nurture groups (Kirkbride, 2014), there appears to be little research into the specific effects of nurture groups on parent/ child relationships.

**5.2.4 Summary of research question analysis**

Research questions have been explicitly revisited and answered using joint group and subtheme models drawn directly from interpretations of young people’s lived experiences. Further points of discussion will look touch upon the type of nurture group ‘Breakfast Club’ could be described as, the unique aspect of the dual interview approach, ethical issues, implications and reflections.

**5.3 Breakfast Club: A Nurture Group Variant?**

As stated previously (see 5.2.2.3), Breakfast Club ran on Thursday and Friday mornings every week of term from November 2013 to the time of interviews (July 2014). Sessions ran for the length of morning ‘form time’ (45 minutes) and provided opportunities for social, emotional and behavioural development through combined activities, creative tasks, individualised support and adult modelling. However, this secondary nurture model differs from the ‘classic’ nurture group model established by Marjorie Boxall (Bennathan & Boxall, 2000), which can be described as a short-term intervention within mainstream schools, primarily aimed at replacing missed early years experiences for primary age children (Garner & Thomas, 2011). Current research explores where Breakfast Club fits in terms of a spectrum of classic, part-time or aberrant nurture groups outlined below:

1. Classic ‘Boxall’ Nurture Groups, which accord in all

respects with the model established by Marjorie Boxall,

(Bennathan & Boxall, 2000);

1. Variants on the classic model which differ in structure

and/or organisational features from the Boxall

groups, but which clearly adhere to the core principles

of the classic approach;

1. Groups that bear the name ‘Nurture Group’, or are

claimed to be variants on the Nurture Group concept,

but that do not conform to Boxall principles;

1. Aberrant groups that bear the name ‘Nurture Group’ or are

claimed to be variants on the Nurture Group concept,

but that contravene, undermine or distort the key

defining principles of the classic Nurture Group.

(Adapted from Garner & Thomas 2011; Cooper et al, 2011)

Key differences were seen firstly from the environment; Breakfast Club used two rooms – a food tech area for cooking on a Thursday morning and a smaller, more intimate round table room for creative activities on a Friday morning. A classic nurture group room replicates the home environment with a comfortable seating area, a kitchen facility and working area to address formal curriculum demands (Colley, 2009). The Breakfast Club model splits the classic nurture provision across two rooms, yet despite this physical divide, young people held Breakfast Club in high regard, describing it as ‘comfortable’ and ‘just like my house’. The consistency of two staff (trained teacher and assistant) between both rooms may also have helped to facilitate these positive experiences for young people. Research suggests the six principles of nurture and key features of nurture, such as double staffing, transfer easily into the secondary context, with research also supporting the suggestion that current secondary practice is questioning whether a dedicated nurture room is in fact required (Colley, 2009).

The interpreted experiences of young people formed the focus of this research, therefore one element of nurture support - consistent with the classic nurture model but considered a distraction from the essence of this study – was the use of the Boxall Profile for Young People (Bennathan, Boxall & Colley, 2010). Staff reported to update profiles on a termly basis, having initially selected young people for the group based on low diagnostic and developmental scores and comparing profiles against these baselines to track progress.

As seen from the description of theoretical parameters and comparable evidence from current research, Breakfast Club appears to fit with the second description of ‘variants on the classic nurture model, but which clearly adhere to core principles of nurture’ through elements that include consistent staffing, room provision and developmental monitoring in line with mainstream reintegration.

**5.4 Dual interview approach**

As illustrated during the methodology chapter, an exploratory element of the current research that dovetailed well with IPA as a methodological approach was the dual interview approach for each young participant; firstly an interview in a one-to-one situation within a quieter but familiar room, close to the nurture teachers office, but secondly (and currently unique to nurture research) a second ‘in-situ’ interview within a nurture room, with participants talking the interviewer through areas of interest and actively engaging with their nurture room environment. The purpose of this second interview was not only an opportunity to gain richer qualitative data though the unstructured, child-led nature of the interviews, but also to get as close as possible to the ‘lived experiences’ of the young person. By immersing both participant and interviewer within the phenomenon to be explored, it was hoped this would tap into the ideographic – what the experience for *that* person was like and what sense *that* particular person was making of what was happening to them (Smith et al, 2009).

In practice, second interviews tended to be slightly shorter than initial face-to-face interviews, yet frequently produced unexpectedly rich and meaningful excepts of data, for example Gary’s final, powerful comment during the second interview that he ‘enjoyed watching people eat the food they made’ (Appendix 12, Transcript C, Line 533). It could be argued that data during any second interview can be richer due to familiarity between interviewer and participant. However, this distinctive approach to capturing the views of young people correlates with recent research from Griffiths et al (2014) exploring children’s constructions of primary nurture group experiences. Through the use of focus groups, the voices of children resonated and were given a platform through which they could express their views, in their own space and in their own words. This research aims to achieve a similar goal in eliciting the voice of the young (Gersch, 1994) and empowering a particularly vulnerable group of young people.

**5.5 The non-verbal**

One final interview area for consideration is the non-verbal. Due to the nature of IPA, analysis of research was based around firstly verbal and secondly textual interpretations of experience. However, throughout each interview young people gave frequent non-verbal methods of communication through body language, eye contact, movements and facial expressions. For example, Bradley had a stutter, which appeared to become more prominent when the subject matter discussed was emotive. Research by Bani (2011) explored the importance of the non-verbal in nurture groups and discovered that nearly half (41%) of children responded to non-verbal praise by continuing with appropriate behaviours. Despite the lower age range for children involved in this research (five to seven years), this study may still have implications for further research around non-verbal communication in young people whose social and emotional development may be delayed or who may have missed early attachment experiences.

**5.6 Limitations and ethical issues**

**5.6.1 Power imbalance**

The process of interview is seen as a formalised method of qualitative data collection. However, the rapport and dynamic between interviewer and participant can be the discerning factor as to whether data collected is rich or superficial. From a humanistic (and some would argue, a social constructionist) perspective, Rogers (1951) practised an approach of ‘unconditional positive regard’ to his ‘interviewees’ (termed as ‘clients’) during therapy, defined as accepting a person without negative judgement of a person’s basic worth. Whilst the researcher adopted this stance throughout each interview, a basic and deductive power imbalance existed during research. This imbalance was influenced by factors that included:

* Age difference – researcher age of 32 compared to 11 of participants
* Information – researcher access to information regarding participant backgrounds, developmental profiles and educational history
* Familiarity – following the pilot visit, interviews were second and third meetings respectively between researcher and participants
* Role – despite the purpose and aims of research being made clear, young people may have been wary of the role of the researcher…this is fine
* Systemic context – participants may have felt limited by the educational setting in which interviews took place

However, despite the existence of these inequalities, attempts were made to mediate their influence. For example, in an attempt to alleviate pressure and cultivate a relaxed atmosphere of parity and respect, young people were praised, reassured and thanked for their time throughout interviews. The researcher was also conscious of the importance of sharing information with participants, for example regarding storage, protection and the confidentiality of all recorded data. Furthermore, the ethos of research as a whole was to place the voice of young people at the epicentre of study, empowering young people to become active participants in decisions surrounding their education (Griffiths et al, 2014). Hence through its very purpose and nature, research aimed to redress the imbalance of power between adults and young people.

**5.6.2 Demand characteristics**

Leading on from an imbalance of power, it is important to acknowledge the high level of demand characteristics arising from the interview context. Weber and Cooke (1972) describe demand characteristics involving the participant taking on a role in the experiment (or in this case, interview). These include:

* The *good-participant role* in which the participant attempts to discern the experimenter's hypotheses and to confirm them.The participant does not want to “ruin” the experiment.
* The *negative-participant role* in which the participant attempts to discern the experimenter's hypotheses, but only in order to destroy the credibility of the study.
* The *faithful-participant role* in which the participant follows the instructions given by the experimenter to the letter.
* The *apprehensive-participant role* in which the participant is so concerned about how the experimenter might evaluate the responses that the participant behaves in a socially desirable way.

In an attempt to mediate the necessity for participants to feel they were required to assume any of the above roles, participants were reminded how their views would be fully anonymised, that they had the right not to answer any question and were able to withdraw at any time. Interviews were conducted confidentially away from the presence of school staff or peers, in a room familiar to participants with unrestricted access should they have wished to leave.

From one of the few research studies to feature the views of children involved in nurture groups, Cooper et al (2001) found a number of nurture group areas were identified as beneficial, whilst at the same time acknowledging a high level of demand characteristics from individual interviews conducted to obtain these views. Griffiths et al (2014) argue that the interactive and participatory nature of data collection methods such as focus groups have the potential to eliminate demand characteristics that can arise between adult and child in an individual interview context (Kennedy, Kools & Kruger, 2001). In an attempt to reduce demand characteristic influence, the pilot visit conducted prior to research introduced young people to the researcher, allowing the researcher to eat with young people in a Breakfast Club session and begin building rapport that would potentially allow for richer data during interviews. In addition, the ideographic, inductive nature of IPA research meant that interviews were perceived as the optimal vehicle to explore individual lived experiences.

**5.6.3 Researcher as active co-participant**

Developing the notions of power imbalance and demand characteristics further, these factors may also have influenced the length of young people’s responses to individual questions. Often responses were short, thus the importance for the researcher to play the role of *active* listener, or co-participant (Smith et al, 2009) was sharpened during interactions. The terse nature of some responses lead to what could be considered a key adaptation when planning future research into secondary nurture provision; the need for frequent interview prompts.

Traditionally, IPA alludes to questions that expand upon a particular thought or feeling noticed during interview dialogue (e.g. ‘how did that make you feel’ or ‘can you tell me more about that?’) However, a majority of these probing questions were used during the start of interviews, therefore it became necessary to use alternative methods of extracting inductive data and allowing young people to feel comfortable about expanding on a point of interest (e.g. reflecting responses back to participants, allowing them to reprocess and often add to their original interpretation). However, through both verbal and non-verbal methods of participant communication, the researcher was acutely aware of limitations when using of probing questions with a sample of emotionally vulnerable young people. At points the researcher considered it unethical to pursue a point if, for example, the young person has been asked to elaborate but either changed the subject or found it difficult to articulate due to the potentially emotive nature of the topic.

Given the emphasis IPA affords towards the participant as the ‘experiential expert’ on the topic of study, this allowed the researcher to deviate from the main structure of the interview and follow specific concerns of young people. For example, when Gary explained how he cooked for his mother on Mother’s Day, asking him how he felt about this experience, it elicited the response that it made him feel ‘better’ and ‘useful’, two powerful pieces of experiential data that contributed to both the group theme of ‘Home’ and towards answering the third research question exploring the behavioural aspects of Breakfast Club.

**5.6.4 Language**

The fourth principle of nurture positions language as a ‘vital means of communication’ (Lucas et al, 2006). Furthering this from a theoretical standpoint, Vygotsky (1978) emphasised the role language plays in a child’s development of internal thought and the provision of play opportunities; both key elements of the Boxall model of nurture groups (Garner & Thomas, 2011). However, from school-based learning profiles obtained through the school SENCo, three out of the four participants included in the study had difficulties with language and communication. Many children with SEBD display such difficulties, so being aware of this prior to research allowed the researcher to build in additional time for rapport, simplify language and ensure young people felt as comfortable as possible when giving their views. Essentially, difficulties with language and communication should *not* be a preventative factor when asking children or young people to participate in research.

However, language did have the potential to influence young people’s ability to articulate and express themselves in a manner that befits their actual lived experiences. However, the nature of IPA research is to explore a phenomenon via a deep interpretive analysis of *words.* Therefore in an attempt to reduce the potential for the complexity of language having a stifling impact on participant responses, interview questions were simplified and language adapted to ensure the essence of their relationship with original research questions remained, whilst simultaneously being understood and linked to participant experience.

Recent research offers an alternative method when capturing children’s nurture group experiences, including ice breaker activities, paired discussions and written communication for quieter group members to share their experiences (Griffiths et al, 2014). However, given the recent strides in technological development and IT literacy in young people, one suggested method of data collection that may be viable for future research into secondary nurture interventions is via a secure online chat forum or social media based feedback streams. Provided these methods were made fundamentally secure and ethically sound in relation to anonymity, confidentiality and data storage, online feedback has the potential to eradicate any power imbalance, demand characteristics or anxiety around talking in the presence of those who may not be familiar to young people or adolescents. In addition to being a more subtle form of feedback, this method of collating data also has the potential to be ‘real time’ (i.e. immediately after nurture group sessions) through PC, iPad or smart phone app, giving data collection a sense of credibility amongst young people and enabling researchers to get closer to the meaning of individual nurture experiences for young people.

**5.6.5 Homogeneity, gender and ethnicity**

IPA requires a participant sample to be a) purposeful and b) homogenous within the population of study. Participants were contacted via referral from a ‘gatekeeper’ (SENCo), and were selected on the basis that they could provide access to their particular perspectives of secondary nurture as a phenomena of study (Smith et al, 2009). In this case, homogeneity was achieved with relative ease; all young people selected for Breakfast Club were male, in year seven at secondary school, all were aged 11 at time of interviews and all had attended the nurture group for at least six months. Therefore the four participants were jointly selected by researcher and SENCo so as to provide an understanding of both the psychological variability of participants (through convergent and divergent themes) but also to obtain subjective interpretations of the phenomenon from different perspectives.

Despite purposeful, homogenous sampling, gender was pre-determined in that all members of Breakfast Club were male. The rationale for this may be down to institutionalised perceptions of boys in secondary settings. It is well established that a key risk factor for exclusion from school is being male (Hawkins, 2011). The DCSF report from 2007/8 noted that the ‘permanent exclusion rate for boys was 3.5 times higher than that for girls and that ‘boys represented 78 per cent of the total number of exclusions each year’ (DCSF 2009). Moreover, evidence is beginning to appear that suggests nurturing interventions are particularly beneficial for boys. Renwick & Spalding (2002) suggest the effectiveness of a therapeutic intervention as slightly increased in boys over girls. However, critique of research exists through its lack of association to the six principles of nurture or core Boxall model protocol. Therefore a suggestion for further research could be proposed around the gender-specific effects of secondary nurture groups.

Participants for research were selected based on criteria of equality that did not discriminate against aspects of ethnicity. However, the small range of ethnic backgrounds that happened to be included after purposeful sampling (White British, Asian British and Indian) raises the notion of nurture within differing cultural contexts; for example, do external socio-political factors such as race or ethnicity have a bearing on selection for secondary nurture group support. Skiba, Michael, Nardo and Peterson (2002) note that cultural discontinuity may create a cycle of miscommunication and confrontation for students, with increasing numbers of Asian pupils (Pakistani boys in particular) being permanently excluded from schools (Wright, Weekes & McGlaughlin, 2000). It should be noted that is clearly relative to the demographic of a research population, yet this area could also form the basis of further research into secondary nurture provision relative to cultural values, beliefs and systems at home.

Finally, it is pertinent to mention a caveat regarding small sample size and homogeneity. Although a purposeful sample size of four fits well within the methodological framework of IPA, this understandably places a limit on the generalisability of findings. Circumstances were such that all research participants were male. Slightly larger sample sizes, perhaps including samples of mixed gender may give an indication as to themes of experience and meaning that run consistently across genders and those that may be gender specific.

**5.7 Implications for Educational Psychology**

The findings of this research have some potentially significant implications for Educational Psychologists (EPs). On a local level, one key purpose of research was to bring attention to the lack of secondary nurture groups within the local authority of study, and to alert EPs to the benefits of such interventions as measures of transitional support from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 settings. Furthermore, research may also support EPs in conversations around the implementation of secondary nurture groups as a provision to include children or young people with SEBD within mainstream environments – a topic particularly relevant on both a local and national level.

Furthermore, research could provide the catalyst for EP involvement and support during the creation, running and assessment of secondary nurture groups. Research suggests school staff are skilled in providing informal support to colleagues (Furness, 2014), yet EPs may also be able to offer a formal style staff supervision, for example, to ensure the six principles of nurture remain actively relevant and practised as part of daily activities. EP training sessions may also allow staff to develop their own practise and expertise, empowering staff to develop their own methods of formalised support.

Other potential roles for EPs within secondary nurture groups are through identification and reintegration. EPs could work with SENCo’s and other schools staff and assist in helping to identify suitable young people for inclusion within nurture group settings, using assessment tools such as resiliency scales to track progress and support developmental and diagnostic profiles from the Boxall Profile for Young People. This form of referral could exist through direct work with a school during planning meetings or individual case-work visits, and joint working could ensure explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria are drawn up for NG selection. This in turn should prevent children with significant social communication difficulties (e.g. Autistic Spectrum Disorder) being included within NGs - as an intervention that places emphasis and demands on social integration and communication – and ensure inclusion of young people with SEBD/ SEMH related difficulties.

Furthermore, research highlights the need to ensure NG participants are compatible and can facilitate positive group dynamics. The very nature of NG inclusion may mean some NG pupils may find this form of purposeful social integration difficult, yet it is these pupils that serve to gain the most from NGs as supportive models of social and emotional regulation, with NG principles underpinning positive short and long term outcomes for the group as a whole.

A core principle of nurture groups is to help reintegrate young people back into mainstream classes. Though young people spoke of both mainstream and nurture environments, no explicit data was captured around how reintegration works. Therefore through training, EP involvement could highlight and apply areas of knowledge and transition when supporting transfers to mainstream.

On a broader level, EPs have the capability to work systemically with secondary schools on a number of levels, helping to embed the principles of nurture on a whole school level. This could involve direct work with a senior management team, contributions to policy or guidance documents, or the circulation of practice-based evidence to support the ethos of nurture group support. EPs have a unique insight into research into good practise of nurture groups on a national level and therefore have a responsibility to disseminate this information and advocate for the growth of research within schools.

Finally, EPs have the capacity to deliver localised, bespoke training to fit with appropriate gaps in school timetables (e.g. twilight or INSET sessions). A 2013 survey of 844 education staff by the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL, 2013) highlighted a deficit in training to support students with mental health problems - only a fifth (21%) of teachers get regular training which they rate as good or adequate, and nearly 39% said they did not get any relevant training in their initial teacher training (Rae, 2015). Pertinent implications therefore exist around EPs being well placed to train school staff in areas that support SEBD and the potential implementation of NGs, for example around emotional literacy skills, solution focused brief therapy or mindfulness in the classroom.

**5.8 Implications for research**

On a wider level, this research aimed to follow the lead of Griffiths et al (2014) and build on research suggestions from Garner & Thomas (2011) in providing a valuable vehicle for eliciting the voice of the young (Gersch, 1994). It is hoped that research positioning young people as key stakeholders will lead to the development of further research adopting similar methodological approaches, empowering children and young people to become active co-contributors to evidence-based research. Moreover, this form of research holds particular relevance in the current political and legislative climate, given recent changes to the SEN Code of Practice (DfE, 2014) placing the child and family at the centre of Education, Health and Care plans. Furthermore, these plans have been extended to cover individuals into young adulthood (age 25), therefore adding further weight to the argument for research into secondary and perhaps even college based nurture group provisions.

By evidencing the lived experiences of secondary nurture for young people verbatim, research has the potential to raise the profile of secondary nurture groups across the county and, if evidence of positive impact is continued, this has the potential to continue to a national level. With nurture becoming part of a school ethos, it is conceivable that similar approaches to research can change the way SEBD is understood within schools. During the process of conducting research, government legislation altered the terminology of this broadly termed area of SEN from SEBD to SEMH (Social, Emotional and Mental Health), having implications for secondary nurture groups to consider the mental health and wellbeing of young people in more depth and with greater understanding.

Emotional regulation was identified as a key aspect experienced by young people in this research. This may have implications for schools where one or several young people may be on the brink of exclusion. Secondary nurture groups provide an alternative to managing emotional needs and behaviours within mainstream classes or SEN departments, and can be discussed with schools (and within research) as having a positive impact on exclusions rates, highlighting statistics where young people at risk of exclusion have succeeded within a secondary nurture environment and reintegrated back into mainstream.

In an attempt to raise the profile of secondary nurture groups further, this research will be presented to a number of different groups relating to education, psychology, academia and schools. On a local level, research will be presented back to staff, parents and young people involved in Breakfast Club. On a county-wide level, the researcher will conduct a workshop giving all local EPs within the LA in which the study was conducted the chance to understand the purpose, aims and outcomes of research, as well as giving the researcher an opportunity to promote further areas of research. Specific reference will be made to aspects of NGs that young people value (e.g. the four key themes – friendships, communication, emotional regulation and home) to ensure these aspects are considered by both EPs and SENCos when setting up secondary nurture provisions.

On a national level, research will be presented at a Nurture Group Network conference on secondary nurture, and will be published in the International Journal of Nurture and Education.

**5.9 Reflexivity**

Reflections on the journey towards producing this research fall into four categories; practical issues, researcher self-efficacy, hermeneutics and personal development.

***5.9.1 Practical issues***

Practical issues experienced during research included recruitment of a suitable secondary nurture group. On a local level, additional funding for nurture support had been released in the summer of 2013. The researcher

was employed as a Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP) within the local authority and nurture was considered an area of priority, therefore research within this context would support local authority principles. However, given funding provision for nurture was a recent initiative, no secondary nurture groups were in existence within the local municipality. Hence it became necessary to widen parameters and extend the search to EP teams in other municipalities. As a newly established TEP within the local authority, the researcher found a particular difficulty establishing contacts or an awareness of professionals that might act as ‘gatekeepers’ to the area of research. Word of mouth eventually lead the researcher to a secondary school on the borders of another home county; this lack of localised secondary nurture groups became one of the founding pillars of rationale behind the production of this research.

***5.9.2 Self efficacy***

The researcher called into question levels of self-efficacyseveral times throughout the research journey, particularly after conducting interviews and having concerns around the application of interview questions, richness of responses and the overall suitability of IPA as a methodological approach as opposed to more established methods such as thematic analysis or more emancipatory techniques such as action research. At these stages, academic and professional supervision provided valuable experience, guidance and reassurance, allowing the researcher to focus on areas that required additional substance or attention, for example the three tiered process of analysis (descriptive, linguistic and contextual) for the transcript of each participant that would eventually lead to emergent, super-ordinate and finally key group themes. Extracts from the reseachers’ diary (see Appendix 3) provide a snapshot of typical concerns, many of which were eased via the process of articulation in ‘real-time’ diary format.

***5.9.3 Hermeneutics***

As an analytical concept, hermeneutics took some time to fully understand, but became an enjoyable tool to utilise during research. Smith et al (2009) describe the hermeneutic cycle as a process of moving from the particular to the whole; the researcher envisaged this like the zooming of a camera lens moving from one single utterance, word or sentence like a pixel in a photograph and looking at this ‘pixel’ as a smaller part of the individual case (or photograph) as a whole. Explicit ‘bracketing’ of each case was attempted through the use of time lapse; one case would be analysed, then the researcher would wait a week before analysing the second in the hope that previous thoughts around experience and meaning would be made peripheral.

The way in which hermeneutics – the theory of interpretation – links with social constructionism was also a relationship that became more evident as research progressed. For example, each young person would speak of their own experience of, say, friendship within the group using unique language or linking to a distinctively personal experience. However, what intrigued the researcher the most was the process of filtration that then occurs; the experience itself has already been processed, distilled and verbalised by the participant, yet the experience then goes through a *second* filtration process when the participants words are heard, understood and interpreted by the researcher, becoming a psychological exchange of ideas and concepts between young person and adult that, in this case, resulted in the co-construction of four themes the researcher was proud to be associated with.

***5.9.4 Personal development***

The production of research has developed the researcher both professionally and personally. On a professional level, the researcher has developed a deeper awareness of the importance of obtaining the views of children and young people; the voice of the young will play a fundamental role for the researcher when considering future areas of study. On a personal level, the researcher felt distinctly privileged to have the opportunity to work face-to-face with young people regarding their social, emotional and behavioural wellbeing and feels an element of co-constructed research with children or young people should be an essential part of EP training.

**5.9.3.1 Reflections: a theoretical approach**

Personal reflections on the research journey as a whole required the researcher to take more of a meta-cognitive approach, ironically not dissimilar to the ‘zoom lens’ method used during IPA analysis, moving out from the particular to the wider picture. By adopting a stance as a reflective practitioner, the researcher used a model by Gibbs (1988) as a suitable vehicle for describing thoughts, feelings and emotions:

Figure 5.4: Gibbs Reflective Cycle



1. ***Description –*** The production of a thesis, as part fulfilment of doctoral criteria
2. ***Feelings*** – As captured within the research diary (see Appendix 3)
3. ***Evaluation*** – The researcher enjoyed the ‘emic’, that it to say, being invited to be part of Breakfast Club for one morning and getting an experiential feel for what it might be like to be a young person on the receiving end of such an intervention. The researcher found it surprisingly difficult to locate a secondary nurture group within the county and at times felt frustrated at a lack of availability, at one point considering the prospect of conducting research out of county.
4. ***Analysis –*** The researcher found a surprising anomaly in that one young person interviewed did not attach positive meaning to the social experiences of Breakfast Club. Initially feelings were empathetic, followed by a realisation that this perceived ‘negativity’ could in fact be richer and hold more implication for research design and continuity than those of an appreciative nature.
5. ***Conclusion*** – Generally young people promote the notion that nurture groups can hold on to core principles whilst at the same time adapting to the complexity of secondary school structure, organisation and need
6. **Action Plan –** Raise the profile of secondary nurture further by disseminating research at local, national and international levels; back to the young people and staff themselves, to EPs within the local authority, presentation at a national conference and publication within an international journal.

**5.10 Conclusion**

This research aimed to explore the lived experiences of young people within a secondary nurture group. Analysis indicates that young people attach four areas of meaning to their experiences of friendship, communication, emotional regulation and home within a secondary nurture group. These findings are consistent with those from three research studies that focused on the views of children or young people in nurture groups (Bishop & Swain, 2000; Cooper et al, 2001; Griffiths et al; 2014) and provide support for the concept of nurture groups transferring over to secondary school settings as support for young people with social, emotional and behavioural challenges.

Evidence from research also supports a suggestion from Colley (2009) in that the provision of one single secondary nurture room may not be necessary; due to room and timetabling pressures, the provision was split over two rooms, but despite this young people spoke highly of Breakfast Club as a provision that helped them socialise, self-regulate and focus.

In conclusion, the complexity of secondary schools as organisational structures and the needs of young people mean a more flexible approach to secondary nurture is required. The views of young people are fundamental to this approach, hence versatile methods of collecting young people’s views should be considered, potentially via the use of technology or social media.

Concurrent with findings from Furness (2014), it is hoped that research will increase knowledge and understanding of a secondary nurture approach that is beginning to germinate across the local authority. Through advocating for the voices of young people, such research can contribute to the construction of a consistent and effective model of secondary nurture provision that, through support for young people with SEBD, can look to decrease levels of *ex*clusion and increase levels of *in*clusion within mainstream settings, whilst ultimately helping children and young people to live happier and better supported experiences at school.

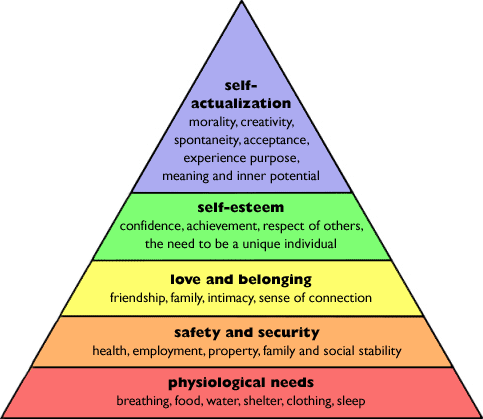
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**APPENDICES**

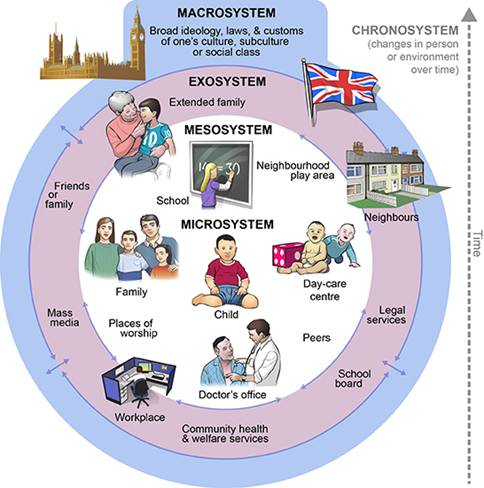
**Appendix 1: Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs**

**(Maslow, 1943)**

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**Appendix 2: Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory**

**(Bronfenbrenner, 1979)**

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**Appendix 3: Research Diary Extract**

Week 33 – October 2014

‘Whilst transcribing interviews, I’ve felt particularly conscious of my voice (and therefore position as a researcher) as empirical ‘noise’, and how weighted semi-interview structures can seem in raw format. Semi or unstructured interviews can feel like a deviation from core research question principles, yet then occasionally a young person will surprise you. Gary’s final closing comment – warm appreciation for Breakfast Club despite disliking the social side – is one example that stands out and restores my faith in the process. That said, IPA prompts around feelings and experience have unearthed what at the moment feels like meaningfully rich data.’

**Appendix 4: Interview Question Schedule**

How do young people experience the social aspects of a secondary school nurture group?

‘People’ Questions

1. What is it like being with the other young people in the Breakfast Club?
2. How has being in the Breakfast Club affected your friendships?
3. Do you think being in a Breakfast Club has helped to improve your friendships, or make them worse? If so, how?
4. Do you find it easier or harder to speak to new people now?
5. How has being in the Breakfast Club affected your relationships with your family?

Research Question 2

How do young people experience the emotional aspects of a secondary school nurture group?

‘Feelings’ Questions

1. How did you feel before the Breakfast Club started?
2. How do you feel since the Breakfast Club has started?
3. How do you feel when you are in the Breakfast Club?
4. Would you say you are happier or less happy as a result of the Breakfast Club?
5. What is it about the Breakfast Club that makes you feel that way about it?

Research Question 3

How do young people experience the behavioural aspects of a secondary school nurture group?

Behaviour Questions

1. How did you behave before the Breakfast Club started?
2. How do you behave now the Breakfast Club is running?
3. How do you behave when you’re in the Breakfast Club?
4. How do you behave when you’re in school but not in Breakfast Club?
5. How do you behave at home?

**Appendix 5: Research Timeline**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **December 2013** | Hand in research proposal and ethics application. |
| **January 2014** | Revise proposal in light of feedback.  Begin background to literature review. |
| **February 2014** | Receive ethical approval.  Send letters to Head Teachers of all Local Authority maintained secondary schools with nurture groups, requesting participation in the study. |
| **March 2014** | Follow up phone calls to schools ascertain interest.  Key contacts established and meetings arranged in consenting schools. |
| **April 2014** | Number of young people within nurture group who meet criteria for involvement established.  Consent letters sent to those pupils, parents and teachers.  Consent letters followed up with phone calls.  Hand in draft literature review. |
| **May 2014** | Number of consenting pupils established.  Times and dates arranged to conduct case study interviews. |
| **June 2014** | Continue arranging times and dates for interviews.  Hand in draft methodology. |
| **July 2014** | Informal pilot of semi-structured interview with peers. Consult supervisor. Make changes to guide.  Begin first interviews with case study 1 participants.  Transcribe interviews from case study 1. |
| **August 2014** | Analysis of case study 1 transcripts. |
| **September 2014** | Begin interviews with case study 2 participants.  Transcribe interviews with case study 2. |
| **October 2014** | Analysis of case study 2 transcripts.  Begin results section. |
| **November 2014** | Hand in draft data collection section.  Begin results/ findings section. |
| **December 2014** | Hand in draft results/ findings section.  Begin discussion section. |
| **January 2015** | Continue discussion section.  Hand in draft discussion section. |
| **February 2015** | Make amendments to discussion section.  Hand in draft thesis. |
| **March 2015** | Amendments to all thesis areas. |
| **April 2015** | Submission of final thesis. |
| **June 2015** | Viva. |

**Appendix 6: Letter to Participants**



Hi!

My name is Ben (that’s me in the photo, close to the Statue of Liberty in New York!) and I work as an Educational Psychologist. We look at the different ways children and young people learn in schools and try to help them with things.

I am at university at the moment, and I am doing a big project on young people like you who are in Breakfast Club.

I wondered if you would like to help me by spending a bit of time talking to me about Breakfast Club? I’d be really interested to hear if you’ve enjoyed it, or not, and some of the reasons why. If you didn’t want to answer a question then that’s absolutely fine, we can either go on to the next question or end the interview whenever you feel like it. I will be the only one in the room, so no one else will hear what we talk about. If you’re ok with it, I will record what we talk about with a tape recorder and use it for my university work. I will keep what was said completely safe, and will change your name when I write about it so no one will know it was you. Once written up, all recordings of our conversations will be deleted. If this sounds ok to you, please fill in the short form on the next page.

Thanks and hope to see you soon!  
Ben

**Appendix 7: Letter to Parents**



Local authority logo

Dear Mr/ Mrs [insert surname]

My name is Ben Hibberd and I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist, currently studying for my Professional Doctorate at University of East London (UEL). For my thesis, I am doing some research into nurture groups that might help your son/ daughter’s school to support children better. In my research I will ask your son/ daughter a number of questions about their experience of being part of Breakfast Club.

Before researchers study children, we talk to the parents and ask them for permission. After you have heard more about the study, and if you agree, then I will ask your son/ daughter for agreement too. Both of you will need to agree independently before I begin. You do not have to decide today whether or not you agree to either your child or yourself participating – before you decide you can talk to myself or anyone you feel comfortable with. Each interview will take a maximum of one hour and we will have a telephone conversation beforehand for me to a) explain a little more about the research and b) arrange a date and time for interview.

Your son/ daughter would participate in an interview with myself – your son/ daughter would not have to answer any questions that they do not wish to and the interview can be terminated at any point. They will also be made fully aware they have the right to withdraw from research at any time. The interview can take place in your home or at your child’s school – wherever is most convenient and comfortable for you. No one else but myself will be present at both interviews. I will need to record each interview using a Dictaphone, but all conversations are kept confidential (locked in a cupboard and/ or encrypted on my own personal laptop used by no-one else but me) and your son/ daughter’s name changed in any research findings so data is fully anonymous.

At the end of research (Summer 2015) I would like to call or meet with you at a convenient time to explain my findings. If the above seems agreeable then could I ask that you please sign the informed consent form overleaf on behalf of yourself and your son/ daughter.

Kind regards

**Appendix 8: Letter to Head Teachers**



*Local Authority Logo*

Dear Head Teacher’s surname,

My name is Benjamin Hibberd and I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist, currently studying for my Professional Doctorate at University of East London (UEL) and on my second year placement at [name of local authority]. My thesis topic is based around secondary school nurture groups and how they function to support young people with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD).

My research in particular is looking at the meaning and experience young people construct from being part of a nurture group, and I have been passed your details by [name of colleague] as you were considered to be a school that might appreciate the opportunity to be part of research that aspires to be published in appropriate academic journals and be included in the Nurture Group Network’s online resource base?

I would be looking to interview pupils that have been part of your nurture group for more than six months. I have prepared necessary informed consent forms and will follow this letter up with a telephone call to explain a little more about the project and perhaps arrange a time for me to come in and meet with yourself and the SENCo at your school.

My mobile number is [xxxx] and my email address is [insert local authority email address]. Feel free to drop me a line and we can schedule in a call for me to explain further details.

Kind regards

**Appendix 9: Parent & Participant Consent Form**



School Logo

**CONSENT FORM**

**TO BE COMPLETED BY YOUNG PERSON AND** **PARENT/GUARDIAN**

**PART A - TO BE COMPLETED BY THE YOUNG PERSON.**

I agree to take part in the study on nurture groups in secondary schools and would like to take part in an individual interview.

I have read and understood the accompanying letter. I know what the study is about and the part I will be involved in. I know that I do not have to answer all of the questions and that I can decide not to continue at any time.

Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Age\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**PART B - TO BE COMPLETED BY THE PARENT/GUARDIAN**

I have read and understood the accompanying letter and give permission for my child (named above) to be included.

Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to child \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix 10: Example of Full IPA Transcript Analysis**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Emergent Themes | Line No | Original Transcript  (R: Researcher, I: Interviewee) | Exploratory Comments |
| Therapeutic  Freedom of expression  Confidentiality  Freedom of expression  Communication  Communication  Modelling  Relationships with peers  Relationships with peers  Quantified  Identity  Emotional regulation  Communication  Relationships with peers  Family  Resilience  Relationships with adults  Communication  Freedom of expression  Emotional regulation  Communication  Relationships with peers  Communication  Relationships with peers  Help  Modelling  Safety  Meaningful role  Meaningful role  Meaningful role  Self-esteem  Communication  Freedom of expression  Relationships with peers  Communication  Self-esteem  Rituals  Relationships with peers  Relationships with peers  Positive experience  Emotional regulation  Diagnosis part of identity  Emotional Regulation  Communication  Emotional regulation  Modelling  Emotional regulation  Emotional regulation  Family  Therapeutic  Communication  Positive experience  Quantifying benefits  Help  Community  Rituals  Patience  Therapeutic  Empowered by choice  Therapeutic  Emotional regulation  Communication  Safety  Safety  Therapeutic  Emotional regulation  Communication  Rituals  Relationships with adults  Theory of mind  Modelling  Communication  Relationships with peers  Self-esteem  Therapeutic  Emotional regulation  Safety  Stability before learning  Rituals  Interaction  Creativity  Focused fun  Perseverance  Language acquisition  Language acquisition  Self-esteem  Food production as a metaphor  Self-esteem  Rituals  Family  Food production as metaphor  Family  Modelling  Family  Modelling  Rituals  Rituals  Patience  Meaningful role  Flexibility  Self-esteem  Relationships with peers  Emotional regulation  Safety  Merges home and school  Therapeutic | 1  5  10  15  20  25  30  35  40  45  50  55  60  65  70  75  80  85  90  95  100  105  110  115  120  125  130  135  140  145  150  155  160  165  170  175  180  185  190  195  200  205  210  215  220  225  230  235  240  245  250  255  260  265  270  275  280  285  290  300  305  310  315  320  325  330  335  340  345  350  355  360  365  370  375  380  385  390  395  400  405  410  415  420  425  430  435  440  445  450  455  460  465  470  475  480  485  490  495  500  505  510  515  520  525  530  535  540  545  550  555  560  565  570  575  580  585  590  595  600  605  610  615  620  625  630  635 | R: Ok so the first question I want to ask about breakfast club is a people question, so, what is it like being with the other young people in the breakfast club?  I: Um it’s quite like, it’s like, relaxing, like if you want to say something you don’t have to like say in front of the whole class you only have to…like miss said, [stutters] what stays in the room stays in the room, like it don’t leave the room  R: Excellent, and what’s it like when you’re in breakfast club with the others?  I: Yeah well it’s not like…hard, like if you want to ask something you can ask it, but in class you’re not allowed to like, say that…like Miss V and all that…you can talk, it’s like social time really like you can spend time…[stutters] it’s like one to one, but not like loads  R: Ok, so you feel like you can talk to the other young people in breakfast club?  I: Yeah yeah, you can talk to them a lot and then you can, play games you can, have breakfast, everything. It’s like fun, stuff yeah  R: Ok so there’s a lot of interaction with others, and with staff as well?  I: Yeah the staff are lovely. There’s only [stutters] two staff in with us normally, Miss H and Miss V  R: And they help run it?  I: Yeah they help yeah  R: Great, ok. How has being in the breakfast club affected your friendships?  I: Er, it’s like helped me a little bit, because at the start of the school, like it was quite hard to kind of make friends, and then now I’ve made loads of friends like from breakfast club and…stuff  R: Ok, are they friends that are in breakfast club or….  I: Yeah, and now we [stutters] hang out at school together  R: Ok, yeah? So you think breakfast club has helped you make friends?  I: Yeah, a lot!  R: A lot?    I: A lot. A million!  R: A million? Wow, ok fantastic. Ok so in the breakfast club and outside, like around school as well.    I: Yeah  R: Ok so do you think being in the breakfast club has helped to improve your friendships, keep them the same or make them worse?  I: Umm yeah [stutters] improved. Cos like I said it’s hard to make friends like with me  R: Ok, why’s that?  I: Cos it’s like, sometimes I lose my [stutters] temper sometimes and just [stutters] go mental  R: Right, so breakfast clubs helped with that?  I: Mmm hmmm  R: I’m pleased to hear that. Ok so do you find it easier or harder to speak to new people now?  I: It’s easier, cos it’s like, you can speak in one group instead of like, you can speak to a person like…me, I remember when I first started school…like [stutters] I had to walk past them because of my stutter and I had to..[stutters] they end up taking the mick out of my stutter or something, and then the start of school my Mum was like, [stutters] stick your head up and then, [stutters] try your hardest  R: Fantastic, and that’s what you’ve done since is it?  I: Mmm hmm, yep…[stutters] and Miss V has helped me as well a lot. Yeah, for breakfast club and other social times  R: And what is it about breakfast club for you that feels special?  I: Like…like we can talk to each other, we don’t have to [stutters] keep something on our mind we can say it. Yeah…  R: Yeah?  I: Uh huh.  R: Fantastic, ok…so the next set of questions are about your feelings towards breakfast club, if that’s ok Bradley. So the first one is, how did you feel before breakfast club started?  I: Uh quite nervous and….that’s it really quite nervous, and then after like I moved in I felt like happy and like we can talk together and…  R: Yeah? So you felt nervous, what was it that made you feel nervous do you think?  I: Like the people who I was with, I didn’t know them at the time, so if I wanted to say something it was quite hard…  R: Ok, so you moved to the school from primary school last year, and it was all new...  I: Yeah  R: And you really didn’t know that many people here?  I: No, really I only knew about three four [stutters] people, and now I know like most of the year sevens  R: Really? And how do you think breakfast club has helped with that?  I: Er it’s like, sup[stutters]ported me…it’s just like Miss V said, you need to like, like you need to like…like start associating with people and making friends and stuff  R: Umm hmm  I: I’m friends with the year eights, year nines…most of the year tens and all the year elevens really  R: Wow, ok so it seemed to help you establish yourself and get in contact with lots more people…  I: Mmm hmm  R: Great ok, so how feel when you’re in breakfast club? Like when you’re doing the cooking, when you’re with the other people…  I: We can all work as a team, it’s like teamwork, it’s not like individual we can all work as a team  R: Ok, that must be a really nice feeling…do you get that feeling anywhere else? No?  I: Kind of, sometimes, not loads of times  R: In what other situations do you get that feeling, that you get from breakfast club?  I: Like when we’re working in PE, we work as teamworks, and other sports  R: Mmm hmm  I: Like for me, I’ve been boxing, see but [stutters] I’ve stopped now, like it’s teamwork boxing and stuff, mmm  R: Teamwork? Fantastic…ok, so would you say you were happier, the same, or less happy as a result of the breakfast club?  I: Happier.  R: Ok, and what makes you say that….when you think ‘I’m happier because of breakfast club’ what first comes to mind?  I: Because, I don’t know associating with people, it’s like talking to people and stuff  R: Ok, when’s the best talk time in breakfast club?  I: Anytime, you can talk any time in breakfast club! You [stutters] don’t have to wait for the end, or even at the start, you can just say when you want  R: Yeah? Ok…what’s the best thing about breakfast club do you think?  I: Probably...making, well when I first start I thought the best thing was making friends, and talking and, making stuff for the teachers and the other students  R: Ok, and how does that feel, making things for other people…  I: Yeah I feel like happy and proud of myself for making them  R: Fantastic…and what about the worst thing about breakfast club?  I: There’s nothing really worse about breakfast club  R: Yeah? There’s nothing you would change about breakfast club if you could?  I: Nothing. Nothing.  R: Ok, I’ve got a few more, just a couple more questions here…these ones are about behaviour, so how did you behave before the breakfast club started?  I: Like…[stutters] just like normal to how I [stutters] behave, like I’m like…I can’t really explain like it’s like hard, like, it was hard like, the first ever one was like hard. I [stutters] didn’t know none of them and we all shook hands, I said my name and they said their name [stutters] and we all shook hands, and then after the third and fourth and following on we made lego and, ate together…  R: Ok  I: Yeah and I’ve made more friends  R: That’s great…ok, so how about your behaviour in class before breakfast club, or during break time…  I: Same  R: Because you mentioned earlier that sometimes you get angry…  I: Yeah  R: In those situations, like can you remember a time when you got angry before breakfast club started?  I: Not really…nah it was ages ago  R: Yeah it was a while ago wasn’t it  I: [Stutters] I think we’ve had about six lessons…seven lessons. And I’ve really enjoyed it.  R: Fantastic, ok so…you used to get sort of angry before the breakfast club..  I: Yeah like of work like, in maths I find it hard and…other lessons  R: Right, and you get angry because of the work?  I: Yeah  R: You get frustrated with the work at bit?  I: Yeah, and I’m [stutters] dyslexic as well  R: Ok, so that makes it twice as hard a lot of the time for you to understand things?  I: Mmm hmm  R: Ok, so how do you feel like you behave now the breakfast club is running?  I: It’s kind of helped me with like my like [stutters] behaviour and my like, my nerves I was nervous at the start and then now I’m not nervous  R: Ok  I: Like if, like talking to each other  R: Ok, and do you get as angry as you did before?  I: No not really I’ll just like, [stutters] take five minutes out and then I go [stutters] back in again  R: Ok so there’s some strategies you’ve leant to deal with your anger, ok so take five minutes out is there anything else breakfast club has taught you?  I: Not really…like….breathe in and out of your nose Miss H said, don’t [stutters] get angry  R: Slow breathing, fantastic yeah, ok…how do you behave when you’re in breakfast club itself?  I: Good, I feel like it’s better, and stuff  R: Yeah? You’re more comfortable?  I: Yeah, it’s like…[stutters] being at home really with my family  R: Yeah, you feel like you’re at home?  I: At home yeah when I’m at breakfast club. Cos it’s so like, quiet and not like a whole class, mmm hmm  R: Ok, so you get like a chance to…  I: Yeah talk and stuff  R: Fantastic. How do you behave when you’re in school but not in breakfast club?  I: Good  R: Ok, and how about at home?  I: Yeah good, same  R: Cool, ok so if there was a scale of 0 – 10, where naught is useless and ten is excellent, which number do you think you’d circle for the breakfast club?  I: Cor ten  R: Ten?  I: Yeah, past ten  R: Past ten?! Ok, it’s been that good for you?  I: Yeah  R: Is there anything else you wanted to add about breakfast club?  I: Not really, it’s all…like I said excellent. It’s helped me.  R: Ok, well thank you very much for answering my questions Bradley  I: Thank you!  **Nurture room tour interview**  I: Yep I’ve [stutters] had the club in here and the other room up there  R: So if you wanna show me a few of the things you do in breakfast club in this room…  I: Like basically we…[stutters] sit round a table, we have like breakfast, we’ve got bowls and everything, we’ve got milk, everything like that and we just…[stutters] wait till eight fifteen and then we can all come in and then [stutters] we can eat  R: Ok, so what kind of activities do you do in here, so like is there anything in the cupboards you wanted to show me…  I: Yeah well we normally do Loom Bands, I think they’re banned now…Hama Beads  R: Hama beads as well, right ok…so they’re up there? I’ll get them down hang on a second  I: They’re Hama Beads  R: Ah ok, so that’s like the first thing you do together is it?  I: Err, well we normally [stutters] choose really…choose and, whatever you want to do  R: Ok, so how does it feel for you being around different people that you wouldn’t normally go and sit round with like in the mornings having breakfast with, and doing activities like Hama Beads with…  I: Um, it’s like relaxing, like there ain’t no talking, like at the start it was all major, like all hectic “whheeeyy class seven” and all that, and then through the year we like calmed down and sit and ch[stutters]at  R: Yeah? Ok, so have you like, so this is one of the rooms where you have breakfast club…how does it feel for you being in here?  I: It’s just like my house really, it’s just like some room in my house  R: Really?  I: Yeah it’s just like, being at home  R: Yeah? Ok, is that because it’s like familiar?  I: Yeah you get relaxed and stuff, you relax and chill out you have a little chat then you eat  R: Ok  I: We normally have toast…err, we made a [stutters] breakfast. We normally have breakfast and then like last week we had cereal and then the other week we had…like we invited our [stutters] teachers and stuff, so we could like talk to them and we can [stutters] eat with them, so we had to write out and invitation  R: Uh huh  I: So they could took time off for their form, so they have a supply teacher that comes, and then they like come, and we had bacon, tomatoes, er bread toast coffee tea  R: Lovely  I: Loads of other things like juice  R: How was that for you when your teachers came as well  I: It was like hard for me to make, it was going like quick  R: Was it?  I: Yeah Miss was like “get that, get that, get that”, it was quick  R: Really? It was tough to manage? But when your teachers were eating with you…  I: Yeah it feels like nice like to talk to them  R: Yeah? And they become part of your group at that point?  I: Yeah  R: Ok so how does it, I mean…cos you didn’t know a lot of the boys in the group to begin with and then has it been difficult to sort of adapt around…  I: Yeah like cos for me it’s….it’s hard for me making friends  R: Right  I: Yeah so…I was proud of myself like making friends, so now I’m like friends with all of them  R: All of them in breakfast club? Ok brilliant…so what do you think breakfast club has taught you do you think?  I: Umm, it’s like…it’s like more calm  R: Uh huh…breakfast club has taught you to be more calm you think?  I: Yeah  R: Ok brilliant, umm and how do you feel like behaving in here now?  I: Mate it’s unbelievable, it’s like well good…everyone’s not even, not even threatening or anything it’s just like, friends and stuff  R: Mmmm  I: I think there’s only been…one or two arguments right at the start, and then that was it, and then straight after we’ve been learning like, how to…like half way through on a Thursday, like Thursday we normally eat, then Friday form’s for like playing Hama Beads, The Cube, Swap Snap, how to tell the time…  R: Yeah  I: Er, what else…we play hangman on the board, Loom Bands which are banned now, we can draw, make posters…everything  R: Ok, so there’s a real range of activities you’ve been doing  I: Yeah  R: So it makes you, does it make you feel more hyperactive being in here, or help you to concentrate, or…  I: Helps me to concentrate with these cos they’re so small, you stick em on the [indecipherable] and they all fall out  R: Right  I: And you stick it back in and they all fall out  R: Ok so you’d say the activities in breakfast club help you to concentrate?  I: Yeah  R: Ok, great, well let’s nip up to the other food tech room that you use for breakfast club and we can carry on from there…  R: Cool, ok so what do you want to show me first Bradley?  I: So we use this  R: And what’s this?  I: Like, the oven  R: The hob?  I: Yeah the hob, and then we cooked all the stuff on that  R: Ok  I: And then in here you got the, peeler, the knife, spoons  R: Cutlery?  I: Cutlery and spoons…and after, we stuck it all in the…and bowls are in here  R: Ok, and what else have we got in there?  I: Like we got some pots that we made it in and like frying pans…and that’s it really  R: So how do you feel about using all of this, this stuff now?  I: I’m sort of used to it really  R: Used to it now?  I: Yeah, cos I’ve made all that in there and after, come out and made some more  R: Ok, so what about…you use some of the equipment here now, can you use some equipment at home?  I: Yeah, all of it!  R: All of it? Ok so what sort of things have you cooked at breakfast club that you can now cook at home?  I: Umm…bacon sandwich, umm, omelettes  R: Bacon sandwich, omelettes, nice! You make them at home do you?  I: Yeah…a fry up, everything, almost…normally I make Shepherds Pie for my Mum  R: Shepherds Pie for your Mum do you? Wow  I: Yeah, and like a big stew  R: Ok so you cook for other people at home?  I: Yeah sometimes yeah  R: Do you think that’s because you cook for other people at breakfast club and you’ve thought ‘I could go back home and cook for other people there’?  I: Sometimes, like…I learnt how to cook at home…like my Mum showed me how to cook  R: Ok  I: And weighed all the things at home, and that’s that…my Mum taught me that  R: That’s a good skill to have…ok so how do you feel when you come here and you come into the breakfast club room at eight fifteen, what’s the first thing that you do?  I: Blazer apron hair and hands  R: Ok, what does that mean?  I: Blazer, take your blazer hang it up, and then apron stick on your apron, and then you tuck the hair if you’ve got long hair, and then hands you wash the hands  R: Ok and then what would you do after that once you’ve washed your hands?  I: You have all the ingredients laid out and then wait for Miss’ instructions to go  R: Ok, you have the ingredients left out ok, so you’ve got, you have a role  I: Yeah  R: To play in, if you’re making something do you all have different parts to play in cooking?  I: Er, sometimes yeah….like other people cut the mushrooms you’ll stick the bacon on  R: Uh huh  I: And then I have the mushrooms someone else has the bacon  R: Ok so how does that feel to you, having that role having that, sort of everything organised does that make you feel…like you know what you’re doing?  I: Confident, mmm  R: What about being around other people in breakfast club that you wouldn’t normally be around…?  I: Yeah, most of the time…to be honest I’m used to it  R: Ok, whereas before…  I: Before I wasn’t  R: Ok, so how does it feel being in this room now?  I: It feels like I’m in my kitchen at home  R: In your kitchen at home? Ok…  I: Yeah, well it’s all the same thing  R: Uh huh…  I: …yeah it’s all the same thing  R: Does it make you feel more hyper, more calm, more angry…  I: No…just calm  R: Just calm? Ok, that’s nice. Ok Bradley I’ll let you go now, thanks very much  I: Cheers, that’s alright! | BC = Breakfast Club (Nurture Group)  SEMH = Social, Emotional & Mental Health  Relaxation  *Use of ‘room’ expression from adult*  1. Opinion without judgement/ consequence, 2. Confidentiality  BC as ‘easy’  TALK 1  *Like – youth slang, frequency = nerves? Time to think?*  Miss V – associates freedom of speech with teacher  TALK 2  Communication/ interaction/ eating  *Experience is ‘fun’*  Combination of above important for success?  *‘they help’ echoed – use of researchers words = symbolic of power imbalance?*  Socialising difficult, new beginning. Honesty/ vulnerability  Transitionary support when SEMH can be isolated  Organic peer support  Biggest number he can comprehend?  *A lot – repeated, reinforced point*  Quantifying emotional support – symbolic  Theory of mind; critical of himself through other people’s eyes, BC enabled this?  Increased stutters – more emotive topic?  *Mental – word that links thoughts, feelings and behaviour*  Awareness of reactive behaviour  TALK 3/ 4  Social benefits on group and individual level, then reflects on memory  Fear of prevented socialising – BC/ family as combined resource to combat  BC teacher personally cited  Teacher transient between BC and mainstream  *Emphasis on ‘talk’*  Articulating thoughts  Thoughts are ‘trapped’, BC provides release  TALK 5  *nervous x 2 to happy – idea of settling*  *‘Moved in’ – transition to secondary like moving house? BC is his ‘home’*  ­  Being ‘with’ people – his new class/ form  Shyness as form of internal suppression  *Knew/ know = to what extent? Names? Form?*  Numbers = security/ established  Teacher as mentor/ guide  *Supported – nurturing word*  *Associating – echoing teachers language?*  *Like x 6 – difficulty articulating as remembering difficulty socialising*  Multi-age friendships  *All the year elevens – elevated sense of popularity?*  Strength and safety in elders  Immediate response  *Team/ teamwork x 4 – rote learnt?*  Cog in a working mechanism, no longer lost in ‘factory’ of school  Relatively unique feeling  Compares BC to team sport  *‘Work’ and ‘team’ intrinsically linked for B*  Individual sport framed as a team – boxer and coach  Analogy of B as boxer fighting against stutter/ nerves, and BC as coach  Immediate, definitive, assured  TALK 6  Interaction most important  Relishes opportunity for unregulated expression  Order of importance? 1. Friends, 2. TALK 7 3. Making presents for others  *Making x 3 – poignant*  Verb ‘To Make’ – correlation between making food/ objects, and making friends?  Pride - reciprocal exchange of gift for emotion  No stutters – positive topic lowers anxiety?  Again, immediate, reinforced and assured  Able to reflect  *Like x 9 – behaviour an emotive topic, real struggle to explain*  *Hard x 3 – difficulty integrating into new social environment*  School as hard place, magnified for SEMH  Verbalising social gestures as learned ‘steps’  Added in at end, friendship clearly important  Recollections limited  Can’t, or would rather not recount?  Changes subject  *Lessons – BC like a subject, integrated into curriculum*  Uncomfortable with previous angry behaviour or comfortable with BC?  Anger born from frustration with subject  BC lengthens temper/ introduces patience?  Reveals learning difficulty  Stutters beforehand – emotive  Diagnosis holds meaning/ inference for him, who he is  Comfortable telling stranger – would this have occurred before BC?  Asked about behaviour, links to reduction of anxiety  *Nerves/ nervous – repetition*  Voice of child summarising SEMH benefits of BC  TALK 8  Strategy for dealing with anger  Stutters = behavioural tic to strong emotions?  Relates coping strategy directly to source of anger (classroom)  Second strategy recalled  Adults as role models/ mentors  *it’s – referring to his behaviour, i.e. angry temperament? The environment?*  MAJOR QUOTE  *‘Home’ and ‘family’ – specific, verbalised bridge created*  BC a reflection of family nucleus – what if nothing to reflect?  Cites reasons for benefits – noise a stimulus for arousal, tighter knit ‘community’  TALK 9  Shrift response – truthful?  Again, brevity as behaviour may not always transfer to home life  Immediate praise  Help reinforced  *Excellent – first use, said with emphasis*  BC as ordered process – wait, sit, eat, utensils, ingredients  Sitting in the ‘round’ an enabler?  Beads and bands – tactile, focused, cathartic  More creative/ feminine activity, safer/ more comfortable to complete during BC  Researcher clarifying type of activity  *Choose repeated – freedom of choice important*  *Relaxing – second use*  *Major – emphasises*  Talking/ hectic, inferring start was competitive/ bravado and prefers more real form of communication  TALK 10  MAJOR QUOTE – direct comparison of BC room to own family abode  *House repeated as word, repetitions symbolic of core meaning?*  Transition from room to whole house, SAFE BASE?  *Relaxed x 2, clearly meaningful to him*  BC as emotional sanctuary, regulate/ communicate/ meet physiological need  TALK 11  Toast – default sharing tool, unifying?  *We x 9 – collectiveness*  Life skills of invitations/ sharing  Practicalities/ theory of mind  Learning how others can be affected by actions  Felt under pressure to perform (teachers like parents?)  Time pressure, supported through adult guidance  TALK 12  Feels – emotional response  Eating blurs power imbalance, allows for more emotional connection to teachers  *For me x 2 – personal journey*  Struggle to be liked  *Proud – second mention, instilled by Mum?*  Succeeding against adversity  Description of atmosphere of BC for own learnings, meaningful?  Emotional regulation as form of knowledge  *Unbelievable/ well good – relief at having opportunity to be at one with self and others*  Sees mainstream environment as a threat/ danger – IMPORTANT  Arguments common outside BC? Pose a threat? Disharmony to harmony  Balance of fun and up skilling  Emotional turbulence to structured tuition  All interactive/ creative activities  *Banned – second mention, enjoyed and perturbed as taken away?*  Limited language/ vocab, so prompts required  Links activity to concentration  Patience/ perseverance through fun  Reaffirming, both question and answer  Building new vocabulary  Also building new skill  Knows nouns and locations – ordered  Two stories conflicting – explanation of utensils vs memories of cooking  Conflict may represent how thoughts are easily entangled  Accustomed to equipment  Grounded/ confident  Referring to recipes/ food produced  Making = continually topping up self-esteem?  Confidence in transferable skills  More complicated cooking procedure  FAMILY  Mental transfer: BC food = cook at home = give to others  *Big stew – emphasised tone, positive emotion attached?*  Home served as foundation for skill  FAMILY  FAMILY  Proud of accomplishment, foundation for success in BC  Rote learnt, automated response  Hygiene perfect example of routine providing structure  Planned and patient  Description of roles – cooperation  Flexibility of roles/ duties  *Confidence – first use*  New people not so scary  Acclimatised to this group, but transferable social skill?  Being ‘used to’ the unknown  MAJOR QUOTE – similar to previous re room in house  *My kitchen – feels like literally same room*  Symbolic and poignant – BC is an extension of safe base at home  Again, wide range of language prompts  Linguistic synopsis of BC for Bradley, pause for thought, onomatopoeic |

**Appendix 11: Ethical approval**

# ETHICAL PRACTICE CHECKLIST (Professional Doctorates)

**SUPERVISOR**: Tina Rae **ASSESSOR:** Donald Ridley

**STUDENT:** Benjamin Hibberd **DATE (sent to assessor):** 07/03/2014

**Proposed research topic**: Nurture Groups in Secondary Schools: An exploration of young people’s lived experiences

**Course**: Professional Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology

1. Will free and informed consent of participants be obtained? YES

2. If there is any deception is it justified? N/A

3. Will information obtained remain confidential? YES

4. Will participants be made aware of their right to withdraw at any time? YES

5. Will participants be adequately debriefed? YES

6. If this study involves observation does it respect participants’ privacy? NA

7. If the proposal involves participants whose free and informed

consent may be in question (e.g. for reasons of age, mental or

emotional incapacity), are they treated ethically? YES

8. Is procedure that might cause distress to participants ethical? NA

9. If there are inducements to take part in the project is this ethical? NA

10. If there are any other ethical issues involved, are they a problem?NA

**APPROVED**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | YES, PENDING MINOR CONDITIONS |  |

**MINOR CONDITIONS:**

**Supervisor to confirm DBS current and appropriate**

**REASONS FOR NON APPROVAL:**

Assessor initials: DR Date: 07.03.2014

# RESEARCHER RISK ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST (BSc/MSc/MA)

**SUPERVISOR**: Tina Rae **ASSESSOR:** Donald Ridley

**STUDENT:** Benjamin Hibberd **DATE (sent to assessor):** 07/03/2014

**Proposed research topic**: Nurture Groups in Secondary Schools: An exploration of young people’s lived experiences

**Course**: Professional Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology

Would the proposed project expose the researcher to any of the following kinds of hazard?

1 Emotional NO

2. Physical NO

3. Other NO

(e.g. health & safety issues)

If you’ve answered YES to any of the above please estimate the chance of the researcher being harmed as: HIGH / MED / LOW

**APPROVED**

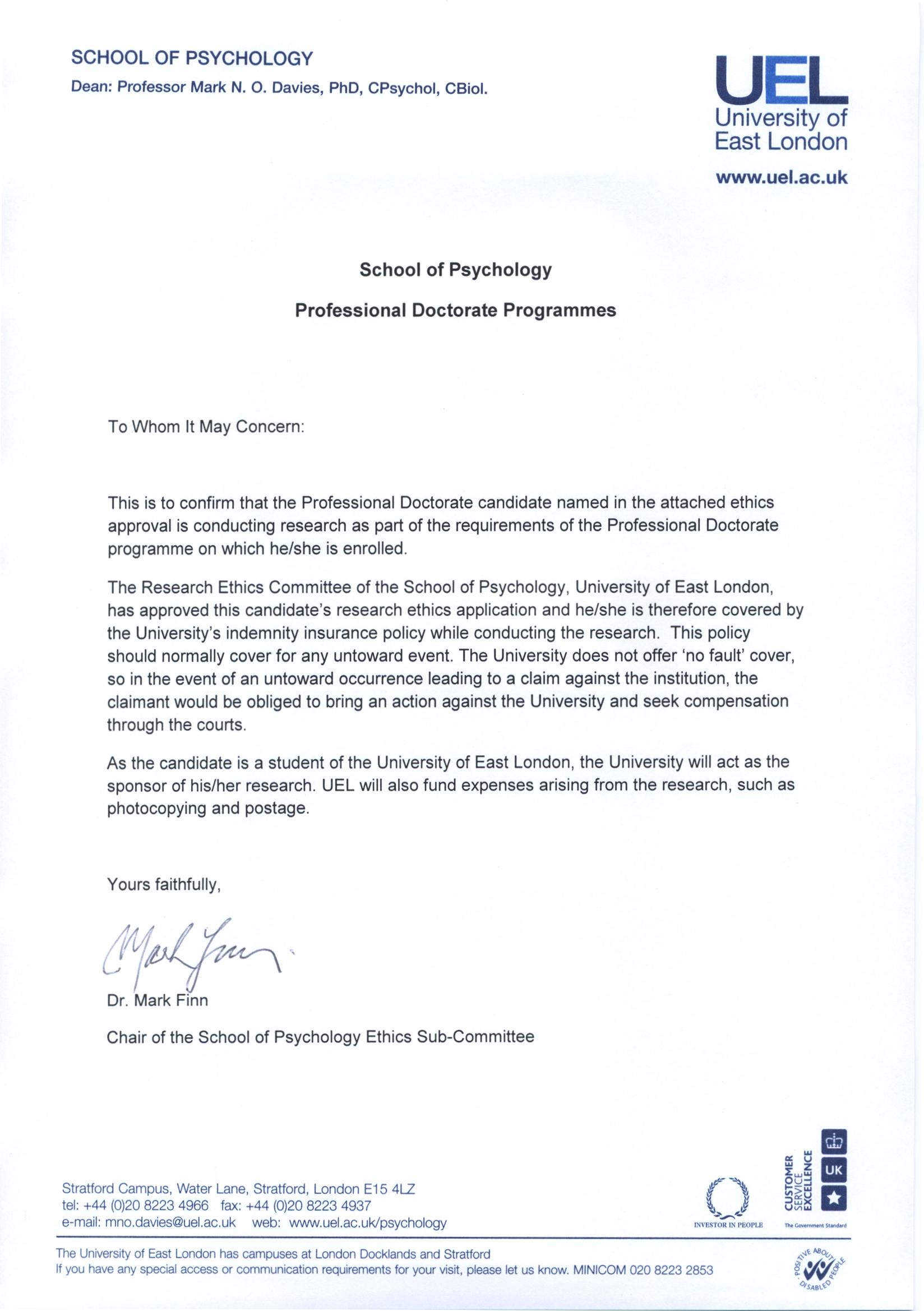
|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| YES |  |  |

**MINOR CONDITIONS:**

**REASONS FOR NON APPROVAL:**

Assessor initials:  **DR** Date: 07 March 2014

For the attention of the assessor: Please return the completed checklists by e-mail to [ethics.applications@uel.ac.uk](mailto:ethics.applications@uel.ac.uk) within 1 week.



**Appendix 12: Anonymised transcripts (CD)**