Closing the Gap: Young People’s Views on Learning at School

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the University of East London for the Professional Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology

April 2016
Declaration

I declare that while registered as a research degree student at the University of East London, I have not been a registered or enrolled student for another award of this university or of any other academic or professional institution.

I declare that no material contained in this thesis has been used in any other submission for an academic award.

I declare that my research required ethical approval from the University Ethics Committee (UREC) and confirmation of approval is embedded within the thesis.

...............................................................
Anna Griffiths
April 2016
Acknowledgements

I would firstly like to thank my fantastic academic tutor Dr Laura Cockburn, for reading the many drafts of this thesis carefully from its inception, and giving such useful guidance, feedback and encouragement. Thanks also to Professor Irvine Gersch, who gave me much valued time and support throughout the process of completing this project. In addition, the rest of the tutor team at University of East London provided amazing support and guidance. I feel very lucky to have had the opportunity to complete this course at the University of East London.

Sincere thanks to the school in which this research was carried out, particularly the Assistant SENCo who went to great lengths to help me to organise research interviews.

This research would have been impossible without the young people that agreed to take part and share their experiences with me. The interviews with young people were an incredibly privileged and humbling experience.

Thanks to my placement supervisor Dr Tina Axup and other colleagues in my placement borough for supporting the process of my research and giving useful feedback.

Many thanks to friends who helped me with practicalities and emotional sustenance while I was completing the research: Fiona Mannion, Heather Middleton for the amazing artwork on the participant feedback sheets, Sahar Qureshi, and all my lovely colleagues on the Doctorate course.

I would like to thank my daughter Kiera Griffiths for being a constant source of inspiration and support throughout the whole of my course.
Abstract

The UK has been criticised for its inequitable education system, as student outcomes are strongly linked to parental socio-economic status. Children and young people experiencing poverty are less likely than their better off peers to leave school with good grades, which can perpetuate disadvantage in later life.

The attainment gap between children and young people experiencing poverty and their better off peers in the UK is widening, despite an increasing media and policy focus in this area. Poverty-related educational inequality is a complex area and there is no conclusive evidence in what works to reduce its effects. While there is a plethora of research on the impact of poverty on education, very little of it includes the voice of children and young people and/or the psychological impact of poverty on learning.

The importance of hearing the views of children and young people is central to educational psychology, as is social justice and facilitating access to the curriculum for all students. The barriers presented by the experience of poverty to learning are thus vital for educational psychologists to address.

This study used qualitative methods to explore the learning journey of Key Stage 3 (age 12-13) young people experiencing poverty in an English coastal borough. Questions from the Little Box of Big Questions 2 were used as a tool in semi-structured interviews, in addition to questions devised by the researcher.

Young people discussed aspects of their lives that enabled them to learn at school, and aspects that presented barriers to learning. The research used Positive Psychology, taking a strengths based approach to explore the skills young people thought they brought to education, skills they would like to develop, and how they could be supported in this. The study has highlighted themes that, if addressed, could potentially raise the attainment of children and young people experiencing poverty.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AEP</td>
<td>Association of Educational Psychologists</td>
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<td>BPS</td>
<td>British Psychological Society</td>
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<td>CAF</td>
<td>Common Assessment Framework</td>
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<td>CPD</td>
<td>Continuing professional development</td>
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<td>CYP</td>
<td>Children and young people</td>
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<td>DECP</td>
<td>Division of Educational and Child Psychology</td>
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<td>DfE</td>
<td>Department for Education</td>
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<td>EHCP</td>
<td>Education, Health and Care Plan</td>
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<td>Educational Psychology Service</td>
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<td>FSM</td>
<td>Free school meals</td>
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<td>LA</td>
<td>Local Authority</td>
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<td>LBBQ2</td>
<td>Little Box of Big Questions 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>SENCO</td>
<td>Special Educational Needs Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNP</td>
<td>Scottish National Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>TEP</td>
<td>Trainee Educational Psychologist</td>
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<td>UEL</td>
<td>University of East London</td>
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<td>UK</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
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<td>USA</td>
<td>United States of America</td>
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<td>YP</td>
<td>Young people/person</td>
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Chapter 1: Introduction

“The experience of poverty and the impact of poverty invade every aspect of a young person’s life, and cannot be left at the classroom door.”
Bill Ramsay (Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS), 2014, p.2)

This thesis is concerned with poverty-related educational inequality in the UK. The UK has been criticised for its inequitable education system, due to the fact that student outcomes are strongly linked to parental socio-economic status (Baars et al. 2014). Children and young people (CYP) experiencing poverty are less likely than their better off peers to leave school with good grades, which can perpetuate disadvantage in later life (Hirsch, 2007). The term poverty-related educational inequality is used in this study to refer to this disadvantage.

There has been a strong media focus on the attainment gap between rich and poor (a Google news search for “attainment gap” on 12.02.2016 produced 15,500 results). However, this has included little awareness of the psychological impact of poverty (or austerity measures) on young people’s wellbeing (Beckett & Wrigley, 2014). The voice of CYP experiencing poverty, and how this impacts on their education, is not well documented in research, as will be evidenced in the literature review in Chapter 2. This provides a strong argument for more educational psychology research in this area. This study addressed the gap by directly asking young people experiencing poverty in an English coastal borough for their views on school, learning and the future.

The thesis is written from the perspective of educational psychology in the UK. The role of the Educational Psychologist (EP) is described as distinctive in listening to, and advocating on behalf of, CYP (Beaver, 2011). EPs employ a range of approaches and tools to elicit the voice of CYP. One of these tools, The Little Box of Big Questions 2 (Gersch & Lipscombe, 2015), was utilised in this study to facilitate young people to express their views.

While this study was primarily concerned with exploring young people’s views, a subsidiary argument is for an increased recognition of the possible EP role in devising and delivering evidence-based solutions to poverty-related educational
inequality. It could be argued that this is an important area for EPs to address due to the ethical and social injustice issues thrown up by poverty-related educational inequality. EP involvement in this area could include: raising awareness of what EPs are already doing in schools; representing the voice of CYP in thinking about effective strategies; and anticipating how EPs could make additional contributions in this area, in consultation with CYP and other partners.

This chapter will introduce the research study and provide a context for where and when it was carried out. It will define key terminology used throughout the thesis and explore why the research is important for educational psychology. The positioning of the researcher will be outlined. Lastly, the research questions used to direct the study will be specified.

1.1 Terminology and definitions

1.1.1 Poverty

While there are a number of approaches to defining poverty (Seymour, 2009), researchers of poverty in developed nations usually agree on two kinds: absolute and overall (Raphael, 2013). Overall poverty, also known as relative poverty, is where household income is compared to the national median. People are classified as poor if they have less than 50 percent of median income (Raphael, 2013). The United Nations (1995) define overall poverty as having:

...various manifestations, including lack of income and productive resources sufficient to ensure sustainable livelihoods, hunger and malnutrition; ill health; limited or lack of access to education and other basic services; increased morbidity and mortality from illness; homelessness and inadequate housing; unsafe environments; and social discrimination and exclusion. It is also characterised by a lack of participation in decision-making and in civil, social, and cultural life. (p.57)

Thus, CYP experiencing poverty (and participating in this study) “miss out on daily essentials, such as healthy food, warm clothes in winter and new shoes when they need them” (Save the Children, 2013, p.9). In addition to overall
poverty, The United Nations (1995) define absolute poverty as “a condition characterised by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education, and information” (p.57).

The next section outlines how poverty was defined in this research.

1.1.2 Definition of Poverty in this Study
This study has purposefully used the word ‘poverty’ to describe the experience of participants (whilst remaining cognisant of the increasing body of research using ‘inequality’ as the basis of analysis, discussed below). It is the view of the researcher that both overall and absolute poverty continue to exist in the UK. Terms such as ‘disadvantaged’, ‘deprived’ and ‘disaffected’ are used by some researchers as a synonym for poverty. It is this author’s view that some terms have a deficit connotation; they are used in this thesis only when reporting on others’ research.

An indication of poverty for the purposes of this research was CYP who are in receipt of free school meals (FSM). This was used because of limited socio-economic information held by schools. The English Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) measures relative deprivation across small postcode areas in the UK (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2015). Participants’ postcodes could have been used to ascertain whether they were resident in more deprived areas identified by the IMD. However, due to time constraints and other hurdles during the research process (detailed in Chapter 3), this measure was not used.

The use of FSM as an indicator of poverty is a crude measure, as CYP within this group come from varied backgrounds, and it gives no indication of intergenerational poverty. Beckett and Wrigley (2014) state that almost half of students below the poverty line are not entitled to FSM, and point out that some CYP entitled to FSM may come from families with well educated parents who have taken career breaks in order to care for children, and thus do not face severe educational disadvantage. The researcher was cognisant of this when discussing the selection of participants with the school.
Thus, despite the best intentions of the researcher to include a range of participants experiencing poverty in the study, the definition used (of entitlement to FSM) is inherently flawed. The next section explores this in more detail.

1.1.3 Hidden Poverty in the UK
Some absolute poverty in the UK seems to be hidden. For example, an estimated 120,000 children are undocumented migrants, making up 0.9% of the under 18 population (Coram, 2013). There are multiple reasons why some children are undocumented. For example, they may be unaccompanied minors (or accompanied by family members) who have been refused asylum but unable to return to their country of origin due to fear of persecution. Other undocumented children may have been trafficked; be in families who have overstayed visa allowance; or children of families who have entered the UK ‘illegally’. Although legally able to access education, undocumented children are often living in extreme poverty, may be destitute, undernourished, and unable to access appropriate support due to their immigration status (Coram, 2013).

Undocumented children are not entitled to free school meals (FSM), financial support for uniforms, or transport costs to school (Coram, 2013). UK government austerity measures, coupled with a punitive immigration policy and frequent hostile media coverage (Coram, 2013) put these children at increased risks, as fearfulness of detection may prevent engagement with statutory services (Spencer et al. 2014). In addition, friends, family or the voluntary sector are often no longer able to support them (Coram, 2013). Young people in these categories are excluded from this research, due to the criteria of eligibility for FSM. Thus, some absolute poverty in the UK does not benefit from the scrutiny of research to highlight and address issues.

The next section introduces the analysis of inequality, which has become a frequently discussed issue by contemporary researchers. This term and its relationship with poverty is discussed.

1.1.4 Inequality
In more recent years, the concept, terminology and definitions of poverty have been debated and challenged. Lancaster (2014) claims that many people in the
UK do not believe that poverty exists in the true sense of the word. He suggests using the term ‘inequality’ instead of poverty, arguing that it is impossible to refute the rising levels of inequality.

Wilkinson and Pickett (2010) assert that the income differences (or inequality) within a society impact on a range of outcomes including health, education, prison population, and death rates. They argue that poorer people always come off worse; the wider the differences, the worse the outcomes. They term this the ‘gradient effect’. The UK has one of the steepest socioeconomic gradients in the developed world (see Figure 1.1). Thus poorer CYP do worse than their more advantaged peers in the UK than poorer CYP in similar more equal countries (Hirsch, 2007; Wilkinson & Pickett, 2010).

**Figure 1.1: How unequal are different countries?**
(from https://www.equalitytrust.org.uk/scale-economic-inequality-uk)

Mental health is more negatively affected in more unequal countries (The Equality Trust, 2015) and the UK has one of the highest rates of mental distress, as Figure 1.2 illustrates. Poor parental mental health can impact on children’s cognitive, social and emotional development, as well as their mental health (Stanley & Cox, 2009). This in turn, is likely to have a negative impact on their performance at school.
Figure 1.2  The prevalence of mental illness is higher in more unequal rich countries (from https://www.equalitytrust.org.uk/mental-health)

In addition to the varied terminology around poverty, reviews of the literature (see chapter 2 for full detail) show that poverty is often conflated with working-class status in the UK. The next section clarifies use of the term working-class in this thesis.

1.1.5 Working Class

Research often defines CYP in receipt of FSM as working-class (House of Commons Education Committee (HOCEC), 2014). However HOCEC (2014) state that “entitlement to FSM is not synonymous with working-class, but it is a useful proxy for poverty which itself has an association with educational underachievement” (p.11).

The concept of working-class is ill-defined, and there is debate as to whether it is a useful categorisation. While only 34% of adults in the UK are classified as working-class, 57% perceive themselves to be working-class (HOCEC, 2014), indicating considerable discrepancy. The National Union of Teachers (NUT, 2010) assert that there are many working-class communities that are not experiencing poverty, but
...that division by class in the UK is something which can’t be ignored as
...there continues to be a group of people in society whose children are
extremely likely to reproduce the social and economic conditions of their
parents’ lives, if not see a deterioration in life conditions relative to their
parents. (p.3)
Thus, it seems useful to maintain an analysis of class when discussing poverty
and inequality in the UK. Many researchers have pointed out that the issue of
poverty is a political one, pertaining to the distribution of resources by
governments (e.g. Pirrie & Hockings, 2012; Raphael, 2013). This will be
expanded on in the next section.

1.1.6 The Politics of Poverty and Inequality
Raphael (2013) argues that poverty in developed nations is a political issue: “a
nation’s poverty rate is determined in large part by how a nation’s governing
authorities distribute economic and other resources amongst the population,
i.e., politics” (p.5). It has been argued that austerity measures and proposed
welfare reforms introduced by the current Tory government in the UK increase
poverty and the social divides created by inequality (e.g. Beckett & Wrigley,
2014; Biswas-Diener & Patterson, 2011). Despite the aim to eradicate child
poverty by 2020 set out in the Child Poverty Act 2010, child poverty is now
increasing (CPAG, 2015).

Raphael (2013) argues that the dominant narrative in the UK is that poverty is
due to individual failures, which deflects attention away from public policies that
do not ensure a fair distribution of resources. Further, he points out that people
experiencing poverty do not have a voice and are often not included in
community and political life. Thus they do not have the power or influence to
change public policy or find solutions to societal inequality. This study aimed to
address this disenfranchisement by giving a voice to young people experiencing
poverty.

The next section explores more of the local context of educational inequality for
participants in the study.
1.2 Context and Background

1.2.1 The Poverty-Related Attainment Gap

The poverty-related attainment gap is held to be evident in children as young as the age of 22 months, when poorer children have been assessed to be behind their richer peers in developmental tasks and communication (Perry & Francis, 2010; Pirrie & Hockings, 2012). These gaps widen significantly throughout schooling and the life course (Pirrie & Hockings, 2012). For example, only 4% of students eligible for FSM at age 15 go on to study at university, in comparison to 33% of their peers (Perry & Francis, 2010).

The statistics for the English coastal borough in which this study was carried out support this hypothesis. It falls within the 20% highest scoring boroughs in inequality, which measures the highest scoring localities with the lowest (Local Futures, 2010). Almost a quarter of children in the borough experiences poverty, compared with a fifth across England (Public Health England, 2014). The borough has one of the highest attainment gaps in England, ranking 4th out of 326 districts. In 2014 there was a gap of 24% on measures of development between Early Years children eligible for FSM and non-FSM children (Public Health England, 2014). This gap rose to 38.4% at GCSE stage (DfE, 2012); 66.8% of students not eligible for FSM in the borough achieve five or more General Certificates of Secondary Education (GCSEs) at grade A-C, in contrast to 28.2% of FSM students (DfE, 2012).

The current government’s stated aim is to “ensure that a child’s socioeconomic disadvantage does not limit their educational outcomes by age 19, compared to their peers” (HOCEC, 2014, p.5). A raft of legislation and interventions in the last decade has aimed to address the attainment gap, with varying success. Sinclair, McKendrick, and Scott (2010) assert that recent policy is distinct for its increased stress on individual responsibility rather than structural (or systemic) causes of disadvantage and social exclusion. However, more recent policy critiques place more emphasis on the systemic change necessary to close the gap (e.g. Ellis & Sosu, 2015).
The literature about different approaches towards mitigating poverty-related educational inequality will be outlined in the literature review in Chapter 2, to give a sense of the bigger picture and a rationale for this research. The next section situates the researcher within this study, outlining the perspective taken within the research.

1.3 Reflexivity: The Researcher’s Perspective

This section outlines how the researcher’s perspective has impacted on the completion of this study. Willig (2013) points out that any research project is based on assumptions; researchers draw on their own social constructions throughout the process (Mertens, 2010). Thus, researchers should take a step back, consider their social position, values, assumptions, beliefs, biases and relationship with the system, how these impact on the research, and how the ‘data’ in the study is constructed and finalised (Fox, Martin & Green, 2007; Mertens, 2010; Moore, 2005).

Willig (2013) advises consideration of the impact of researchers on their participant(s) e.g. the researcher’s social class, gender, age, or ethnicity can influence dynamics. She urges recognising the double hermeneutic while interpreting data. This is the way participants and researchers interpret and influence each other throughout the process. Willig (2013) advises including clear and informative information on the researcher's position (see below). Additional monitoring of the researcher’s position was done through the use of a reflective diary and supervision with two academic supervisors (Fox et al. 2007; Mertens, 2010).

I (the researcher) am a white, middle class trainee educational psychologist, born in Liverpool. Following a childhood spent in different countries and attending 10 schools, I have spent most of my adult life living in Glasgow, Scotland. I have a long interest in equality issues and became politicised during my undergraduate student days (1986-89), during the Thatcher administration. I began my involvement in the feminist movement and other political campaigning during this period.
My experiences as a young single parent bringing up my daughter (born 1990) in Glasgow have given me first hand insight into the prejudice of others. This was during a time when single parents were media scapegoats for all kinds of societal problems (e.g. Atkinson, Oerton, & Burns, 1998 refer to the early 1990s as when “discourses of vilification” (p.1) of lone parents were dominant).

I worked as a community worker for 3 charities in Glasgow over a period of 12 years, working with children, young people, and families from a variety of backgrounds. Some of my work was with families who were in the asylum system, and with Roma families, who had often been forced to live on the margins of society. This confirmed to me the existence of absolute poverty in the UK (see above discussion on poverty). Many families were in severely overcrowded accommodation, and often denied support through the UK welfare system. Their survival was dependent on friends or family (if they had any), and voluntary and church-based organisations. I was involved in work to support and campaign with people to get their most basic needs of food, shelter and clothing met. I strongly believe that all people in our society (and all societies) should have equal opportunities to thrive, and injustice of any kind should be addressed.

These views have influenced my choice of thesis topic. Children do not choose the circumstances they are born into and I believe that EPs could do more to mitigate the effects of poverty, which often impacts on outcomes in school and later life. My belief is that listening to the views of children and young people experiencing poverty should be part of the solution to poverty-related educational inequality, a belief which I have designed this research study around. I am interested in finding out how young people experience school and learning, and the meanings that they ascribe to education. This is with a view to thinking about how things could be different in the education system, and how it could be more equal and inclusive.

1.4 Hearing the Voice of Children and Young People

Previous research has shown that YP experiencing poverty are disadvantaged within the education system, due to a myriad of complex reasons. This study
took a strengths-based approach advocated by Seligman (e.g. 2002), the founder of Positive Psychology. This approach is in keeping with the EP ethos of promoting positive change by advocating on behalf of CYP (Beaver, 2011). It also aimed to counteract the dominant deficit narrative about CYP experiencing poverty (and their families) in the literature on poverty-related educational inequality (see literature review in Chapter 2). Central to the research is listening to the voice of young people, in order to address the lacunae of research in this area.

Some legislation has recognised and enshrined the rights of CYP to have their views taken into account in decisions affecting them (Harding & Atkinson, 2009). This includes the Children and Families Act (2014) in England, and international declarations such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), of which the UK is a signatory.

The research used a tool devised by Gersch and Lipscombe (2015) – The Little Box of Big Questions 2 (LBBQ2), as well as questions devised by the researcher. These tools will be discussed in more detail in subsequent chapters.

1.5 Research Questions

As discussed, this research was interested in eliciting the views of YP in years 7 and 8 (age 13-14) on school, learning and the future. Strengths-based Positive Psychology was used and themes relating to how educational psychologists can address the issue were extrapolated from the data. The research questions were:

i. What do YP experiencing poverty think helps them to learn at school? What do they think are the barriers to learning?

ii. What skills and resources do YP experiencing poverty think they bring to education? What additional skills do they think they need?

iii. How do YP experiencing poverty think they could be supported in planning for the future?
1.6 Overview of the Thesis

Chapter 1: Introduction - justifies poverty-related educational inequality as the area of research and sets it in a national and local context. New knowledge that will be generated by the research is outlined, along with the research questions. Key terminology used in the research is defined, and the researcher’s position explained.

Chapter 2: Literature review - provides a narrative review on the topic of poverty-related educational inequality. The literature is critically analysed and linked to the current study.

Chapter 3: Methodology and data collection - sets out the research design (thematic analysis), and clarification of the ontological and epistemological position taken by the researcher. A detailed and clear description of how the data was collected is provided.

Chapter 4: Findings - the findings of the study are set out in detail, themes and subthemes are described in detail. Quotes from participants are used to back up thematic analysis.

Chapter 5: Discussion - discusses the findings in the context of the research questions and previous research. The limitations of the findings are acknowledged and implications for further research and for EP practice are discussed. The researcher’s learning from the project is articulated. The chapter finishes with a conclusion of the study.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will give a broad overview of the diverse research in the area of poverty-related educational inequality, to set out a rationale for this study. A narrative review was undertaken, for reasons outlined below. As will be discussed in this chapter, much of the research around poverty-related educational inequality omits the voice of the child. This thesis aimed to address this gap.

The principle focus of this research was on listening to YP experiencing poverty; eliciting their views on school, learning and the future. As outlined in the introduction, the EP role is distinctive in listening to and advocating on behalf of CYP (Beaver, 2011). A subsidiary argument of this thesis, which will be expanded on in the discussion in Chapter 5, is for increased recognition of the EP role in addressing poverty-related educational inequality. This is important because, despite the extensive literature on the topic of poverty and education in various disciplines (e.g. sociology, social policy, school improvement, psychology), no studies from a UK educational psychology perspective were found. It is the researcher’s view that more awareness of this issue in EP research and literature is needed in order to address poverty-related educational inequality affecting many CYP in the UK.

Following an introductory section explaining the process undertaken in reviewing the literature, the review comprises of four sections. The first section explores the voice of the child on poverty-related issues in education. The following three sections explore different approaches taken towards explaining and addressing poverty-related educational inequality in the literature: the social and cultural capital of the family; school systems, teaching and leadership (including ‘the London effect’); and psychological factors. The conclusion will summarise the argument presented in the chapter and introduce the next chapter.
2.1.1 Narrative Review Strategy

Poverty-related educational inequality is a very comprehensive topic, and has been addressed in a diversity of academic disciplines, including social policy, sociology, and psychology. Due to the difficulty in pinpointing relevant articles using a systematic approach, a narrative review was carried out. A narrative review draws conclusions from different studies and brings them together into a holistic interpretation (Educational Research Review, 2007). Articles viewed by the researcher as relevant and important to the research questions were selected to be included in the review.

Narrative methods can introduce more author bias, due to researcher subjectivity both in deciding which journal articles to include, and around interpretation of the included articles (Green, Johnson & Adams, 2006). Previous research has shown that the conclusions drawn from one narrative review can be radically different from the same review written by a different author, when the same articles are reviewed (Randolph, 2009). However, a narrative review is arguably more useful when reviewing broad, complex areas with numerous issues (Hammersley, 2001).

Journal articles were accessed by the researcher between October 2014 and January 2016. Papers dated from 2000 to August 2015 were included, due to the fast changing nature of the policy context. The search terms included:

Poverty, education*, UK, inequality, attainment gap, achievement gap, underachievement, working-class, social class, deprivation, disadvantage, educational psychology, Positive Psychology, psych*, young people, intervention, social justice, school, socio-economic, school improvement, pupil voice, student voice

Articles not relating to the UK or USA context were excluded. This was done as the UK has a distinctive policy context which may not be comparable to other countries. Psychological research conducted in the USA was included, due to the dearth of psychological research on this topic in the UK. Reference lists in relevant articles were scanned to locate further relevant journal articles. As the topic of poverty-related educational inequality is never far from the news, a ‘Google alert’ was set up to monitor news reporting on the topic (this sends an email whenever a news item is reported on the topic). Please see Appendix A.
for more information on the narrative review, including the search process and inclusion/exclusion criteria.

2.2 Research: Poverty-related Educational Inequality

Ellis and Sosu (2015), in a briefing commissioned by the Scottish Government to review what education providers can do about poverty-related educational inequality, assert that this is an issue for all schools and local authorities. However, despite the well documented relationship between poverty and attainment, there is little UK research evidence to show what strategies and interventions work to raise attainment in children and YP experiencing poverty (Sharples, Slavin, Chambers & Sharp, 2011). There is more international evidence, which limits application of the findings to a UK context due to cultural differences (Sharples et al. 2011).

Attainment has been found to be attributable to a complex interplay of factors in the systems surrounding CYP (e.g. NUT, 2010; Perry & Francis, 2010); there are no easy answers to the issue of poverty-related educational inequality. Research suggests the success of interventions is dependent on context, and should be tailored to individuals, neighbourhoods and schools (e.g. Sharples et al. 2011; Sosu & Ellis, 2014; Yeager & Walton, 2011). Some of the most prominent factors discussed in the literature are the social and cultural capital of the family (including aspirations and educational level of parent/carer/s); school systems, teaching and leadership; and psychological factors such as resilience and student mind-set. Pirrie and Hockings (2012) point out that recent policy and academic literature concentrates on

...fixing the child, fixing the family, fixing the school and fixing the community rather than on addressing more fundamental issues relating to social justice: namely systemic issues relating to fairness and equality, especially in terms of state distribution of resources, opportunities, and benefits. (p.10)

Thus, while the research around interventions discussed in this section may go some way towards mitigating poverty-related educational inequality, wider
political reform is needed to address the structural causes (Connelly, Sullivan & Jerrim, 2014).

The first section of this review explores previous research which has involved CYP.

2.2.1 The Voice of the Child

Gersch, Lipscomb and Potton (forthcoming) highlight that there are “moral, legal and pragmatic reasons for involving children as fully as possible in assessment and education” (p.8). Arguably the most useful approach to understanding and enabling YP is asking the right question(s) (Ravenette, 1999). This study aimed to ask the right questions in order to understand more about the educational experiences of YP living in poverty (the questions will be discussed further in Chapter 3). This was with a view to finding appropriate ways of supporting these (and other) YP to raise their attainment school. This fills a gap in the research literature as, although EPs have added to the body of research eliciting the views of CYP, no research specifically focusing on the relationship between poverty and attainment was found. A selection of questions focusing on learning and the future, from The Little Box of Big Questions 2 (LBBQ2) (Gersch & Lipscomb, 2015) was used in this study (outlined in full in Chapter 3). The LBBQ (editions 1 and 2) is a tool to elicit CYP’s views, with the explicit aim of linking responses to questions to actions for change and development (Gersch, Lipscomb, Stoyles & Caputi, 2014). Professor Gersch, the lead author of the LBBQ2, is an EP practitioner, researcher, and a leading proponent of eliciting the voice of the child. He supported the researcher personally throughout the process of research.

Studies Eliciting the Voice of CYP Experiencing Poverty on Education

Riley and Docking (2004) consulted YP from ‘socially disadvantaged areas’ about their experiences of school. Relationships were a dominant theme; there was often a lack of trust between teachers and students. Many students felt their learning needs were not understood, their views were unheard, that they were not viewed as individuals in school, and that the conformism expected of them was de-motivating. The authors made recommendations, including curriculum reforms, adequate teacher training around poverty, and establishing
mutual trust between students and teachers. While the study is useful in illuminating YP’s views, there are a number of methodological issues. The study is 11 years old, which makes it dated in a fast changing policy context. The terminology used is problematic. For example the authors appeared to equate YP experiencing poverty with ‘disaffection’, took a deficit view and often failed to recognise strengths. In addition, participant selection process was not explained - no measures were outlined on how participants were defined as ‘disadvantaged’ or ‘disaffected’.

Beckett and Wrigley (2014) carried out research similar to the current study. They interviewed YP experiencing poverty, asking questions about their lives outside of school. The authors were critical of the heavily standardised curriculum in English schools, which was noted to fail to bridge and build on the knowledge and experience CYP have, and can access in their extended families. They reiterate Riley and Docking’s (2004) argument for more teacher-training around issues of poverty. They recognise the constraints faced by schools in the struggle to meet targets and Ofsted (Government Office for Standards in Education) requirements. The authors, although not EPs, have a similar ethos – recognising the importance of acknowledging student strengths, and incorporating YP’s views into school reform. However, there are methodological limitations – most of the sample was boys, the exact number of participants or their ages was not specified, and the selection process was not defined.

Three similar studies carried out in collaboration with CYP on the impact of poverty on education have been carried out in Scotland (Elsley, 2014), England (Holloway, Mahoney, Royston, & Mueller, 2014) and Wales (Save the Children, 2013), with overlapping findings. YP surveyed thought having a home, an education, their basic needs met and a supportive family were the most important factors to achieve their potential at school (Elsely, 2014; Save the Children, 2013). Low confidence and self worth was identified as a barrier to learning (Save the Children, 2013). Students asserted that a safe place to learn, one-to-one support from other students, someone to talk about home and school, and a special fund to enable CYP to pay for school equipment and trips were vital (Save the Children, 2013). The reports also recommended school
transparency and consultation with YP in the use of pupil premium funding (Holloway et al. 2014); teacher-training to improve understanding of poverty issues; and Ofsted inspections to incorporate evidence of how schools support their poorest students (Holloway et al. 2014). While these reports are an important addition to the literature on poverty-related inequality in education, giving children and YP a voice, they are not done from an EP perspective. The recommendations are mainly practical and do not fully explore psychological aspects of the issues.

Hirsch (2007), in a review of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation’s Education and Poverty Programme, emphasises that involving ‘disaffected’ (his term) YP in discussions about their own futures is one of the most effective approaches to addressing educational inequality. He states that CYP experiencing poverty are more likely to feel a lack of control in their learning, and to feel unconfident about school. He stresses the importance of positive relationships between school staff and disadvantaged CYP and their families. He also emphasises the importance of homework: stating that CYP living in poverty tend to get less regular help from adults to do their homework, and do not always have access to environments conducive to doing homework. While the Joseph Rowntree Foundation has produced a very useful body of knowledge around poverty issues, these have been done more from a social policy perspective than an EP perspective. Thus, there are limits to their use in an EP analysis of the issue of poverty-related educational equality.

Research reviewed in this section shows the paucity of research in the area of educational equality that includes the views of CYP, with none from an EP perspective. Many of the research outcomes link to what it would be possible for EPs to do at a systemic level, both in schools and in a wider policy context. There are also methodological limitations in the research outlined above. Both of these points provide justification for this thesis, which aims to address gaps in EP research and awareness, and in the wider research into the relationship between poverty and attainment. This was done by listening to YP experiencing poverty’s views on education and learning.
Most children’s initial learning begins and is sustained at home with the family (National Literacy Trust, 2011). Research around the influence of the family on children’s attainment is explored in the next section.

2.2.2 The Social and Cultural Capital of the Family

One of the main discourses in the literature on school attainment is around aspirations (e.g. Berzin, 2010; Cabinet Office, 2008; Stahl, 2012). Parent/carer/s, families and communities are asserted to be most influential on YPs’ aspirations, and aspirations one of the most important predictors of educational attainment. In much of this research YP experiencing poverty, and their parent/carer/s, are criticised for having low aspirations. However many studies have found that YP and parent/carer/s experiencing poverty have high aspirations, despite having low attainment at school (e.g. Educational Endowment Foundation (EEF), 2014; Sinclair, McKendrick & Scott, 2010; Sosu & Ellis, 2014; St-Clair, Kintrea & Houston, 2011).

St-Clair et al. (2011) suggest that despite having high aspirations, YP do not have knowledge of the strategies or pathways towards achieving their aims; or that aspirations are not realised due to barriers arising from inequality. There is evidence to support this argument. In the Cabinet Office (2008) report on aspiration and attainment amongst YP in deprived communities, many YP surveyed stated that they needed more support to reach their goals in life. Sinclair et al (2010) assert that the education system does not inculcate the skills necessary for successful and sustained employment and/or training. This suggests that YP need better information in fitting together schooling, post-compulsory education and work (St-Clair et al. 2011).

Ellis and Sosu (2015) categorically state that parents in poverty do not have low aspirations for their children. This is backed up by evidence e.g. Riley and Docking (2004) found that parents of ‘deprived’ CYP were very invested in education for their child. Ellis and Sosu (2015) argue that parents often do not have the knowledge, networks, and resources to enable their child to navigate through challenges at school, and need more support with this. However, interventions aiming to increase parental involvement to support their children’s learning at school have had varied success (EEF, 2014). Ellis and Sosu (2015)
stress that, to succeed, schools should encourage and support more meaningful, and less tokenistic, parental involvement in their child’s education. This could be done, they suggest, through regular group-based home-school collaboration. This collaboration could enable parents to learn skills to support their children to learn more effectively, assist with homework, or read with and talk to their child. This is clearly an area in which EPs could be involved. For example by supporting schools to devise workshops for parents to explain school systems, and/or outline strategies that could be used to support their children with homework.

Evans (2006) carried out research on a ‘deprived’ housing estate in Central London, aiming to understand why working-class white children were failing in school. She used the term working-classes, of which working-class white children were a subset, arguing that working-class people are not a homogenous group. She concluded that working-class status, values and ways of being in the world conflict with what is required for success in formal education, which is imbued with a middle-class bias. Evans (2006) argues that schools should recognise what is important to working-class YP, in order to make learning more meaningful for them. This idea is reinforced by other researchers (e.g. Beckett & Wrigley, 2014; Connelly et al. 2014) who point out the challenges of CYP moving between neighbourhood and school cultures, when there may be a wide gulf between them. These researchers assert that schools should try to understand the cultural context of their students, and recognise the skill set that each young person brings to school. This would uncover a potential that is currently not capitalised on, due to the time pressures of delivering a rigid curriculum which does not equally value a range of skills and interests (Connelly et al. 2014).

While the research discussed in this section is useful; the voices of CYP are largely absent. Evans’ research provides ‘food for thought’ and pointers around why working-class children appear to be being failed by the school system. Her work is based on spending extended periods of time interacting with students in school, and interviewing parents; thus, children’s views are included. However, the poverty-related attainment gap in London schools has improved dramatically since her research was completed (e.g. Baars et al. 2014).
next section will explore research on the role of school systems, and how they relate to poverty and attainment.

### 2.2.3 School systems, teaching and leadership

There is a lack of convergence in the literature around the role that schools play in poverty-related educational inequality, although increased attention is being paid to this area, as will be outlined in this section.

Hirsch (2007) claims that only 14% of variation in attainment is accounted for by school quality. He asserts that other factors, in and out of school, should be explored. However, reforms such as the London Challenge school improvement programme (see below) refute this claim, as significant inroads into closing the poverty-related attainment gap have been made. A subsequent report by Macleod, Sharp, Bernardinelli, Skipp and Higgins (2015) also challenges this view. They conclude that “between one and two-thirds of the variance between schools in disadvantaged pupils’ attainment can be explained by a number of school-level characteristics” (p.12). As will be argued in this section, research suggests that school quality can account for variations in student attainment.

The school system has changed considerably since Hirsch’s (2007) claims. Changes include budget cuts through government austerity measures (Smith, 2015), along with a greatly expanded academies programme and the introduction of free schools in 2010. This new system has been criticised for creating schools from market forces (marketisation), and producing increased fragmentation and divisions in the education system (Gillard, 2011).

Academies were introduced in 2000 to improve failing schools (usually serving students from disadvantaged backgrounds). Academies are run by a board of governors, receive funding directly from the government, and have more freedom in the way they are run as they are devolved from local authority control. This results in a non-standardised provision. In 2010 there were around 200 academies in England, now there are almost 5,000 (Hutchings, Francis & Kirby, 2015). Recent evaluation suggests significant variation in outcomes for academy students. Some ‘disadvantaged’ students have improved their outcomes (Hutchings et al. 2015). However, sponsored academies (transferred
to academy status as part of a government intervention strategy) are twice more likely to be below standard than local authority schools (Hutchings et al. 2015).

Connelly et al. (2014) state that increasing parental choice and school autonomy resulting from the recent marketisation of education has not increased the attainment of CYP experiencing poverty. Indeed some researchers argue that marketisation has worked against CYP experiencing poverty, as their families are not as adept at working the system (e.g. Perry & Francis, 2010). Connelly et al. (2014) point out that CYP experiencing poverty attending schools with more students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds perform better than those at schools with more students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. They suggest that systems such as banding (where proportionate school places are provided to students from each ability group) and school lotteries (where student places are allocated randomly) may address this disparity. However Macleod et al. (2015) refute this, asserting that “schools with a higher proportion of disadvantaged pupils were associated with higher performance among disadvantaged pupils” (p.11), and vice versa. This disparity shows that it is hard to generalise about what works to improve learning for students experiencing poverty as the ‘evidence’ can be conflicting.

Riley and Docking (2004) found wide differences between schools, which they attributed to school ethos, suggesting that school policies, head-teachers and teachers make a difference to school experience for students. Parents in their study viewed the punitive practices of schools as the biggest barrier to their child’s learning. The authors suggest a move away from behaviour management, towards more creative and inclusive teaching methods that embrace difference, stating that the current curriculum is not suitable for all students. They assert the importance of mutual respect, arguing that the stress experienced by many teachers can be detrimental to relationships, resulting in “some teachers...humiliating students” (p.177). They argue that there is a lack of opportunity for interaction in class, forcing students into a passive learning role. However, there are methodological issues with their study, as outlined in section 2.2.1.
School funding appears to be linked to attainment when used optimally (Connelly et al. 2014; Ellis & Sosu, 2015). Pupil Premium funding has been allocated to English schools since 2011, based on the number of students registered for FSM (and students who have been in local authority care for more than 6 months), in order to facilitate schools to support ‘disadvantaged’ students tackle barriers to learning. Carpenter et al. (2013) carried out an evaluation of Pupil Premium funding. Although the authors stress that it is too early to assess the impact of funding on attainment, the evaluation documented the implementation of a range of support, including buying additional EP time spent in school (in areas where EPSs are able to respond to increases in demand). However, concurrent budget cuts due to the UK government austerity agenda was reported to have simultaneously reduced schools’ access to EPs, which constrained their ability to address disadvantage (Carpenter et al. 2013). Schools were reported to have used Pupil Premium funding to maintain EP provision previously funded through other sources. This provides useful evidence to show that EPs are utilised as part of the solution when addressing poverty-related educational inequality. Sadly, this is not acknowledged in the extensive literature on the topic. This suggests that EPs should do more to raise their profile and be explicit about what they can do to address poverty issues in schools.

Connelly et al. (2014) argue that CYP experiencing the stress of poverty are more likely to have social, emotional and mental health needs, which detract from learning at school. They assert that to address this, teaching quality is vital. Beckett and Wrigley (2014) stress the importance of relationships and propose that more specialist staff are needed in schools (e.g. community educators, family counsellors, mentors). These staff can build relationships and provide support to students in need, giving teachers more time to focus on academic needs. Well implemented nurture groups are recognised interventions that focus on relationships to address poverty-related social and emotional needs (Sosu & Ellis, 2014).

As with most of the research described in this chapter, research on school improvement has rarely included the views of CYP experiencing poverty. Despite this, perhaps some of the most persuasive evidence for the potential
role of schools in reducing poverty-related attainment is to be found in the school reforms carried out in London. This is described in the next section.

The London Effect
Judged by relative performance in examinations and in Ofsted inspections, London schools now outperform schools in the rest of England and achieve the highest proportion of students obtaining five good GCSEs, the highest percentage of schools rated ‘outstanding’ by Ofsted, and the highest GCSE attainment for pupils from poorer backgrounds (Baars et al. 2014, p.8).

Analysis of figures for London from 2000-2014 has shown that the attainment gap between students eligible for FSM and non-FSM students is now smaller than in the rest of England. Prior to 2000, the attainment gap in London was wider than the rest of England. Closure of the attainment gap is more marked in inner London. Students experiencing poverty in London are now 50% more likely than poor students elsewhere to get 5 GCSEs A* to C and to continue into Key Stage 5 (post-16) education (Greaves, Macmillan & Sibieta, 2014). Similar, but smaller, improvements have also been observed in Birmingham and Manchester, although disadvantaged students in these areas are less likely to continue to Key Stage 5.

This improvement is clearly of huge importance to research and practice around reducing poverty-related educational inequality. It refutes many theories discussed in this chapter on the perpetuation of inequality in the education system, shifting the focus from families to schools. However, there is disagreement among researchers in explaining the reason for the London effect, due to a lack of built-in evaluation. London school reforms were retrospectively evaluated, which introduces significant limitations in explaining cause and effect.

Baars et al (2014) argue that there was no one formula, but rather a paradigm shift, with different London boroughs using a range of different approaches according to need. Funding per pupil is consistently higher in London compared to other areas, which some researchers have attributed to the closing of the attainment gap (Baars et al. 2014). However, the authors argue that funding has
been higher even in the past, when London schools’ outcomes were significantly below other national areas.

Baars et al. (2014) claim that four major interventions improved teaching and leadership: the London Challenge (Ofsted, 2010); Teach First (2016); the academies programme; and increased support from local authorities. Embedded in these interventions was the effective use of personalised tracking data in schools, which the authors cite as crucial. This enabled schools to spot underperformance early, and plan targeted interventions based on individual information to stabilise or raise attainment.

London Challenge was a cross-party series of policies in school improvement from 2002-2011. The scheme encompassed a combination of approaches focusing on establishing a strong professional culture in secondary schools (launched in primary schools in 2008). Independent advisors identified support needs for individual schools (e.g. training, leadership, inter-school collaboration) and helped to establish a coherent ‘theory of change’ (Baars et al. 2014). An ethos of optimism and high expectations was key, with a ‘no excuses’ culture towards serving more disadvantaged students (Baars et al. 2014).

Teach First was introduced in secondary schools in London in 2003 (and primary schools in 2011), before being rolled out to the rest of England. The scheme aimed to bring high achieving graduates into ‘deprived’ schools, addressing the teacher and head-teacher recruitment crisis. Currently, 6% of the London teaching population are derived from the scheme (Baars et al. 2014). Evaluations have shown a moderately positive impact on attainment (Allen & Allnutt, 2013).

Baars et al. (2014) assert that the academies programme enabled failing schools in London to successfully change their governance processes. While this may be true for some academies, evidence cited earlier in this chapter refutes this claim as there are huge variations in outcomes for YP attending academies. In addition, Machin and Silva (2013) argue that school academy conversions between 2002 and 2007 benefitted students in the upper 20%
ability bracket, with little evidence of benefit for students in the lower 20% ability range.

The importance of local authority support was stressed as key to success in the London interventions. The Borough of Tower Hamlets saw particularly marked transformation in closing the poverty-related attainment gap, which is attributed to the support and ‘buy in’ of the local authority (Woods et al. 2013).

Greaves et al. (2014) argue that London schools were already beginning to close the attainment gap before the London Challenge. They assert that higher attainment was attributable to changes in primary schools during 1999-2003, not secondary schools from 2002. They hypothesise that National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, which were piloted in many London boroughs during that time, could explain the London Effect. The authors conclude that early intervention in primary school to ensure basic skills, followed by secondary school support to ensure that students stay on track are key in decreasing the attainment gap. However, Beckett and Wrigley (2014) propose that literacy and numeracy skills are only part of the picture and that a wider ranging curriculum and more focus on ‘soft skills’ e.g. self confidence, are key to closing the attainment gap.

Burgess (2014) argues that the increased ethnic diversity of students in London makes for greater aspiration and engagement for all ethnicities, resulting in increased attainment. He maintains that an integrated and multi-racial school system facilitates ‘spill-over’ of raised attainment from minority ethnic students to white British disadvantaged students through peer interaction. However Baars et al. (2014) refute this claim, arguing that both previous underperformance and improved outcomes are shared across ethnic groups in London, including white students.

The different approaches by researchers on school systems are not incompatible, and it could be argued that they are looking at different parts of a complicated whole. The aggregated research seems to suggest that school systems affect student outcomes more than previously thought, and that this is applicable throughout all formal schooling, from nursery to higher education.
Embedded in school culture are the attitudes of staff towards students, and a ‘no excuses’ culture may go some way towards mitigating prejudice held by some staff towards more disadvantaged students, promoting inclusion and a more productive learning environment. As argued previously, this is an area where EPs have the potential to make a contribution, as part of the focus of the role is on systemic work.

**School Effectiveness Research**

The effective schools movement grew out of the USA in the 1970s and has now been adopted worldwide (Hopkins, Stringfield, Harris, Stoll & Mackay, 2014). It originated as a way of challenging poverty-related educational inequality and is based on social justice principles (Lezotte, 2001). The premise of the approach is that students of all backgrounds have the ability to learn and should be given opportunities to succeed at school on a par with their peers, regardless of socio-economic status or family background (Lezotte, 2001). The movement shifted the focus of responsibility from individuals and minority groups, who had previously been blamed for the fact that many of them weren’t achieving in education, to schools. It is based on the concept of organisational health and the social psychological theories of Lewin (1947), who focused on how organisations influence the behaviour of their members (Hopkins et al. 2014). This could easily link with the systemic work done by EPs.

School effectiveness researchers have tried to determine which school characteristics result in successful learning for CYP experiencing poverty and other minority groups, who are often failed by the education system. The movement became popular in the UK; Sammons, Hillman and Mortimore (1995), in a review of the research, constructed eleven factors for effective schools, documented in the table below:
### Table 2.1 Eleven Factors for Effective Schools
From Sammons et al. 1995 p.71

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELEVEN FACTORS FOR EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firm and purposeful</td>
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<tr>
<td>A participative approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The leading professional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared vision and goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unity of purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistency of practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collegiality and collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A learning environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An orderly atmosphere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An attractive working environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concentration on teaching and learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximisation of learning time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic emphasis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purposeful teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficient organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity of purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structured lessons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptive practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High expectations all round</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing intellectual challenge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive reinforcement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear and fair discipline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring pupil performance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluating school performance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pupil rights and responsibilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Raising pupil self esteem</td>
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<tr>
<td>Positions of responsibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>Control of work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Home-school partnership</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parental involvement in their children’s learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A learning organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School-based staff development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interestingly, many of the factors in the table were used in school improvement measures producing the London effect, described above. Although school effectiveness was not mentioned in any reports on the London effect, it was clearly an influence. Perhaps this could be more explicitly taken up by anti-poverty campaigners in education.

Student voice is notably absent in the analysis of the London effect, alluded to fleetingly only once in the Baars et al. (2014) report. Similarly, student voice takes a very low profile in the 11 factors of effective schools (above), it could perhaps be included under the ‘Pupil rights and responsibilities’ factor.
The contribution of EPs is also absent from the both analyses, again showing the diminished profile of the work of EPs in poverty-related educational inequality. There is clearly a psychological aspect of the research outlined thus far, although it has not been carried out by psychologists nor made explicit. Psychology will be explored more in the next section, which outlines research that has been carried out from a psychological perspective aiming to support and enable students experiencing poverty to learn (and hence achieve) more at school.

2.2.4 Psychological Factors
This section will outline some of the psychological interventions that have been used to address poverty-related educational inequality. A range of interventions used will be described, and then critiqued.

Cambridge Dictionaries Online (2016) defines psychological as “relating to the human mind and feelings”. The psychological approach to poverty-related educational inequality usually (but not exclusively) takes the stance that CYP experiencing poverty may need support to change how they think about themselves, school, and/or learning (e.g. Winerman, 2011). For example, they may feel that they don’t belong in school, or they may feel the effects of teachers who display prejudice towards students experiencing poverty.

The psychological approach to minimising poverty-related educational inequality is based on the idea that students should be supported to experience positive wellbeing. As set out in the introduction, the existence of poverty and inequality can mitigate against this, which in turn impacts on learning.

The Association of Educational Psychologists in the UK set out a manifesto for children and young people prior to the general election in May 2015 (AEP, 2015). This included a call for future governments to support the psychological wellbeing of all CYP through the provision of support, and taking measures to address the societal inequality that creates poverty and impacts on wellbeing. Sadly, since the Tories won the general election, societal inequality appears to be increasing (Harrop, 2015). The Fabian Society project that by 2030, as a result of policies announced by the government in May 2015, 1.9 million more
children will be in poverty, if decisions made in 2015 go unchanged (Harrop, 2015).

Anecdotal evidence suggests that EP practice routinely addresses poverty-related issues using a variety of approaches to promote wellbeing (e.g. nurture groups, mindset interventions, attachment training). However, this is hard to justify as only one UK research paper (around mindsets) was found to back-up this claim (Rienzo, Rolfe & Wilkinson (2015) - discussed below). For this reason, research from the USA has been included in this section.

It is claimed that a psychological approach taken in schools can do much to mitigate the effects of poverty on students; outcomes from interventions in the USA are claimed to have reduced attainment gaps months (and years) later (e.g. Yeager & Walton, 2011). Timing is held to be key (interventions are best carried out at the beginning of the academic year or during important transitions), and recursive interventions more effective (Yeager & Walton, 2011). Using different interventions to target different barriers to achievement are argued to accrue cumulative effects (Yeager & Walton, 2011). Some interventions, mostly conducted in the USA, will be outlined below.

**Stress, Emotional Regulation and Resilience**

Suggestions of interventions to reduce stress and help regulate feelings have included mindfulness, students writing about their stress, and nurture groups (Carpenter et al. 2013; Sosu & Ellis, 2014; Spitzer & Aronson, 2015). However, although this is an area of expertise for educational psychologists, this is not backed up by any research specifically addressing poverty-related educational inequality.

**Mindsets: growth and belonging**

A growth mindset is the “belief that intelligence can be developed over time” (Rattan, Savani, Chugh & Dweck, 2015, p.721), while a belonging mindset is the “belief that people like you belong in your school” (Rattan et al. 2015, p.721). Interventions are based on the idea that students with a fixed mindset, who believe that intelligence is fixed and unchangeable, are likely to give up easier than students with a growth mindset, who believe that intelligence can
grow with effort and work (e.g. Spitzer & Aronson, 2015; Yeager & Walton, 2011). Studies fostering a growth mindset in low-income YP (involving coaching on how the brain can grow and develop) have been carried out in the USA (e.g. Blackwell et al. 2007). Participants were held to have significantly higher grades in maths and reading at the end of the year, relative to control groups. More recently, a scaled-up online growth mindset intervention was rolled out to 1,594 students in 13 US high schools – students identified as at risk of dropping out raised their grades by an average of 6.4 percentage points (Paunesku et al. 2015). Psychologists in the USA are currently pushing for mindset interventions to become a national education priority (e.g. Rattan et al. 2015).

A study by Rienzo et al. (2015) evaluated the effectiveness of two interventions carried out in Portsmouth, England. Students participating in 10 growth mindset workshops made an average of 2 additional months’ progress in English and maths, relative to controls. However, this was not statistically significant. Teachers participating in a professional development programme (2 half days) around how they could use mindset ideas in class did not produce any significant effects. Although the interventions were not statistically significant they seem promising and may encourage further research in this area. The authors proposed further research and interventions over a longer period of time.

Character Traits
Character education has also stemmed from the USA and (anecdotally) seems to be gathering popularity in the UK. Tough (2012), a USA based academic, draws on a range of research (including attachment theory and neuroscience) to determine what factors enable CYP experiencing poverty to succeed. He concludes that positive character traits, which can be learnt (e.g. persistence, curiosity, self-control, conscientiousness, self-confidence and grit), are often more important than cognitive skills for CYP’s success. However, there seems to be little research evidence for the effectiveness of the character education approach, particularly in the UK.
‘Possible Selves’
This idea was coined by Markus and Nurius (1986) and pertains to the ideas individuals have about the kind of person they would like to become. These ‘possible selves’ are thought to motivate people to strive towards imagined goals. Interventions based on this approach encourage students to write about how they could be academically successful in the future, including reflecting on overcoming setbacks. Students in a USA study participated in 10 ‘possible selves’ writing sessions. Two years later, participants had higher scores, less absences, were less behaviourally challenging in school, had fewer symptoms of low mood, and were 60% less likely to be elected to repeat 8th grade than a control group (Oyserman et al. 2006). As for other psychological interventions discussed in this section, there was no research found that used this approach in the UK.

Stereotyping and Prejudice
Schools often systematically treat different groups in different ways, and school staff may negatively stereotype CYP from specific neighbourhoods and/or experiencing poverty (e.g. HOCEC, 2014; Beckett & Wrigley, 2014). Horgan (2007) found that CYP were very aware of their social position and the limitations this brings them from an early age. Research has shown that the expectancy that one will be negatively stereotyped at school affects performance (Yeager & Walton, 2011).

Research based on the stereotype threat model argues that if students are encouraged to affirm values that are important to them, it can provide protection from the negative effects of others’ prejudice, reducing achievement gaps. Encouraging students to write about values that are important to them was shown to increase grade points for students in an intervention carried out with YP in the USA (Cohen et al. 2006, 2009). Other American studies have shown that having access to a range of role models can counteract stereotype threat, particularly role models who explain the challenges they faced in reaching their goals (Spitzer & Aronson, 2015). However, for both approaches, although participants were ‘low-income’ the studies took more of a race approach, comparing black with white students. Thus the transferability of results to students experiencing poverty is limited. The studies were also in the different
cultural context of the USA, further limiting the transferability of findings to the UK.

Positive Psychology
Positive Psychology (Seligman 2000, 2002) focuses on strengths, and how these can enhance well-being and enable people to reach their potential. Much of the research reviewed in this chapter takes a deficit approach to CYP experiencing poverty, omitting resilience and strengths. Biswas-Diener and Patterson (2011) point out that “a complete understanding of the lives of those living in poverty must also include well-being, successes and other aspects of positive functioning” (p.126). Their study used a positive perspective in addressing poverty-related issues for YP at school, in order to emphasise strengths and resilience often overlooked. This study adopted the perspective of Positive Psychology and aimed to highlight the strengths that different YP bring to their education.

Critique of Psychological Interventions
There are a range of limitations in the methodology used in the USA studies described above. Although there was evidence of beneficial effects from interventions, they do not seem to be specifically showing effectiveness in poverty-related educational inequality. There was a clear focus on racial differences in US studies. Terms such as ‘low income’ were not explained in any of the studies, and there was frequent conflation between ethnic status and socio-economic status.

It was usually not clear how participants were selected. All of the research found was carried out with adolescents and college students, which limits transferability to younger students. The studies found were only quantitative; there was no qualitative evidence found documenting YP’s views on interventions. The analysis predominantly takes an individual, within-child approach; concentrating on working with CYP to support them to adapt to their environment, rather than adapting the environment to accommodate student needs and diversity. There are also limitations in applying evidence from other cultures to the UK context.
Despite these limitations, there are some possible applications of US research to the UK context. More UK research is desperately needed in this area, including the views of YP on their experiences of interventions.

2.3 Summary

This chapter has outlined some of the current research on poverty-related educational inequality. Research reviewed has been conducted in three main areas: children and YP; families and communities; and schools. As argued, educational psychology has much to offer in all of these areas, to mitigate the effects of poverty and inequality.

Research seems to suggest that, for interventions to work, they should be based on a thorough understanding of individual students, their school, and the neighbourhood context. Each intervention must be tailored carefully. This makes the transference of research interventions from one context to another problematic. Thus, research can only serve as a pointer. Spitzer & Aronson (2015) highlight the need for more guidance on choosing interventions for different contexts. It appears that the best way of finding out what helps YP to learn is by asking them, as was done in this study.

It is important to bear in mind that the research and interventions outlined in this chapter are focused on mitigating the effects of poverty on CYP at school, rather than tackling the root causes. Much of the research does not address wider structural issues causing poverty-related educational inequality:

   Educational reform alone will never be sufficient to address educational inequalities. Poor and overcrowded housing, frequent moves, parental stress, depression and poor health have all been shown to have a detrimental effect on children’s learning, thus social policies on the economy, work, housing and health can all affect educational outcomes (Connelly et al. 2014, p.130).

Addressing the structural causes of poverty is arguably beyond the professional remit of EPs. However, this chapter has highlighted that EPs can and do make a difference. It has also found a dearth of psychological research in the area of
poverty-related educational inequality, and set out an argument for increasing the profile and role of EPs. This would include research with a focus on the views of CYP experiencing poverty; along with accentuating the strengths that CYP experiencing poverty bring to school, in order to counteract the dominant deficit narrative. The current government austerity agenda is placing more children into poverty each year (CPAG, 2015). Thus, it is imperative that EPs are well equipped to address this issue. Beckett and Wrigley (2014) propose the need for “practitioner research which moves beyond the statistics and towards a critical and empathetic understanding of students’ lifeworlds, learning needs and schooling experiences” (p.222).

This thesis intends to address this gap in the research. The next chapter will describe how this was done.
Chapter 3: Methodology and Data Collection

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will provide detail into how this study was carried out. Chapter 2 set out research suggesting that young people experiencing poverty are disadvantaged within the education system, due to a myriad of complex reasons. This study was designed to explore the views of YP experiencing poverty about school, their learning and the future. Qualitative methods were used to elicit young people’s views. The words spoken by eight young people in semi-structured interviews were used as data. These words were re-presented through transcription (Bird, 2005), coded, and arranged into themes using thematic analysis methods set out by Braun and Clarke (2006, 2013). This was done in order to look for meaning and patterns in the data.

It was hoped that this research would add to the body of information around poverty-related educational inequality, and facilitate thinking around ways to improve outcomes in education for children and young people experiencing poverty. The research took a strengths-based approach in order to counteract the deficit narrative which has occupied much of the literature around the attainment gap. The research is particularly important in the EP field as there was no UK research found in the area of poverty and EP practice.

3.2 Design of the Study

A qualitative research design was selected as the aim was to explore the views and experiences of the participants. This would have been impossible to elicit using quantitative methods. As outlined in the literature review, most of the research articles found in the area of poverty-related educational inequality are from disciplines other than psychology (e.g. social policy, sociology) and have precluded the voice of the child/young person; no papers from a British Educational Psychology perspective were found. Most of the psychological research papers found were based in the USA, which poses difficulties in transferring findings to the UK context. The psychological research found also used predominantly quantitative methods (e.g. measuring the effect size of interventions). While quantitative research can be very useful, qualitative
research has the potential to uncover richer, more specific and nuanced information about experiences and contexts that may be valuable in addressing poverty-related educational inequality. For example providing information to guide the selection of interventions in schools, or ideas around how schools can maximise the use of pupil premium payments (discussed in Chapter 2).

As set out in Chapter 2, previous research argues that interventions should be carefully tailored to the specific school and context; this study aims to produce information about specific students at a specific school.

3.3 Research Ontology and Epistemology

Processing qualitative research data involves interpretation, as information gathered cannot be analysed numerically in the way that quantitative data can (Mertens, 2010). Thus, a qualitative approach necessitates that researchers try to understand the meaning that participants’ responses encapsulate. The researcher’s ontological positioning, defined as the beliefs around the nature of reality held by the researcher (Mertens, 2010), affects the understandings and interpretations made from the data.

This thesis takes a social constructionist ontological position. A social construction is defined as “a concept or practice that may appear to be natural, objective and valid to those who accept it, but which, in reality is an invention or artefact of a particular culture or society” (Kelly, 2008, p20-21).

Hence, there is not one ‘true’ and fixed objective reality, but a social reality constructed by people to make sense of the world they live in (Fox, Martin & Green, 2007). This process of constructing reality is closely related to the context in which it occurs, mediated by relationships and language, and situated within a specific time and culture (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Moore, 2005; Willig, 2013).

The social constructionist paradigm posits that while many constructions of reality are shared (and hence social), there are also individually constructed realities. More than one version of reality can exist, even for the same person.
(Braun & Clarke, 2013). For example, the same event may be interpreted differently by different individuals (Fox et al. 2007); similarly an individual may change their interpretation of an event over time. Social constructionism asserts that there is not one objective truth, as in the positivist tradition; rather there are a number of subjective truths, all of which are valid (Willig, 2001).

Researchers need to have an idea of what it is possible for them to find out and do this by adopting an epistemological position (Willig, 2001). The epistemological position refers to the nature of knowledge, “how and what can we know?” (Willig, 2001, p.2). Social constructionism informed the epistemology of this study. The research took the view that education is constructed, experienced, and viewed differently by different people. More information and knowledge was sought around the research questions by consulting with students who have direct experience, to find out their interpretations.

The social constructionist approach was chosen as it acknowledges the multiple world views held by people in a diverse society (Moore, 2005). The aim of the study was to explore the social constructions of school and education by young people who were experiencing poverty. It was expected that while many aspects of the research questions would be shared, each participant would also bring individual or unique experiences and interpretations; the qualitative design aimed to explore these.

3.4 Research Aims, Objectives and Purpose

As outlined, this research aimed to elicit and explore the views around education of YP experiencing poverty in an English coastal borough. The analysis aimed to describe and give voice to the views of YP experiencing poverty. Chapter 2 argued that most research papers found in this area have excluded the voice of CYP, and have been predominantly positivist and quantitative. This study aimed to address the bias in previous research by using a qualitative methodology with a social constructionist underpinning. Positive Psychology was used to counteract the deficit approach taken towards CYP and families experiencing poverty in much of the literature on the topic.
In semi-structured interviews, YP were asked questions about learning, interests, strengths, and support. The aim was to highlight themes that, if addressed, could potentially raise the attainment of young people experiencing poverty. The research questions were:

i. What do young people experiencing poverty think helps them to learn at school? What do they think are the barriers to learning?

ii. What skills and resources do young people experiencing poverty think they bring to education? What additional skills do they think they need?

iii. How do young people experiencing poverty think they could be supported in planning for the future?

3.5 Participant Recruitment

Initially, participants were invited from a non-selective secondary school in an English coastal borough, an area with large educational attainment gaps between richer and poorer students. The school was identified due to its relatively high ratio of students claiming FSM. The school had 28% of students eligible for FSM, and 50.3% of students having been eligible for FSM in the last 6 years (DfE, 2015). However the school pulled out of the study after an Ofsted inspection rated the school as inadequate, and a new head teacher was recruited. Another school was approached and agreed to take part in the research, this school had 6.9% of students eligible for FSM, and 21.5% of students having been eligible for FSM in the last 6 years (DfE, 2015).

Initially the researcher made contact with the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) in the school, to seek interest and gain ‘buy-in’ for the research. The SENCo was keen to go ahead with the research and contacted the head teacher to secure agreement. A letter was provided for the school, accompanied by an A4 information sheet outlining the main aims of the research (see Appendix B). The head teacher agreed to the study, on the proviso that it was done at the end of the day in the participant’s own time.

The school SENCo and assistant SENCo selected 8 possible participants (4 male and 4 female) from Key Stage 3 (years 7 and 8), who they judged would be suitable to participate in the research. The researcher had no input into this
selection process, aside from describing the aims and purpose of the research and stipulating that participants should be in receipt of FSM. While all 8 students selected took part in the research, one interview was stopped early due to the participant having an anxiety attack.

The number of eight participants was chosen as the researcher felt that this would give a sufficient range of views. Braun & Clarke (2013) estimate that 6-10 interviews provides sufficient data for a small thematic analysis project. This was also a manageable number for carrying out the research and data analysis within the allotted time frame. This number of participants can be justified as the purpose of the research was to explore the views of young people experiencing poverty within a specific locality and school. Whilst the findings show that there were individual differences between participants in this project, many of the themes constructed from the data overlapped and were iterated by all eight participants. This indicates that data collection was reaching saturation point, where little new information may have been gleaned with the inclusion of more participants.

The assistant SENCo organised a session where the researcher met with the 8 possible participants, to explain the purpose of the research and invite them to participate. The researcher ensured that all participants were fully aware of what the research entailed by giving an outline to the whole group, reading the consent form out to the whole group, and reading the consent form to each student individually (if they agreed to take part). All of the students agreed to participate and signed an individual consent form in which they acknowledged that they had read the information about the study, agreed to take part, and agreed that the interview could be audio-recorded. Each participant took an information letter about the study home, for parental consent. The parental letter was followed up with a phone call to each of the parents to gain verbal consent; this was done by the school Assistant SENCo to comply with data protection laws. Please see Appendix B for the information sheet, letters, and consent forms used. The section on ethics later in this chapter will outline the considerable thought and discussion that took place regarding how to inform participants and parents about the research without stigmatising them for experiencing poverty.
3.6 Data Gathering method: Semi Structured Interviews

Data was gathered through semi-structured individual interviews, where participants responded to questions using their own words. Open-ended questions were used in order to facilitate a “professional conversation” (Braun & Carke, 2013, p.77). It was hoped that the questions would not impose too much structure on participants’ expression. Thus, questions were selected and constructed that would be flexible enough to enable participants to talk about things that were important to them, and to elicit new and unexpected information around experience and meaning in the area of poverty-related inequality (Willig, 2013). Please see Appendix C for details of the interview questions used in the study.

Each interview began with the researcher reminding participants of what the research was about, why it was being conducted, and giving the opportunity to ask questions. Some unplanned questions were included in interviews, which followed the lead of participants’ responses to questions. These were used to elicit information that was relevant to the research, as well as to try and demonstrate the researcher’s interest in the participant and put them at ease. Silence was used by the researcher, when it seemed appropriate to the progression of the interview; for example if the researcher sensed that the participant could say more about a topic, or if they needed time to think about a response. The researcher was aware of her body language and non-verbal responses to participants, and tried to convey active listening and empathy throughout.

Braun & Clarke (2013) emphasise the active role of the interviewer, acknowledging that meanings are co-constructed by participant and interviewer. The researcher checked meaning with participants throughout the interview, both by reiterating what participants had said, or paraphrasing responses. This paraphrasing could be seen as interpretation on the part of the researcher, contributing to the co-construction process.

Interviews lasted for around an hour (the shortest was 10 minutes due to the participant having an anxiety attack, the longest was 79 minutes). Interviews
were carried out in a designated meeting room in the school at the end of the school day; no more than one interview was held per day, and the interview days were scheduled over a period of 4 weeks. Refreshments (water, biscuits, and sweets) were available for each participant, in order to make them feel comfortable and welcome. Chairs were set up facing at an angle, to ensure the most amenable positioning for the researcher and participant. Each interview was audio-recorded; the recording was stored on a password protected computer and deleted once transcribed, to comply with data protection law.

Two selected cards from the Little Box of Big Questions 2 (LBBQ2) (Gersch & Lipscomb, 2015) were used in the interviews, with added prompt questions, and followed by a supplementary question devised for this research. The LBBQ2 was created in order to explore YP’s views on their learning, behaviour and future. The questions on the 2 cards selected were well suited to the research questions for this study. A lot of prior thought and discussion took place during the construction of the supplementary question, to ensure that the response would capture information sought by the researcher. The LBBQ2 cards had a main question on the front, with sub-questions on the back. Each participant was given the card to hold, so that they could refer to the questions when needed. The researcher had the same questions on an A4 laminated sheet, with additional prompt questions selected from other cards in the Little Box of Big Questions 2. The questions are outlined in table 3.1 below.
Table 3.1: Questions asked in semi structured interview  
(also in Appendix C)

*Thanks to Small World Publishing and Professor Gersch for permission to reproduce the questions here (Gersch & Lipscombe, 2015)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Card 1: How do people learn things?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prompt question (not on card): what helps you to do well at school? Is there anything that stops you from learning at school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Who has been your very best teacher? Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What do you think is the most important thing for you to learn about now?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prompt question (not on card): why? Where can you learn about these things?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What would you like to learn about in the future?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prompt question (not on card): why?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Card 2: What are your dreams for the future?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- What sort of person would you like to be when you are an adult?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prompt question (not on card): what are your key strengths? What do you love doing? What are your passions?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What are your hopes and dreams for the future? How could you achieve your dreams?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prompt question (not on card): if you definitely could not fail, what would you choose to do?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What would you like to achieve in 5 years time? 10 years time? By the time you are a much older person? Who can help you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What plans or goals could you make for this year?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 3:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If you were advising the mayor of [name of borough] what would you tell him/her to do to ensure that every child/young person succeeded at school?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pilot interviews were carried out initially with 4 participants. Despite the researcher’s efforts to put participants at ease, some were hesitant and seemed to not want to talk, or perhaps unable to articulate their thoughts. For this reason, after some reflection and discussion with the research supervisor, it was decided that watching a short video together at the beginning of the
interview may facilitate more discussion. For the remaining 4 interviews one of
two videos were used at the beginning of the session (please find links/copies
of these videos in the accompanying disc in this thesis). The videos were
chosen as their content was relevant to the educational issues being explored in
the research, and it was thought that the YP would relate to them. Use of the
videos appeared to put participants at ease and encourage them to talk more;
each participant was asked about their impressions of the video immediately
after viewing and before presenting them with the LBBQ2 cards. However, it
may have affected their responses to questions; this will be discussed further in
Chapter 5.

Table 3.2: Ice-breaker videos used at beginning of research interviews
(also on accompanying disc)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Video Title</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Voice Curtis: a 7 minute video of a young man talking about his experiences of growing up in a ‘deprived’ community. Curtis shares that one teacher, Mr Boss, changed his school experience in a positive way.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spoken Word - Why I Hate School but Love Education: a 6 minute spoken word performance about education.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.7 Transcription

Transcription is used as a tool to convert speech in interviews to text, in order to
access the knowledge and beliefs of the participants (Lapadat & Lindsay, 1999). In
this study, the transcription process was completed by the researcher using
an orthographic style (Braun & Clarke, 2013), which focused on transcribing spoken words (what was said, and not how it was said). Orthographic transcription was used as the researcher was interested in the subject matter of participant’s responses, rather than how it was said.

The transcription process involved constructing the text through repeated
listening to the recorded interviews using transcription software Express Scribe
(NCH, 2015). All words and most non-semantic sounds uttered (e.g. “mm hmm”
to indicate agreement) during the interviews were recorded in the transcriptions.
Punctuation was used to aid readability, using intonation and language as an
indication of where sentences started and stopped. Any identifying data was
anonymised. Some parts of interviews were inaudible; this is noted in the transcription text. Each transcription was checked in full once completed. Please see Appendix D for a copy of one research interview transcript (Freddie). All of the transcripts are on the accompanying disc.

3.7.1 Critique of Transcription
Close attention by the researcher to recorded interviews is thought to facilitate interpretation of the data (Lapadat & Lindsay, 1999). However, it should be acknowledged that the transcription process has unavoidably incorporated the biases of the researcher: “when representing an oral voice in written form, the transcriber becomes the channel for that voice. Because the transcriber is not that voice, any act of transcription becomes an interpretive act” (Bird, 2005, p. 228).

Various researchers have highlighted the methodological and theoretical issues related to the process of transcription (e.g. Lapadat & Lindsay, 1999). They argue that transcriptions are not objective accounts and cannot be neutral. Thus transcriptions are subject to interpretation according to the knowledge, beliefs and interpretations of the researcher. Encapsulated in this argument is the fact that an interview does not only encompass verbal information, but a number of other influences such as setting, social background of researcher and participant, and nuances of social interaction including body language, tone of voice, volume and timing of speech. All of this information could not possibly be included in a transcription due to time constraints, meaning that it is necessarily selective (Lapadat & Lindsay, 1999). In addition to this, there are a myriad of transcription techniques, with no one standardised approach (Lapadat & Lindsay, 1999).

These limitations evidently apply to this study and to the interpretations made from the data. However, they are perhaps less applicable to the method of thematic analysis used to identify patterns in the data, used in this study. As described below, thematic analysis is more interested in the subject matter of participant’s responses, rather than the way things are said.
3.8 Data Analysis: Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis was chosen for the study because it is a flexible and recognised method in psychological research for organising and constructing trends and meaning in qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Willig, 2013). The researcher considered other methods of analysis before deciding on thematic analysis. Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was ruled out as the research questions were more interested in exploring and analysing YP’s direct experiences, rather than how YP made sense of their experiences. Discourse and Narrative analysis were excluded for similar reasons – the research was more interested in what participants said, rather than how it was constructed and/or said.

Thematic analysis allows the researcher to combine the overall patterns of data (which makes some meanings more obvious within the research) with meanings that may be more hidden (Joffe, 2012). It aims to make sense of what participants have said and why, rather than simply summarising and organising (Willig, 2013). It can also throw light on the process of social construction (Joffe, 2012), which makes it particularly useful for this study.

A theme is a “specific pattern of meaning found in the data” (Joffe, 2012, p.209). Themes can be directly observable or implicit, depending on how the researcher interprets the data. This is related to what Willig (2013) terms “empathic” (p.145) or “suspicious” (p.143) data analysis (also labelled manifest and latent content by Joffe (2012). Empathic analysis tries to understand the participant’s experience from within; suspicious interpretation, on the other hand, aims to reveal a hidden truth to explain why something is the way it is (Willig, 2013). This study used mostly empathic data analysis, although suspicious interpretation was used aspects of the data that were thought to relate more specifically to poverty. The use of analyses will be explained and justified more fully in the findings and discussion chapters.

A further distinction made when constructing themes is whether the data used is deductive or inductive (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Joffe, 2012). Deductive data is structured around the theoretical underpinning brought to the research, while
inductive data is derived from the raw data itself (Boyatzis, 1998; Joffe, 2012). This study used mainly an inductive approach; the researcher was open to new ways of thinking about poverty-related educational inequality, while also using previous research as a framework for organising thinking and analysis.

This study followed the steps outlined by Braun & Clarke (2006) in their seminal paper on thematic analysis in psychology, outlined in Table 3.2 below. As detailed above, the process of transcription enabled the researcher to become familiar with and immersed in the data. During this stage the researcher began to notice patterns and items of interest in the data, in relation to the research questions. These initial observations were documented in a research diary, so they could be referred back to and used in data analysis. This was only one aspect of analysis; Braun & Clarke (2013) caution against relying on researcher observations, as they are not a result of systematic analysis and may reflect the researcher’s biases. Joffe (2012) outlines that a good thematic analysis must describe the majority of the data, not just the data that backs up the researcher’s arguments, and that this should be done systematically in order to claim that the findings are reliable and valid.
Table 3.3 Phases of thematic analysis  
(taken from Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Description of the process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Familiarizing yourself with your data:</td>
<td>Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generating initial codes:</td>
<td>Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Searching for themes:</td>
<td>Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviewing themes:</td>
<td>Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic ‘map’ of the analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defining and naming themes:</td>
<td>Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Producing the report:</td>
<td>The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once transcriptions were complete, they were printed out so that hard copies could be used for manual analysis (recording codes directly onto transcripts). Subsequently, the researcher found it easier to code electronically. Please see Appendix D for an electronically coded transcript (all coded transcripts are on the accompanying disc). Transcriptions were re-read by the researcher several times, following advice from Braun and Clarke (2013) to think about what the data means, reading the text “actively, analytically and critically” (p.205) while holding the research questions in mind.

Initial codes were generated by analysing the longest interview transcript to begin with, which appeared to contain the richest data. This was done in order to generate a range of codes that could (in theory) be applied to subsequent transcriptions. Initially, the majority of data extracts were systematically recorded for coding (by cutting and pasting into another word document), even if they seemed irrelevant to the research questions. This was done in order not to miss aspects of the data, and because the research questions were fairly broad. Braun & Clarke (2013) refer to this as inclusivity in complete coding.
Data extracts (all instances of text selected in the previous step) were cut out into individual strips and collated on a large sheet of paper, these were formed into clusters according to similarity (see Appendix E for photo documentation of this process). The clusters were named according to their perceived meaning, which produced an introductory list of codes (see table in Appendix F). This initial list of codes included data relating to the context; as analysis progressed the codes became shorter.

Assignment of codes was done by using guide questions including “‘what is being described (event, action, interaction)’?, ‘how is it understood (processes) - what does it mean?’, and ‘why?’” (Tuckett, 2005, p.82). Thus, each code aimed to capture the meaning of a section of text. This process informed the researcher of the prevalence codes within the data (Joffe, 2012). Initial coding was done inductively; thus the data was taken at face value and no interpretations were made (Willig, 2013).

Once the initial codes were completed, the researcher re-read the transcript several times to ensure that all relevant text was coded sufficiently, and to allocate additional codes where needed. During this review process, the researcher thought more about the relationships in the data – within and between codes – going from specific to more general ideas or groupings, producing themes. Themes were constructed from combinations of codes that were similar or overlapping, and relevant to answering the research questions. Themes are broader than codes, as they contain many facets and represent patterns of meaning in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Questions posted by Braun and Clarke (2006) were used as a guide during the construction of themes from the data. These included:

- ‘What does this theme mean?’
- ‘What are the assumptions underpinning it?’
- ‘What are the implications of this theme?’
- ‘What conditions are likely to have given rise to it?’
- ‘Why do people talk about this thing in this particular way (as opposed to other ways)?’
- ‘What is the overall story the different themes reveal about the topic?’ (p.94)

After review with the research supervisors, and peer review with cohort members, four provisional themes were produced for the initial transcript, each
with sub-themes (see Appendix F). These provisional themes assisted in organising information for the analysis of the remaining transcripts. These were systematically analysed using the same method, electronically recording codes onto the transcripts. Coding was an iterative process (Tuckett, 2005), each transcript was re-read several times during coding. Some data extracts were coded more than once and new codes were generated, in addition to those from the initial transcript.

During this iterative process, information from individual transcripts was brought together into a holistic overview. As the data was rich and wide ranging, the initial 4 themes were expanded into 11 themes (see Appendix G). After review with research peers and supervisors, these themes were again reduced to 4 overall themes, each with a number of sub-themes; codes were also shortened (see Appendix H). The final codes were further scrutinised for aspects that were interpreted as specifically relating to poverty; these were highlighted in yellow for later analysis.

Themes were mapped visually using Simplemind (2016), an application for iPad. This visual overview facilitated the review and exploration of themes and sub-themes, including their prevalence and the connections between them (Joffe, 2012), in order for the researcher to make sense of the data and to construct a cohesive narrative (Tuckett, 2005). This is referred to by Braun & Clarke (2013) as pattern based analysis. This is based on the assumption that commonly recurring codes and themes across the data set are important. However, more unusual and idiosyncratic codes and themes were also included as meaningful, as they could throw light on information that other participants may have taken for granted, found difficult to discuss, or had been unable to articulate (Joffe, 2012). The end result of the analysis at this stage was a set of ‘distinctive, coherent themes, and a sense of how they fit together and the overall story they tell about the data’ (Braun & Clarke, 2013 p.236).

Braun and Clarke (2013) emphasise the fact that themes are actively constructed by the researcher, and do not ‘emerge’ from the data. It is perhaps important to note that the themes related closely to the organisation of the literature review in Chapter 2, which could show researcher bias in the way that
interview information was organised. Some codes did not fit with any of the themes and were collated into a miscellaneous category, to ensure that they continued to be considered throughout the analysis.

Braun & Clarke’s (2013) “analytic sensibility” (p.201) was held in mind by the researcher throughout the process of thematic analysis. They propose that this is a skill progressively developed by researchers. It includes:

...the skill of reading and interpreting data through the particular theoretical lens of your chosen method. It also refers to being able to produce insights into the meaning of the data that go beyond the obvious or surface-level content of the data, to notice patterns or meanings that link to broader psychological, social or theoretical concerns. (p.201-204)

They assure that the more a researcher engages with the data, the more is revealed and advise that researchers try to empathise with their participants. This is particularly relevant to the next stage of the research process: outlining and explaining the findings in order to make sense of the patterns identified in the data. This is described and discussed in full in the findings and discussion sections in Chapters 4 and 5.

3.8.1 Critique of Thematic Analysis

Braun & Clarke (2013) point out some limitations of thematic analysis. Firstly, it can be limited as it tends to describe participants’ views, rather than interpret. However the use of an existing theoretical framework within which to position the data can address this limitation. The literature review in this study set out previous research in the area of poverty-related educational inequality, divided into sections according to approach. This provided a backdrop to which the data was interpreted, and helped to address this limitation. Secondly, thematic analysis does not provide a process for higher level, more interpretive analysis and the individual voices can get lost when comparing data between participants. This study used a relatively small pool of participants, and the findings section provides a platform for individual voices to be heard. Lastly, thematic analysis also does not include the examination of the use of language, which is captured in methods such as discourse analysis. This study was more
interested in what participants said about their experiences, rather than analysing the language used to describe them.

### 3.8.2 Quality Criteria

There is ongoing debate in qualitative research on the criteria that should be used to judge its quality (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Yardley, 2000). Researchers have questioned whether the quantitative criteria of reliability, validity and generalisability are applicable (Yardley, 2000). This section will discuss quantitative criteria in relation to qualitative research. It will also set out some of the criteria developed and thought to be more applicable to qualitative research, which was used in the current study.

**Dependability**

The quantitative criterion of reliability means that the same results are generated when the same measures are administered by different researchers to different participants. This is problematic for qualitative research, which recognises the inevitability of the researcher influencing the findings (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Golafshani (2003) posits that reliability is situated in a positivist perspective of a single knowable reality; whereas qualitative research acknowledges potential multiple realities constructed by participants (Braun & Clarke, 2013). People’s views are so subjective it is unlikely that the same answer would be obtained on different occasions (Willig, 2013). Thus, reliability in qualitative research has been conceptualised more broadly as “about the ‘trustworthiness’ or ‘dependability’ of our methods of data collection and analysis” (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p.279).

Dependability is evidenced through the tracking of change in the process of research by detailing the study step by step (Mertens, 2010). This chapter has documented the steps taken at each juncture of the research. Any interpretations made with the findings are explained in subsequent chapters. This clear documentation of the process of the research study has aimed to ensure complete transparency.
**Credibility**

Credibility is the qualitative parallel for the quantitative idea of validity (Mertens, 2010). Validity refers to the accuracy with which the research portrays ‘reality’ and “whether the effects identified are in fact being caused by the variable(s) under study” (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p.280). Willig (2013) asserts that qualitative research allows for credibility issues to be addressed during the research itself; Mertens (2010) outlines a number of factors that contribute to credibility of research. These approaches will be detailed in this section.

Firstly, sufficient involvement in the field by researchers should be ensured (Mertens, 2010). This was done by completing the research in the everyday ‘real life’ setting of a school. This was a school that the researcher was already professionally involved with, in the capacity of a trainee educational psychologist on a 2 year placement. The school was one of a ‘patch’ of schools covered by the researcher, thus there had been prior contact between the researcher and school staff.

The researcher ensured that interviews were sufficiently long to elicit relevant and meaningful information, gathering as much thick description as possible. Participants were informed that they were free to question and correct the researcher’s assumptions about meanings addressed in the research (outlined in the interview method above). The researcher did this by ‘checking’ information throughout the interviews, seeking verification from participants. It should be acknowledged that there may have been some influence on participants from watching a short video at the beginning of the interview.

Credibility for this study was also sought by discussing the process of coding and the construction of themes with 4 university members of staff, including in depth analysis with the researcher’s university research supervisor. Professor Gersch, co-author of the Little Box of Big Questions 2 (2015), was consulted at regular intervals throughout the research process. The researcher brought transcription, coding, and thematic analysis data constructed from the study to seminars with research peers on the doctoral cohort, to discuss issues and seek peer credibility checks.
The researcher’s ontological and epistemological positioning has clarified how the data will be used and interpreted. In addition, reflexivity meant that the research process was closely scrutinised throughout. Reflexivity in this project was facilitated by the use of a research diary, university seminars, peer supervision, and regular supervision with university tutors. Through this process, the researcher acknowledged biases that she brought to the study, and how these affected the interpretation of data. For example, the researcher has been clear about seeking to address issues of social justice in education, which will clearly affect the way that data from the study is interpreted.

The research diary was used throughout the research process, from the planning stage to the final analysis and discussion. After each interview notes were made on contextual factors and reflections on what had gone well during interviews, as well as more challenging aspects (as perceived by the researcher). During transcription, notes were recorded on initial ideas arising from the text. At the coding and construction of themes stage, notes were kept on ideas around theory and method. These notes were referred to when writing up the findings and discussion sections of the thesis.

The proposal for this thesis was presented to the Educational Psychology team in the borough in which it was carried out, for discussion and feedback. Suggestions from placement colleagues were taken on board by the researcher. The findings and salient discussion points will be brought to the team for discussion, particularly around what the EPS may be able to action from points raised in the study.

Transferability
Transferability is used in qualitative research as a parallel of the quantitative concept of generalisability (Mertens, 2010). This addresses whether the findings from research can be applied to wider or different populations. Fox et al. (2007) argue that the research of social constructions illuminates particular individual situations, and generalisation is not usually possible. However a counter-argument to this is that if experiences are socially constructed, they are potentially generalisable (Willig, 2013).
Mertens (2010) suggests a number of steps that can be taken by the researcher to enable the transferability of the research findings, which have been adhered to in this study. These include the provision of adequate information on the study, including extensive description of the time, place context, and culture (known as thick description). She proposes that the use of multiple cases strengthens transferability; the researcher endeavoured that 8 participants would be an adequate number to ensure some transferability of data. The fact that many aspects of themes (and subthemes) were iterated by each participant reinforces this view.

As discussed in Chapter 2, previous research in the area of poverty-related educational inequality has highlighted that interventions should be tailored to individuals, schools, and communities. It was not expected that the findings from this study would be entirely generalisable, although some of the information may be useful to schools in other areas as the themes could be generalisable or universal (e.g. conflict with teachers).

### 3.9 Ethics

Ethics is a crucial consideration for applied psychologists working with vulnerable groups such as YP, who could be seen as needing more protection than adult participants. Ethics prioritises the process of psychological research, including the researcher’s relationships with participants (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The researcher in the current study maintained an ethical stance throughout the process of conducting the research – from planning through to completion and write-up. To ensure ethical considerations were adequately met, ethical standards outlined by the British Psychological Society (BPS) Code of Human Research Ethics (2009) and Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) (Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics, 2012) were used as a reference throughout.

The researcher employed a particular emphasis on the BPS maxim of maximising benefit and minimising harm. While it was not envisaged that any distress would be caused by participation, a directory of sources of school and community support for psychological well-being was compiled. Extensive
discussion with research supervisors took place before the study began around the ethics of researching YP experiencing poverty, and how this could be done without stigmatising participants. The researcher was cognisant of not reinforcing existing inequalities during the research process; for this reason it was decided not to include any questions around socio-economic circumstances. An early research project idea was to ask young people their views on the attainment gap. This would have involved sharing data around social class, attainment, and socio-economic status which could result in participants perceiving themselves negatively, thus damaging self esteem and/or dignity.

Willig (2013) outlines five main ethical considerations in qualitative research practice, which were adhered to in this study. These are: informed consent (from young people, school, and parent/guardian), no deception, the right to withdraw, debriefing, and confidentiality/anonymity.

As outlined previously, informed consent was gained in this study through verbally explaining the research to the school and to potential participants, and through an information sheet and 3 different letters: to the school, participants, and parents/carers. The letter was worded sensitively to avoid stigmatising families experiencing poverty. Participants were advised on how recordings of interviews would be used. Written consent was acquired from the school and participants, and verbal consent from parents/carers; participants were assured that they could withdraw from the research at any time.

Participants were informed that their discussion would remain confidential, unless they disclosed something that would put them (or others) in immediate danger. Anonymity in the use of interview data was explained and each participant chose a name they would like to be known by in the research thesis.

The language used when conducting the research with young people avoided stigmatising, and (as outlined above) poverty was not mentioned during interviews. Students were not directly asked about their personal socioeconomic circumstances, although they were free to share information if they wished. This approach could be argued to be deceptive, as an important
focus of the research was not raised with participants. However, it was decided after extensive discussion, that this deception was justified as it protected the dignity of participants.

Creswell (2012) points out the importance of a caring attitude, researcher/participant equality, rapport building, respect, transparency, democracy, and commitment to social change between participants and researchers. The researcher endeavoured to maintain these attributes during research interviews, displaying a respectful and caring approach to each participant. The researcher briefly re-summarised the aim of the study for each participant at the beginning and end of each interview. Participants were given the opportunity to ask questions throughout the interview process.

Willig (2013) asserts that qualitative research is ‘inherently interpretative in that qualitative data never speaks for itself’ (p.39), highlighting that researchers have the responsibility of ethically interpreting data. These maxims were adhered to throughout the research process, facilitated through researcher reflexivity (detailed earlier in this chapter).

Permission from the borough’s Educational Psychology Service was given for this research. The research was also approved by UEL School of Psychology Ethics Committee (see Appendix I for the letter of approval).

3.10 Summary

This chapter has detailed the steps taken in gathering data for the current research study. As has been discussed, researcher positioning, ontology and epistemology informed the process of research. During the data collection phase 428 minutes of interview data was created. The next section will describe what was found after systematically analysing this data.
Chapter 4: Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will provide a description of the findings of the study. As detailed in previous chapters, the study was interested in what a group of YP experiencing poverty thought helped and hindered them to learn at school, what their skill-sets were (and skills they would like to develop), and their thoughts about the future. Please see Appendix J for a pen portrait of participants. This study wanted to find out more about YP’s views as these have been excluded by most previous research. Chapter 3 detailed how these findings were analysed using thematic analysis. In this chapter, four themes (with subthemes) constructed from the data will be presented in depth, with supporting quotes. The chapter will conclude with a synopsis of the findings.

Two options were considered when writing this chapter: to present findings in sections defined by the research questions, or to present the themes constructed from an overall thematic analysis. The researcher chose the latter option, presenting the findings as an integrated whole. It was envisaged that description of the overall themes would simultaneously answer the research questions. The research questions will be explored more explicitly in the discussion in Chapter 5.

Each of the four main themes identified in the thematic analysis had up to 7 subthemes. There was some overlap between themes, which is discussed in the narrative below. Extracts (or quotes) were selected from across the data to describe and illustrate aspects of each theme. Hesitation and repetition were removed from some quotes; any missing text is indicated by ‘...’, following guidelines from Braun & Clarke (2013).

Quotes help to show the breadth of the data across themes and are accompanied by an illustrative analysis. This is described by Braun & Clarke (2013) as an approach where the “analytic narrative provides a rich and detailed description and interpretation of the theme, and data quotations inserted
throughout are used as examples of the analytic points you are claiming” (p.252).

As detailed in Chapter 3, the researcher initially generated 4 themes from analysis of the first research interview. These were expanded into 11 themes as coding and analysis of additional interviews proceeded. These 11 themes were then condensed into 4 main themes, with subthemes. Reduction in the number of themes was done in order to make the findings easier to conceptualise and explain. Please see Appendices F-H for documentation of this process. Please see Figure 4.1( below) for a visual map of the four themes constructed from the data.

**Figure 4.1: Map of themes constructed to understand the views of young people experiencing poverty on their learning, skills, and the future**
4.2 Theme 1: Aspects of school influencing learning

This theme had the greatest allocation of codes and subthemes in comparison to other themes. It encompasses both supporting factors and barriers to learning within participants’ experience of school. School was the focus and main context for learning, as discussed by the YP. Aside from the obvious observation that school is intended as a place of learning, this may have been due to the interviews being carried out in school.

The seven subthemes are indicative of aspects of school that YP thought influenced their learning. These were constructed by clustering codes according to similarity under the main theme. Each subtheme will be discussed in turn in this section. Where appropriate, some subthemes will be divided into supports and barriers.

**Subtheme 1.1 Teacher attributes: supports**

Teachers were analysed to be central to participants’ experience of learning at school; both teacher ‘personality’ and teaching style. Participants’ liking or enthusiasm for a subject was often determined by their teacher. Floyd said that “a teacher can make a lesson interesting...you could go ‘today we’re going to’ [bored voice]...’ok, so today we’re going to learn!’ [animated voice]...be more energetic” (Floyd, lines 688-698).

Teacher skill in explaining concepts affected how well participants learnt: “I think some teachers I can understand but some I can’t” (Aliyah, line 185). Teachers who intuitively provided extra support to students, particularly one-to-one support, were viewed as supportive. Dennis said he learnt best in a class where “when you’re stuck the teacher helps you” (Dennis, line 48). Holly pointed out
that “he just like helps me more than like the other science teachers...explains it more...and one to one yeah” (Holly, lines 63-73). This was clearly important for learning, Holly described another teacher: “she does it in like one to one...[and] explained it to the whole class” (Holly, lines 113-128). Leah said:

Leah: my Spanish teacher and I’ve had her for 2 years, she’s sort of been helping me with every single question...

Researcher: when she helps you individually is that?
Leah: yeah, or if she just helps me automatically
(Leah, lines 249-257)

The teacher’s personality traits seemed to affect the way that participants viewed their lessons as they often commented on them; “She was really calm...nice hearted lady, if you were in trouble or something, she can help...doesn’t mind saying it again and again” (Aliyah, lines 297-298). Students also valued teachers they perceived as fair, approachable, energetic, and motivating.

The element of fun introduced by the teacher was found to be a major factor in effective learning. “He would always laugh and joke with the class...he wouldn’t take stuff super seriously” (Bertie, lines 121-125). Leah attributed this factor to her improved levels at school: “I had all the fun teachers...and we like played like all sorts of games and everything, which was OK...now, I’m nearly all 5s in every lesson” (Leah, lines 104-109). Leah described one of her teacher’s sense of fun in more detail:

I don’t know, he calls us gurdatorial flash...to remember our name he calls us smiler, or he calls us pickie upper...he goes t’internet for the internet and everything, he goes g-gool for goop, he goes dougal for goggles...and it’s just something which sort of amuses me a bit. (Leah, lines 309-321)

Floyd said “they made sense...they made the lesson fun...even though you were still learning stuff...they were sporty and they...taught well they...wanted you to do good, knowing stuff” (Floyd, lines 186-193). Freddie reinforced this point:
...wood tech...is more practical and we don’t really do writing...we [are] just...told what to do and then we do it...straight away. Cos it’s fun, we get to make things...everyone, no trouble, we all just get on with it (Freddie, lines 642-650).

Leah described a regular maths lesson: “you get play, we get to do...fun stuff when we have double maths, and every Friday we...do a relay thing” (Leah, lines 128-130). Floyd suggested ways in which lessons could be more fun and conducive to learning:

...there’d be a fun activity on the board first and then...you’d have a chilled back lesson, to just gently work on the stuff that you’ve been taught...if you don’t get it, I [teacher] will work with a group of you...and make sure you get it, if you still don’t get it I’ll make sure you get it (Floyd, lines 891-899).

Perceived strictness of the teacher was a factor in how YP learned. Aliyah explained that she liked the teacher being strict: “not that strict like, as, in a bad way, strict as in a good way to make us learn” (Aliyah, lines 204-205). Teachers that gave students an element of autonomy were also important. Aliyah said ”she trusts us...she knows that we are going to be okay...and she gives us work so that we can do it” (Aliyah, lines 209-212). Similarly, Bertie stated that “he would let us do what we want...he would let us like write stories in English” (Bertie, lines 135-136). Some students liked teachers that gave them the opportunity to learn with their friends: “most teachers would keep you all together...tell you what to do, but he would let you like go off in a group” (Bertie, lines 139-143).

Participants were equally articulate about teacher attributes that presented barriers to learning. These will be detailed in the next section.

Subtheme 1.1: Teacher attributes: barriers

There were some teacher attributes that participants viewed as a barrier to learning. Aliyah highlighted situations where the teacher struggled to manage challenging behaviour: “most of my classes...the boys mostly or sometimes the girls, they talk...and that makes the teacher like forget about the lesson and tell them off” (Aliyah, lines 194-197).
Some students said that a teacher had put them off a subject. When asked if he liked maths Dennis said: “no, because of my maths teacher...he sent me out of the class because I was running into the room” (Dennis, lines 135-138). Similarly Leah said “I don’t make progress in the lessons I hate...don’t like the teachers and don’t like the lesson” (Leah, lines 989-991). Aliyah described how she had stopped doing piano due to feeling intimidated by her teacher:

I don’t know something happened...I think I wasn’t that confident, my teacher was really strict, I think he got really like mad and...I got too scared and like, no I just don’t want to do it anymore, so I stopped for a year, not doing piano or not thinking of going back (Aliyah, lines 1345-1349).

Some teachers were perceived to not care if a student wasn’t ‘getting it’ in class: “I don’t get help much” (Dennis, line 554); “sometimes when you’re stuck the teacher doesn’t even bother” (Dennis, lines 48-49); “most of the teachers aren’t even bothered though” (Floyd, lines 50-51). Teachers were described as being both reluctant and unable to explain the work: “if I don’t get it a teacher won’t explain it to me...or I ask them to explain it a different way and they don’t know how to explain it in a different way so then I’m stuck” (Floyd, lines 902-906).

Research participants were vocal about the kind of teachers they would like. They wanted teachers that were fair, respectful, and understanding: “if the teachers can understand” (Freddie, line 557); “have really nice understanding like teachers that can understand the child” (Aliyah, lines 1134-1135). They also wanted teachers that were committed and invested in students: “the teachers that want students to learn” (Floyd, line 879).

In addition to teacher attributes and skills in the classroom, participants frequently talked about relationships with staff in school. This aspect of school was analysed as being crucial to successful learning. The next section will detail some of the participant contributions on this subtheme.
Subtheme 1.2: Relationships with teachers: supports

Relationship with the teacher was analysed as a key factor in how participants learnt best. YP appreciated teachers that they could talk to, cared about them and were invested in them. Floyd said teachers with whom he had a positive relationship “wanted you to do well” (Floyd, line 197). Freddie talked about one of the best teachers he had had:

I was in nurture...there was only like 7 of us...she taught us every single day, every lesson...She knew how to calm us down and everything... She knew how to handle, say if we got really badly told off and everything, and we would come into her class really annoyed she would know, she would leave us alone and let us calm down and then we would get on with our work or she would take me out of the class and talk to me (Freddie, lines 96-119).

Students benefitted from relationships with teachers who they could discuss difficulties with. Freddie described how a member of staff supported him to self-regulate: “Miss F, she helps a lot...she don’t teach me she just helps me with things...like say if get annoyed I tell her and she would help me” (Freddie, lines 140-149). Floyd talked about his PE teacher: “he explains stuff and I understand it, but I came from a lesson right, which I didn’t understand, Mr S explained it and I understood it” (Floyd, lines 235-237). Leah, when discussing Curtis (in the video shown in the interview) said that “the teacher helps him grow up it’s probably what happened to me” (Leah, lines 80-81).

A good relationship with the teacher helped students to learn: “I would have to like them...for me to listen to them” (Floyd, lines 138-140). Aliyah captured the vital aspect of positive emotional relationships and how they relate to learning when talking about wanting to increase her confidence e.g. around speaking out in class. She said that

...they [school] don’t know the background of it and instead it would take ages to explain it and help...but my mum...knows me like from my heart and outside and all...I think she can help me get over my confidence (Aliyah, lines 1001-1006).
Aliyah’s comments convey the time needed to build trust and personal knowledge; the basis of positive relationships. This can be challenging to do in secondary school, with frequent changes of teachers.

Analysis also showed that negative relationships with teachers presented barriers to learning in school. This is described in the next section.

Subtheme 1.2: Relationships with teachers: barriers

The data revealed that less positive relationships with teachers were a major barrier to learning in school. Some students said that a teacher had put them off a subject: “hate art... I’ve never liked the teacher” (Floyd, lines 1257-1263). Floyd had a particular problem with his maths teacher: “I absolutely hate hate hate hate...hate hate I can go on forever...my maths teacher... when I moved into his class...I moved down loads of levels...don’t understand him, he doesn’t explain” (Floyd, lines 1307-1319). Freddie described the impasse he had come to with his maths teacher:

...I want a different teacher in maths...I don’t want to be in that class at all, next maths lesson I’m literally just gonna sit there doing nothing, cos I know he’s just gonna have a go at me...last time...I asked if I can have help...he said yeah hold on I’ll be over in a minute, he walks outside, talks to some other kid, and then come back in, I asked him again, he told me to shut up......I just sat there doing nothing (Freddie, lines 776-793).

Power differentials between students and teachers, and a lack of respect from teachers were found to be a dominant theme. Some students described how they felt they could never win: “sir literally came flying out the classroom, he just, in my face, proper that close... it’s really annoying, but then he’ll get away with it” (Freddie, lines 698-701).

...she said to me shut my mouth or I’ll shut it for you...my science teacher...I said to her you basically can’t say it to a student, and then she went well I can do what I like, I’m the teacher you’re the student, and I went what’s happened the other way round...and then I just literally walked out the classroom even like 2 minutes before the bell went (Leah, lines 876-885).
Power differentials were evident when the teacher’s version of events was privileged over the student’s:

...I just think cos he’s an adult they listen to him more than they do me...N tapped this other kid and then Sir said how dare you touch another kid...N went I tapped him...And then he [the teacher] reported him...and he got done for assault, when there was a camera right there pointing in our classroom and outside the classroom, and they didn’t even look at the security cameras (Freddie, lines 683-691).

...because we have a TA...in the class. So they'll say one thing and then get the other teacher who...didn’t even hear it or see it, get involved and then they'll say oh yeah...and then obviously cos there’s more people saying this...the head teacher or whoever dealing with it would say oh yeah to them and not to me. With the 2 of them against me (Freddie, lines 1317-1324).

The data showed that some students felt they were scapegoats for teachers;

...even if we are just, like, sitting down on our chair doing nothing he’ll shout at us and send us outside. He don’t do it to anyone else...if we’re talking he sends us out but when everyone else is talking he don’t sent anyone else out (Freddie, lines 33-37).

Students described feelings of humiliation in class, if they felt that they were being singled out by the teacher:

...teachers...make you feel small...embarrass you...shout at me in front of the class...class went silent...I ain’t gonna let him make a fool out of me. So I end up saying something back...when the teacher makes you feel...all horrible, I don’t like it...I’ll try making them feel small...I’ve done that before and the teacher didn’t like it and I got excluded for it. Shouldn’t have been doing it to me, trying to embarrass me in front of the whole class (Freddie, lines 833-859).

Floyd said of one teacher: “he’ll give you a call out and then he’ll start laughing at you and going ‘well you’ve got a call out I see’...even though he knows that he’s given you a call out” (Floyd, lines 590-595).
Participants thought their relationships with some teachers would benefit from change. Students said they needed “A lot more respect from the teachers...because...I treat people how I like to be treated. If they treat me in different ways then I treat them horrible” (Freddie, lines 1200-1203). Leah said that those in charge should “Make sure that they fired all the horrible teachers and bring back the more nice teachers who liked the kids” (Leah, lines 746-748). Floyd, when asked what changes he’d make if he could said “I’d make sure that the teachers are not boring and they’re fair...that there’s no cocky teachers” (Floyd, lines 586-589).

This subtheme illustrates how student relationships with staff were a fundamental part of both positive and negative learning experiences at school. Perhaps unsurprisingly, peer relationships were also found to play a significant role in learning at school, detailed in the next section.

**Subtheme 1.3: Peer relationships: supports**

The data revealed positivity from students about their friendships in school. Friendships were found to help with learning and appeared to provide a protective factor, particularly for those who had difficult relationships with some teachers: “I get annoyed sometimes when they [teachers] take the mick out of my friends and that” (Freddie, lines 171-172). Some students used their friends to back up their learning: “if the teacher can’t explain I just ask one of my friends” (Bertie, line 107). Students also appeared to be more comfortable in sharing some information with their friends, rather than the teacher/s. Bertie said that he planned to discuss his subject choices with his friends, rather than school staff.

**Subtheme 1.3: Peer relationships: barriers**

Analysis of the data also showed that some peer relationships presented barriers to learning. Some students appeared to not have the support of their peer group. Both Dennis and Floyd said they preferred doing things on their own. It is noteworthy that Floyd had a diagnosis of autism, indicating that his social communication was different from typical students; Dennis had a diagnosis of ADHD and was reported to have social communication difficulties
(see Appendix J for a pen portrait of participants). Other students felt that they were sometimes being used as scapegoats by their peers:

Freddie: ...other people...they’re sitting near me and they’ll go oh it’s his fault or something like that
Researcher: and then the teacher would act on that?
Freddie: yeah
(Freddie, lines 664-668)

Students talked about the anxiety they felt when comparing grades with their peers. Aliyah talked about rejection from peers in Egypt, where she was at school for a period: “all my friends...it mattered what sets you were in...if you weren’t level that good, they wouldn’t really want you with them, the group of clever people...So I was really trying my best and...it was hard for me as well” (Aliyah, lines 839-847). She described a recent test in the UK: “I cried...I was too scared to tell my parents...it was like really hard to say...to even say to my friends, ah I didn’t get a good level...and I didn’t even tell them” (Aliyah, lines 1292-1301).

The data showed that peers could prevent learning in class by being disruptive: “some people...they're just being really annoying so I can't concentrate” (Leah, lines 849-857).

Researcher: ...is there anything that that stops you from learning at school?...
Holly: people talk...like messing about...
Researcher: ...does that happen much?
Holly: sometimes yeah, in maths...depends who’s in the class
(Holly, lines 76-87)

Difficulties in school resulted in some students being excluded, both internally and externally. The next subtheme outlines the effects of exclusion, as expressed by participants.

**Subtheme 1.4: Exclusion leads to disengagement**

Analysis of the data revealed the barriers that exclusion (both internal and external) presented to student progress and learning. “I don’t really learn
much...I always get kicked out of the classes” (Freddie, lines 500-501). Being educated in isolation was seen as a waste of time: “I'm not learning anything in isolation cos it's not the same as being in the actual class...I'm stuck in isolation doing writing and work and then I get back into class and they're doing a whole lot of different things” (Freddie, lines 57-60). Missing work in isolation had a knock on impact on how students were banded in school: “I'm good at maths but then he kicks me out of the lesson so obviously my grades are going down...cos I'm not there...and now I'm gonna be in set 5, the lowest set” (Freddie, lines 704-712).

Students were excluded for a variety of reasons e.g. “arguing with teachers, shouting things out in class, swearing, all different things” (Freddie, lines 578-579). Some students perceived that “the teachers kick you out for no reason” (Floyd, line 42); “today I got kicked out for nothing...I was sitting on my chair and apparently I looked too relaxed...I got a call out” (Floyd, lines 54-59).

Exclusions did not seem to be working, in terms of improving or modifying behaviour. Quite the opposite, exclusions appeared to generate a cycle of more exclusion: “yeah, in maths every lesson, I can guarantee every lesson for this whole year, I’ve been sent out, sent out and call outs, every single lesson” (Freddie, lines 652-654). “I ain’t learnt nothing this year” (Freddie, line 761). Some students said some classes were easier to settle in than others; Freddie was never excluded from wood tech “because that is more practical and we don’t really do writing” (Freddie, lines 642-643), which implies that perhaps learning needs were not addressed in literacy-based classes.

Students said school shouldn’t be too strict, Floyd suggested “there’s no point giving kids detention, if they don't wanna learn they don't wanna learn, hey ho, don’t punish them for it, they're choosing not to learn” (Floyd, lines 671-674). This suggests Floyd thinks punishments such as exclusion are ineffective for facilitating learning.

In addition to exclusion, participants identified other school systems that presented barriers to effective learning. These are detailed in the next subtheme.
Subtheme 1.5: Challenges of school systems

The data showed home-school relationships and communication as an issue, with home feeling disregarded by school in the view of the YP. For example, on the day of his research interview Freddie was placed in isolation for an incident that had occurred the previous week (which clearly has ethical implications, both for the fact that the ‘punishment’ was delayed, and for not informing parents). He discussed the lack of home-school communication: “they haven’t rung my parents or told my parents or anything...so, I’ve been isolated and my parents don’t even know about it” (Freddie, lines 9-13). One student implied that she and her family felt demonised by the school:

> Researcher: ...what did your mum and dad say when they got the report?
> Leah: my mum and dad just didn’t care
> Researcher: really?
> Leah: yeah they don’t matter. It prob, it’s the school picking on [family name] day.

(Leah, lines 893-901)

This split between home and school is likely to have an impact on the students’ sense of belonging at school, and subsequently their investment in school.

Some aspects of curriculum delivery were confusing for students. Freddie talked about English in school:

> Depends what teacher I’ve got. I’ve got 3 different teachers and they all teach 3 different things...which is really confusing...cos you have 1 teacher doing 1 thing, the other teacher doing another, and then 1 teacher doing the same thing as what we did like 2 months ago...so it’s really confusing (Freddie, lines 720-730).

Thus, some of the methods of teaching in the school were not clear to students. It seems logical that if the student is confused about the structure of the subject, it is likely to impact negatively on learning.

Students emphasised the need to be supported 1:1 or in small groups; and for smaller class sizes. Floyd wanted schools to “make sure that every school has enough people that they need...staff” (Floyd, lines 705-708).
Suggestions for the introduction of more (and different) subjects to the curriculum were raised frequently in the data. Students wanted to study more contemporary and practical subjects that they liked and were interested in. “Add more subjects...like ask students what subjects they would want to be added...like, game design subject where...people that want to do that can” (Bertie, lines 394-399); “if they wanted...they could pick those subjects and go to them...instead of doing some things that they might not even use when they're older” (Bertie, lines 404-407). “Need to do more practical things...more fun things that people like, and learning things that are going on now” (Freddie 1193-1196).

Thus, the data showed that students had many ideas for how school systems could be changed in order to facilitate learning. Part of school systems that were appreciated by students were services offered by pastoral support. This will be detailed in the next section.

**Subtheme 1.6 Pastoral support**

The data showed that participants valued structured emotional support offered in school, particularly the pastoral system. Leah talked about her experience of being supported through the CAF\(^1\)(Common Assessment Framework): “I used to get shouted at all the time...in year 7...they used to stand me outside for...half the lesson...it used to get so annoying” (Leah, lines 85-89). Being provided with pastoral support at school appeared to enable Leah to break the cycle of being excluded from class. She clearly valued the support: “I wish I was still on my report...of... progress...it’s something...I’ve always wanted, to...stay on a report” (Leah, lines 909-916). It seemed important for Leah to be held in mind in this way. She described how she was supported, through ‘the report’, to progress with her learning “they have...3 targets for you to do...you have to be positive with learning...I’ve had interact with peers appropriately, arrive to school and lessons on time...as I bunked off 3-4 lessons...the other one was to follow instructions” (Leah, lines 926-943).

\(^1\) The CAF was introduced through *Every Child Matters* legislation (DfES, 2004). The legislation sets out a 4 step process to support CYP that there may be concerns about: identify needs early; assess those needs; deliver integrated services; and review progress. This is done by establishing a ‘team around the child’ made up of different professionals, selected as appropriate to each child.
The withdrawal of structured support was daunting for participants. Now that Leah was no longer supported through the CAF, she found it difficult to continue to achieve at school: “no, I don’t like making progress, it’s hard, progress is the hardest thing I’ve ever done” (Leah, lines 955-957). Freddie outlined how nurture provision had supported him to access the curriculum, through his good relationship with the teacher. Since the closure of the nurture base, it seemed Freddie was struggling to self-regulate. Leah outlined how counselling provision had supported her to deal with stress:

Leah: ...I have counselling to help...my stress...like it’s so bad
Researcher: ...is it helpful?
Leah: sometimes....
Researcher: ...what do you get stressed about?
Leah: friends, school, and work
(Leah, lines 961-975)

This data shows the immense importance of emotional support for students experiencing poverty, and how key this is in being ready to learn. The next section details aspects of the school environment that can put up barriers to learning.

**Subtheme 1.7: School environment**

When participants were asked what they would change about school, the environment was considered to be important: “if the school environment is not that good and people...don’t feel safe in it, well yeah you can change it” (Aliyah, lines 1125-1126). “If it’s a skanky school I would do up the school...cos then you get the kids that want to learn in the school” (Floyd, lines 981-985).

Difficulties in negotiating the large school environment hindered participant learning: “I didn’t know where half the classrooms were, so it was really hard to...find out what teacher I had, whereabouts the classrooms were” (Leah, lines 269-272). Floyd found classes overcrowded and cramped, saying “you just don’t learn anything” (Floyd, line 720). He thought there should be a maximum of 20 students in a class. Floyd went on to say that he learnt best if he had his own space:
Researcher: what environment do you think would be best for you to learn?
Floyd: erm, on my own...
Researcher: so what would that involve...being at a separate desk on your own?
Floyd: I am for some lessons...
Researcher: yeah, does that work?
Floyd: yeah
(Floyd, lines 952-963)

The school environment was also described as distracting: “If someone told me something at home...I’d probably understand it more than at school...cos probably less distractions, I’m on my own” (Floyd, lines 95-99).

Thus, this subtheme showed that students were very cognisant of their environment, and how it could facilitate or prevent learning.

**Theme 1: conclusion**

A range of factors within school that impact on learning have been discussed within this theme. The data suggests that students who feel supported and included in school, have positive and respectful relationships with peers and teachers, who know their way around the school, and have skilled teachers who use effective pedagogies are most primed to learn.

As well as aspects of school that influence learning, there were individual differences found between participants’ preferred methods and styles of learning. This is described in the second theme in the next section and shows the importance of taking individual factors into account when trying to maximise learning.
This theme represents participants’ views on their preferred methods of learning, or learning styles. The data indicates that individual students are seeking individual approaches, that is, what works for one will not necessarily work for another. The codes for this theme covered a range of learning styles and approaches and were clustered (according to similarity) into 4 subthemes. Each subtheme is described in detail below. The data acknowledges that everyone learns in different ways, and that students should be seen as individuals. This was eloquently put by Aliyah: “Not every child is the same, they might look the same, they might be all in the class... the same levels, but not the same background” (Aliyah, lines 1144-1146); she suggested that each student may need a “change...[in] technique...of the way they teach them” (Aliyah, lines 1127-1130).

Subtheme 2.1: Preferred approaches to learning
The data showed that participants were particular about what worked best for them when learning. Some students learnt best at school, others learnt best at home. Relationships were mentioned e.g. Freddie usually learnt best when he was with his Dad. Some students preferred to work things out on their own, others were more group oriented: “in groups...when there’s more than one person, so say if you got something wrong they could probably help you” (Bertie, lines 76-79). Dennis, who liked to work alone, stressed that students should have the option to “work by themselves” (Dennis, line 641). Support given in class could be experienced as stressful by some students:

Researcher: What happens when other people help?
Dennis: I get stressed....
Researcher: ... Is that when everyone helps you, or just certain people?
Dennis: certain people
(Dennis, lines 565-572)

Analysis of the data showed that some students preferred practical aspects of learning, particularly demonstration: “it being shown to me, how to do it” (Freddie, line 439). Many students liked moving around when learning, e.g. Bertie enjoyed drama because “you don’t need to just sit in one spot...you can just move around...with your friends mostly, in one big group, and you just come up with the weirdest stuff” (Bertie, lines 434-438). Some students liked their learning to be broken up and graduated; Freddie described his ideal lesson in school: “doing the lesson bit by bit...so we’d have...one part of the lesson...do a little bit of the lesson, and then we’d...go on to play a game or something like that, and then we’ll do the rest of the lesson” (Freddie: lines 504-509).

Students expressed a desire for more autonomy, and wanted to be treated in a more adult way, Bertie said he liked drama as: “We can really do what we want and then the teacher will just tell us if we need to improve it or not” (Bertie, lines 22-25). Aliyah thought that teachers should let students “do what they want, don’t make...strict rules...make it seem fun...don’t make it...cheesy or...babyish websites and stuff” (Aliyah, lines 1044-1050). Bertie suggested that teachers “Make school...more relaxed instead of...the teachers...forcing everything onto you...they [students] could take their time if they’re doing it” (Bertie, lines 388-390).

Floyd: if you’re not giving him what he wants. If he wants to work on his own, let him work on his own
Researcher: ...so give the students a bit more freedom.
Floyd: a teacher can’t say ‘oh that’s good for you’, it’s not them
(Floyd, lines 643-650)

Participants acknowledged the importance of making mistakes when learning: “that’s how people learn, history, they are made by mistakes they know what next time to do” (Aliyah, lines 151-153). Using the inspiration of others played a part in learning: Holly learnt from looking at other people’s work in art.
Repetition and/or practice of learning was frequently cited to be helpful: “I just try and do it when I need to do it and then, then I'll probably learn it by the end of the day” (Bertie, lines 62-63); “probably learning it all over again” (Leah, line 216); “I'm the one that has to hear it twice so I can take it in and understand” (Aliyah, lines 170-171). Prior knowledge and paying purposeful attention was seen to be important in linking new information to old: “thinking of what I need to do” (Bertie, line 88); “listening to teachers and understanding the work” (Leah, line 177). Sometimes students felt that there was too much repetition, particularly if it involved a skill that was reinforced in activities outside school: “I already know what to do in wood tech, it's just like...I'm just waiting to do it while he's showing everyone else to do it” (Freddie, lines 766-770). Some students reported that they needed silence to concentrate, while others said that complete silence could be off-putting for them. Floyd reported that he had a tangle in class to support him to pay attention.

The benefit of having individual attention from the teacher when learning was frequently cited: “I like to be individual with the teacher...I find that more interesting...I can understand more” (Aliyah, lines 1177-1183). Some students said that they learnt from books or the internet; other students stressed that they didn’t like books and were more auditory learners:

  Researcher: so you don’t read, so how would you learn?
  Floyd: listen... [to] what’s being said...[by] anyone...I have to like them...for me to listen to them...if I don’t like them I won’t listen to them.

  (Floyd, lines 126-144)

Analysis of the data showed that most students appeared to have a ‘growth mindset’ towards learning (see Chapter 2 for discussion of this concept); they believed that they could learn. Aliyah was an exception, she showed a relatively fixed mindset towards learning: “some people are like born clever, some people are born not clever” (Aliyah, lines 124-125). Aliyah went on to state that: “I think I'm on an average...I'm not below or above, but I'm trying to get above, but I think, I'm not like I said, some people are born clever” (Aliyah, lines 167-171). Floyd stated “I hate school anyway” (Floyd, line 67), saying “I like learning new
stuff but, in this school I don’t think I’ve learnt anything” (Floyd, lines 76-77). For some students it appeared that frequent exclusions had ‘shut down’ their enthusiasm for learning at school.

Students used different sources of information for learning. Some used the internet, or found things out from watching television. Others learnt from other people, particularly their parents. Some students used the school website to engage more with their learning e.g. to find out about scheduled events, or to clarify homework requirements.

As well as individual approaches to learning, data analysis showed that participants were unanimous in stating that feelings affected how they learnt. This will be outlined in the next subtheme.

**Subtheme 2.2: Feelings**

Feelings were analysed as a dominant theme in participants’ experiences of school. Students talked about a range of difficult feelings that affected their propensity to learn at school. These feelings included anger, frustration, regret, powerlessness, humiliation, stress, low self-esteem, demotivation, lack of respect, and feelings of being stuck.

Self regulation of feelings was a barrier for some students in resolving issues at school: “if I had to get sat down to talk to him though I would end up going schizo” (Freddie, lines 47-48); “if I get really annoyed, I do something stupid and I think why did I do that and then I think after” (Freddie, lines 154-155).

Other students seemed to feel self-conscious and lacking in confidence. Aliyah talked about her feelings of discomfort at school: “I’m not comfortable at school, I’m not comfortable also outside” (Aliyah, lines 623-624); “I really care about people think about me” (Aliyah, lines 647-648). This prevented her from doing things that she would like e.g. asking questions in class. Aliyah felt that she needed to improve her confidence to be able to achieve her goals:

I’d like to be...more confident, cos I’m not that confident in lessons...I like to ask questions but if it’s only me and the teacher...I don’t like to answer them, if I get it wrong, I know, if you get something wrong, you could
make your mistakes, but...I don’t think that’s the me person. And...I don’t...talk with...my friends...that much...To the teacher, or about the lesson (Aliyah, lines 604-615).

She wanted to increase her confidence at school, and discussed ways that she could achieve this: “my mum knows me like from my heart and outside and all, so she I think she can help me get over my confidence and all” (Aliyah, lines 953-955). Leah made comments throughout the interview that indicated low self esteem: “yay! I thought, I’m right for once...I’m always wrong” (Leah, lines 580-582).

Researcher: I want you to imagine that you’re the advisor to the mayor...it means that you tell them what to do.

Leah: I would love to do that but I would probably fail it, I’d probably kick them all and I’ll make them die, yeah so I’m like a...I’m a horror person.

(Leah, lines 708-716)

Researcher: imagine someone waved a wand and tomorrow when you came into school you were succeeding to the best of your ability.

Leah: that’s impossible for me...I can’t even do that.

(Leah, lines 802-807)

Leah said that she can get stressed about things at school. She fantasised about having someone (or something) to look after her, saying that she would like “a massive minion which is alive...which stays alive for the rest of your life and you’ll be dead, and it goes with you” (Leah, lines 402-407) and that it “comes alive every day when I come home from school...I would just make sure that it helped me learn...it comes into school with me...it’s my identical twin...it would make sure it gives me every single answer” (Leah, lines 453-471).

This subtheme has shown how participants’ feelings were analysed to present barriers to learning. However, students also demonstrated great resilience. The next subtheme expands on this to detail student strengths and interests revealed through analysis.
Subtheme 2.3: Strengths and interests

Data analysis revealed a wealth of skills and resources that participants potentially brought to education. The researcher wondered if school staff were aware of these skills. For example, Freddie started working a year ago: “I work down the fish shop. I go fishing and I work in the shop” (Freddie, lines 302-303). He had learnt a range of skills through the job: “I can gut the fish, I can fillet flat fish...I can nearly fillet like normal fish. I can do quite a lot of things” (Freddie, lines 343-344).

Some interests were ‘inherited’ from family members. Freddie developed a love of the outdoors and nature from his father and grandfather, who was a bonsai tree enthusiast. Freddie didn’t have any bonsai trees himself but endearingly said “I think I wanna get one for my birthday this year” (Freddie, lines 457-458). He described his garden at home, which he clearly took a lot of pride in:

I got a hundred and fifty foot garden...mine and my dad’s shed at the end...tree house...a little carving bit, a clay oven, like a pizza oven...another fire right in front of it, by a little bit that we sit in...the dog’s area...my mum’s got a massive allotment that takes over the front bit of the grass (Freddie, lines 884-912).

In keeping with the family’s love of nature and the outdoors, Freddie’s father had taken him on a number of camping trips, which he enthusiastically described:

...me and my dad and my uncle went camping...I brought some fish home – some trout and some bass, and I butterflyed the trout...put it on sticks and cooked it over the fire...wrapped the trout in dock leaves...it was really nice when it was cooked over the fire, it tastes completely different” (Freddie, lines 1357-1369).

These interests had clearly opened a whole new world for the participant, and developed passions and interests that school had failed to instil. Freddie seemed to feel like a failure at school and emanated frustration about consistently being thrown out of classes and failing to learn. Luckily for Freddie, these interests fed into his preferred career choice (to start his own landscape
gardening and tree surgery business), and what he wanted to get out of school, despite the challenges:

...I know I have to do triple science...I gotta learn plant cells and how they grow...I've got to learn different species of trees, where they are most likely to grow...it's like geography and history... I gotta know the history of the trees (Freddie, lines 618-631).

Another student described her interest in design, encouraged by her father: “I just look at images...then try to copy it...this is my dad's old, he used to be an artist...and he got me a book so...I copy it...and then draw it” (Aliyah, lines 392-396). Aliyah talked about the clothes designing she does at home; she also thought she was good at being objective in disagreements, which she said she had learnt from her father. She talked about other interests: “I'm really into music...piano” (Aliyah, line 445) and “I love doing swimming and tennis” (Aliyah, lines 527-528). Aliyah is bilingual, which is good for her cognitive skills and a useful skill in itself. Aliyah thought another part of her skill-set was in organisation, also learnt from her father: “me and my dad are like each other, we have to be on time...we have to be...intelligent, smart, clever...organised...inside or outside the house, you have to...do stuff...So, I think I'm good at that” (Aliyah, lines 484-490).

Many participants were interested in computer games: “usually play some games with my friends...x-box” (Bertie, lines 200-202). They expressed an interest in being able to do games-related subjects at school, to facilitate a career in games development. Sports were an interest for some students, particularly Floyd, who had a number of badges on his blazer for: “basketball, rugby...throws...sprints and long jump” (Floyd, lines 289-290). Reading was cited by most participants as being an interest, Holly particularly enjoyed “Michael Berko books...[and] Roald Dahl” (Holly, lines 176-181). Some students commented on their personal qualities, and viewed themselves as kind, caring, and family oriented.

Students had a good idea of the skills they wanted and/or needed to learn for their preferred future: “English...cos you're gonna need to be able to spell and that...do stuff, and to write” (Bertie, lines 172-176).
I need to be good at Math...[for] measurements for...the house, or the dresses... also science, like...what ingredients I need to make...English as well, from the way I speak...I need to...know more...clever words, cos...I’m not that good at words right now...I still mumble a lot (Aliyah, lines 326-337).

Dennis had an interest in becoming a web designer and thought he would benefit from “learning how to make websites” (Dennis, line 237). Ava didn’t yet know what she wanted to do but said she would like to learn more about “maths...cos I’m quite bad at it... cos like when you’re older...you might have to have a job where you have to...know maths” (Ava, lines 180-193). Floyd thought “PE...and how your body works...because your body is your body” (Floyd, lines 266-270). Holly said “English and maths...cos they helps you...you need to know...technology... working in...Tesco...you need to know how to count and stuff...and English and stuff...read and everything” (Holly, lines 157-169).

Thus analysis showed that participants had a range of skills and interests that they brought with them to school. Not all of these were capitalised or built on in school, which could be seen as a missed opportunity. This will be discussed further in Chapter 5. The data also shows a number of areas in which students expressed an interest in developing their skills. Interest could be seen as a contributing factor for motivation at school. The next subtheme explores the aspects of motivation that were revealed through analysis of participant responses.

Subtheme 2.4: Motivation
Analysis revealed a range of motivators for participants' learning at school. Each participant had specific preferred subjects, along with subjects they were good at, which seemed to influence how they applied themselves. Participants expressed an aversion to some subjects, saying they were boring and uninteresting. Some subjects seemed to be described as relating to gender e.g. Dennis said that dance is for girls, which narrows choice for students. Some students didn’t like reading. Other participants felt that they needed more study strategies: “I just need to revise, but I don’t know how to revise, I know how to
revise, yeah look through your book and stuff...but sometimes it doesn’t help at all” (Aliyah, lines 1161-1164).

Changing interests also affected students’ learning e.g. Leah reported she hated maths in primary school, whereas now it was one of her favourite subjects. Feeling positive about and enjoying school affected how students performed; students who were frequently excluded appeared to have lost positivity about school. Some students were motivated by a fear of being reprimanded: “Yeah I never got in trouble, I don't like to get in trouble” (Aliyah, line 249). Clear instructions and expectations in class were also cited as facilitating students to learn well.

Good grades were a key motivator for students’ engagement with the subject. Aliyah was particularly concerned about her grades “school’s not about...what you look like, it’s about education...what really matters is...what level you are now” (Aliyah, lines 669-671). Ava seemed happy and motivated to learn at school, this attitude seemed to be fuelled by getting good grades:

Researcher: ... you’re getting good grades?
Ava: mmm hmm

Researcher: ... So what helps you to get good grades?
Ava: em, just like listening to the teacher

(Ava, lines 367-370)

Other students seemed to have their eye on the future; they saw school as a means to an end:

Researcher: why do you come to school?
Bertie: to learn...that’s it...so you can do things, so you can get jobs...do stuff

Researcher: so do you think that’s the most important thing, it’s about getting a job?
Bertie: yep

(Bertie, lines 537-547)

Motivators for learning could be seen to be strongly linked to individual approaches to learning (subtheme 2.1). The researcher decided to make this a separate theme as motivating factors (as expressed by the participants)
seemed to precede approaches to learning. If participants weren’t interested and motivated, they would be unlikely to engage with the class/subject.

**Theme 2: Conclusion**

This theme has identified individual factors that appear to impact on learning at school for this group of YP. Analysis showed that each student had preferred methods for learning. Individuals also expressed different feelings about school. Each participant had a different skill-set, which interacted with student interests; these skill-sets and interests were often not capitalised on in school. Lastly, motivation (or lack of it) was found to be a significant factor driving (or not) student engagement with school and particular subject areas.

The third theme explores participants’ expressed hopes for the future, both for a more immediate future at school, and a more distant one in adulthood.

**4.4 Theme 3: Young people’s aspirations**

**Figure 4.4 Theme 3: Thinking about the future**

This theme was constructed from participants’ expressed hopes for the future. Aspirations were for both the immediate and more distant future. More immediate aspirations are clustered under ‘Aspirations for learning’, and related mostly to the current school and/or 6th form. All of the participants had something to say about future jobs or careers, and these were clustered into ‘Aspirations for jobs’. The data showed that participants also had aspirations for more personal aspects of life e.g. the type of person they would like to be, or where they would like to be living; these are clustered under ‘Aspirations for personal life’.

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Subtheme 3.1: Aspirations for Learning

Learning appeared to be central to participants’ thoughts and hopes about the future. Aliyah knew that she wanted to stick at her education: “people that...drop out of school at a young age are...not going to have a good life” (Aliyah, lines 128-130); “if I keep...believing in myself, and...think that I can do it I’ll try to do...at least seven GCSE and complete them with...a good high grade” (Aliyah, lines 597-600). Many students expressed a wish to work harder: “try and work a bit harder” (Freddie, line 1349). “...work harder, be more organised...cos this year...I didn’t take it that seriously” (Aliyah, lines 972-982); “I’d put...number 1 work hard...education” (Aliyah, lines 1507-1509). Leah wanted to keep making progress in all her lessons, “to understand the homework more” (Leah, line 1190) and to fix her school computer account so that she could attend homework clubs.

Some students wanted to change their behaviour in school: “Try not to get sent out as much, definitely...as many lessons as I do” (Freddie, lines 1234-1236). Aliyah was focused on trying to increase her confidence: “number 2, for, for me...to be confident...and independent” (Aliyah, lines 1512-1516). Leah said “try not to get in trouble any more...that’s me, the annoying one every day” (Leah, lines 1234-1236).

Leah, Ava, Floyd and Dennis wanted to work towards going to 6th form college. Bertie was less sure about the kind of future he wanted, although education was mentioned; “Just probably doing my work and hang out with my friends” (Bertie, lines 334-335). Freddie said “I don’t know. Good GCSEs” (Freddie, line 585). Freddie had a very definite plan to go to college to study gardening and was enthusiastic about the prospect:

R College I’ll be going to when I’m 16...instead of going to sixth form...there’s [a] garden design course...they give you a hundred foot garden...you’ve got to make this garden look as good as you can...then competitions, and...other courses on...tree life and the best places where things grow, they take you round different places and it’s just really good (Freddie, lines 867-881).
There was an aspect of fear about the future expressed by some participants, particularly a fear of failure at school:

...you like might end up on the streets...if you don’t study...and you don’t get a degree, you don’t get a diploma...or complete an A level or GCSE, you can’t get a job...you don’t know how you’re gonna end then...you can’t do anything...you can’t apply to a job...most the jobs, you need them (Aliyah, lines 1424-1436).

Leah, iterated this fear: “I’m probably gonna drop down every single grade soon...cos my GCSEs are coming up and it’s hard” (Leah, lines 478-481).

The data showed that students thought that education was important, and their future options were dependent on doing well at school. They realised the importance of this for getting the kind of job they wanted, discussed in the next section.

**Subtheme 3.2: Aspirations for Jobs**

Data analysis found that most students talked about hopes for a job in the future; some had thought about this more than others. Bertie said he would like a job in games development: “I would...think of the games...then I would make the games and sketch them out and see if they would be good...if they’re good then I’ll release them” (Bertie, lines 256-265). Floyd wanted to do “Something related to sport...or training to be a police officer...then eventually get to be...a dog handler” (Floyd, lines 523-527). Freddie said “I wanna be a tree surgeon...cos I love being outdoors” (Freddie, lines 356-357). Dennis wanted to be a maths teacher, or a web designer. Aliyah wanted to be a businesswoman with multiple businesses.

Some students didn’t yet know what they wanted to do as a job. Although Bertie expressed an interest in becoming a games developer, at other points in the interview he showed less forethought: “I don’t really have dreams for the future” (Bertie, line 220) and “I’m not older, don’t need to do anything until I’m older” (Bertie, line 695). Similarly Ava, Holly and Leah said that they didn’t yet know what they wanted to do when they were older.
There was little data to show that students were well supported in school around career options. In fact, the opposite was the case:

Researchers: Do you have a careers advisor in school?
Bertie: don't know what that is
(Bertie, lines 356-357)

Researchers: Do you do careers in school?...
Ava: eh, yeah...only sometimes.

Researchers: ...and so what have you done?
Ava: em, I've not really done anything yet.

Researchers: right. So you don't get it very often then?
Ava: no
(Ava, lines 489-500)

Researchers: Do you get careers advice here?...
Floyd: yeah ... just general stuff

Researchers: nothing that really interests you?
Floyd: no
(Floyd, lines 1219-1232)

The data showed that participants often wanted to find out requirements for preferred career paths; they knew what they wanted to do, but were vague about the steps they needed to take to get there. Students expressed the wish for more support around subject choices and career options:

Freddie: I just know I need to have a level in science, maths and English

Researchers: ...it might be good to get a bit more specific information about that so you know what you've got to work towards in each subject

Freddie: yeah, what grades and that
(Freddie, lines 1218-1225)

Floyd identified that he needed to research entrance requirements, in order to pursue his dream of being in the police.
More role models were suggested as a way to provide inspiration for the future: “someone famous comes and tells them about learning, tells them about their story life, how I learnt or something” (Aliyah, lines 1055-1057). Aliyah also suggested to “tell people that they’ve only got one chance but don’t try and scare them too much” (Aliyah, lines 1108-1109).

When asked about a more distant future, say in 10 years time or more, responses showed that many students had a clear idea of what they would like to be doing. Freddie said that he would like to have expanded his own business in garden design, in the borough and beyond. After that he said that he would “Move down to Devon probably...[it’s] nice out there...I'd like to own...my own little house, and...some land” (Freddie, lines 1157-1162). Aliyah liked the idea of being a businesswoman with multiple businesses:

> You can...have a variety of jobs...I can be also a business woman, and...a designer at home...or.....a musician...it doesn’t have to be a big company, I can start it myself, or someone might help me and it might get bigger and bigger and bigger (Aliyah, lines 566-581).

The data for this theme showed that participants had aspirations for the kind of jobs they would like to do in the future. However they didn’t necessarily know the routes that would take them there. Participants also visualised the kind of person they would like to be in the future, this is laid out in the next section.

**Subtheme 3.3: Aspirations for Personal life**

The idea of moving to another country appealed to Floyd: “I might move to America...Florida...it’s very clean...people are nice, just a nice place to live in. It’s not that expensive” (Floyd, lines 536-547). Other students expressed a desire to stay in the borough, near to family and friends.

Female participants seemed to have more to say about the type of person they would like to be when they were older: “I’d like to be a nice caring...nice looking person, that...everybody knows, and loves” (Aliyah, lines 454-455), and “an independent nice...and confident woman...That...has a really nice business going on and...a good life” (Aliyah, lines 685-688). Ava said she would like to be a “nice, kind person” (Ava, line 239). Floyd expressed a desire to further his aim
“to be a passionate sportsman...And give respect to the opposition” (Floyd, lines 1399-1405).

Interestingly, participants had less to say about personal aspirations than educational or job aspirations. Perhaps this reflects the focus of school, which is often on more practical aspects of learning, rather than personal development.

**Theme 3: Conclusion**

Results from data analysis show that students have definite aspirations for the future. When asked about who could help them to achieve their goals, students invariably replied that school, parents and family could support them: “school will definitely help a lot...and my mum and my dad, they would help” (Aliyah, lines 939-942). One student showed some reluctance around discussing his subject options with his teachers, saying “they’ll moan at you, they’ll try to get you to pick something that they would like” (Bertie, lines 752-753). Responses also reflect the fact that school is perhaps not providing as much support as needed by participants; this will be discussed further in chapter 5.

Families and communities were also shown to be influential on learning and future plans. The final theme details the data collected around this theme.

**4.5 Theme 4: Families, communities and role models**

This theme outlines aspects outside school that were discussed by participants, and how they impact on learning at school and planning for the future. It was interesting that this was found to be a theme as students weren’t asked directly about their home and family lives; information gathered was incidental. Data
contained in this theme is less rich than in the previous 3 themes. However, data in this theme helps to paint a fuller picture in relation to the research questions, this point will be expanded on in the discussion in chapter 5.

**Subtheme 4.1: Learning/homework**

Homework was a frequently cited issue in the study. Aliyah viewed it as very important and thought students needed someone to “tell them [to]...do the homework, listen, you gonna have fun as well in lessons but if there’s time to study then there’s time to study” (Aliyah, lines 1113-1115).

Participants had some issues with completing homework. Leah said she didn’t get help from siblings or parents to complete homework, and had to find space to do homework at home, as the family were living in overcrowded accommodation. In addition, she used her mother’s laptop, which meant there were times when it was not possible to complete homework. Two students reported not having the internet at home, which has a huge impact on homework, revising, and staying in touch with friends when not at school. They reported using the library sometimes to access the internet. Students also had responsibility for younger siblings, which could impact on their ability to complete school work at home. Floyd said he completed homework sometimes; he couldn’t ask any of his family about maths as they were “all bad at maths” (Floyd, line 914).

Ava said that her mum, dad and older sister helped her with learning, including homework. Floyd reported getting help from his mum, nan, and great-great-nan with some aspects of homework. He said he felt less distracted at home, and more able to learn. Bertie reported he didn’t do homework, saying that the consequence of this was:

- **Bertie**: detentions, mainly not detentions...don’t go
- **Researcher**: do you not get in trouble for that?
- **Bertie**: no, teachers just leave you

(Bertie, lines 799-809)

Students often said they found homework too hard, and could get stuck. Leah said “if I get it wrong I just get it wrong, I leave it after...I get half the stuff right”
(Leah, lines 701-703). It seemed that after a period of being successful with homework, she had lost some motivation:

...ones and twos for homework...they're very good and excellent...but then I just stopped doing homework (laughs)... because homework gets boring half the time...I had a massive paper...and like [I thought] I can’t do this...then I went on holiday I forgot about the whole thing...and she...gave me an hour and a half detention...although like it’s impossible to do (Leah, lines 518-532).

Thus students got varying levels of support for homework at home. None of the participants mentioned accessing support for doing homework at school (although there was a homework club). Other aspect of families and adult role models are discussed in the next section.

**Subtheme 4.2: Family, adult relationships and role models**

This theme captures the fact that some students had close relationships and clearly gained valuable support and guidance from their parents and other close adults outside school. For example Freddie reported “everything bad that happens...anything that happens bad in that day I go and tell my mum and dad straight away” (Freddie, lines 1312-1314). He told me of an incident involving conflict with one of his teachers: “I told my mum and dad, they even said that he shouldn’t have got in your face and I told them exactly what went on” (Freddie, lines 15-17). He said “they just think it’s stupid and they tell me...calm down, ignore it...get on with whatever you’ve gotta say or...with whatever it’s at” (Freddie, lines 1335-1338).

Freddie’s father had helped him to get a job: “I wanted to do it. My dad knew the owner and everything, so my dad talked to him and [he] said yeah, I’ll be able to work there” (Freddie, lines 335-337). His father had also engaged him in a range of outdoor pursuits: “I was doing all these things and...my dad always said it’s keeping me out of trouble outside of school...and getting in with the wrong people” (Freddie, lines 1064-1067).

Role models were a prominent feature of participants’ experience, particularly for Freddie. He talked a lot about the influence of his father and grandfather. It
was clear that they had had a major input in shaping Freddie’s interests and hopes for the future:

Freddie: my granddad is a tree surgeon
Researcher: ...so has he taught you some stuff about it?
Freddie: yeah he’s given me everything that he’s got, like his chainsaws, his harnesses, all ropes, safety hats, and everything like that

(Freddie, lines 409-413)

Researcher: ...who are you with usually when you learn things well?
Freddie: my dad

(Freddie, lines 442-443)

Freddie: he’s [granddad] taught me a lot of things about bonsai trees and that

(Freddie, lines 452-453).

Freddie had very definite plans for the future, which appeared to have been shaped by the close adults in his life: “I’m just gonna go straight to R college...that’s where my granddad went to do his course” (Freddie, lines 983-985); “me and my granddad went there and looked around and everything” (Freddie, lines 1003-1004).

Aliyah talked about the role models in her family: “I also thought of being a business woman...Like my dad, my dad’s a...food and beverage businessman...as a job” (Aliyah, lines 407-411). She talked about her siblings, and their partners: “my brother’s... a computer science engineer...he works for...one that make...apple devices...android... he has his own job at his house” (Aliyah, lines 1070-1078).

Some participants talked about overcrowded living arrangements at home. For example Leah

“I share a room with A and B...T shares a room with his big sister B...my mum sleeps upstairs, my dad has a little camp bed on the floor to help
my nan cos...[she] can’t really walk up the stairs...it’s hard so he sleeps downstairs on to the sofa to help her” (Leah, lines 666-676).

Some students reported major health issues affecting family members. Freddie, talking about his father, said “he had a motorbike accident 5 years ago...he could have died...hasn’t got a spleen, half a kidney, he’s got loads of things wrong with him...whole left hand side he can’t use” (Freddie, lines 252-260). His mother also had health issues (an aneurism). This meant that neither parent is permitted to drive and “she [Mum] can’t work and same as my dad can’t work now... just like they’re getting things off the council and that, and then I go to work for my mum and that” (Freddie, lines 282-300).

Leah reported that:
...my nan broken her hip... and I have very sensitive bones, if I fall over I have to go up to hospital straight away, it’s basically wasting my mum and my dad’s time, so they get a bit annoyed and it’s harder because...I have to go straight up there...and if I don’t go up there and I stack over again...I can easily bre

Aliyah reported feeling constricted by the expectations of the parents of some of her friends: “So that the child’s mum can go like oh that school is really good...They helped my child to be able, good and he is now....he’s an engineer or something” (Aliyah, lines 804-808).

**Subtheme 4.3: Peer group**

Students reported seeing their friends outside school, taking part in activities such as going to the park, playing football, and playing computer games. Some students also socialised with their sibling’s friends. Freddie talked about having to negotiate the threat of violence from his peer group at his workplace:
...me and my friend had finished and...were just waiting...these kids...started throwing metal at us...they were shouting things and we told them to shut up, they threw water balloons so we threw one back...as we were about to leave they were hiding behind a bush, a big group of them...at least 15 to 20 of them...waiting...so they could beat us
up...we just waited them out...they have knives...that's why I didn’t wanna go past them (Freddie, lines 181-214).

**Theme 4: conclusion**

This theme shows the significance of some of the outside influences on YP’s learning. Family were shown to be a very big influence on some participants. Other more material aspects of family life also have an impact, such as access (or not) to the internet. This study did not have the scope to explore these fully; this could be a focus for a future study.

**4.6 Conclusion**

This chapter has set out the findings from the study. These findings have been organised into themes, which reflect patterns and commonalities across participants’ views. Included in these themes are facilitators and barriers to learning, along with a wide range of inventive suggestions for how school could be improved to help students to learn. Data gathered is broad ranging and rich, and relates to many issues raised in the literature review in Chapter 2. The next chapter will discuss how the data answers the research questions in more depth, and will make connections between this study and previous research.
Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This final chapter will discuss the findings of the study in the context of previous research detailed in the literature review in Chapter 2; each research question will be looked at in turn. The data interpreted as relating specifically to poverty will be discussed. The tools used in the study will be appraised, including the LBBQ2 (Gersch & Lipscomb, 2015), videos, semi-structured interview questions, and the researcher skills in eliciting information from participants. Planned feedback for research participants, parents and school staff will be detailed. The limitations of the study and pointers for further research will be explored. This will be followed by the implications of the research for EP practice. The chapter will then reflexively explore the learning acquired by the researcher in carrying out the study. The chapter will conclude with a commentary drawing together the main points of the study.

5.2 Research Questions

The main aim of this research study was to explore the views of YP experiencing poverty around school, learning, individual strengths, and hopes for the future. Positive Psychology was used in a carefully worded semi-structured interview and the LBBQ2 (Gersch & Lipscomb, 2015).

The research questions were:

i. What do YP experiencing poverty think helps them to learn at school? What do they think are the barriers to learning?

ii. What skills and resources do YP experiencing poverty think they bring to education? What additional skills do they think they need?

iii. How do YP experiencing poverty think they could be supported in planning for the future?

Each research question will be addressed in the sections below, detailing the themes and subthemes that relate to the question. Many aspects of the findings of this study replicate those of previous research, which will be discussed. As highlighted previously, there has been little research in the area of poverty-
related educational inequality that captures the voice of young people. As a result, this study elicited views of YP around education that were not found in any of the research reviewed in Chapter 2; these will be highlighted in the discussion.

The main points extrapolated from the data for each research question was collated into feedback prepared for the school and participants (see Appendix K). This provides a useful aide memoire for the findings set out in Chapter 4.

5.2.1 Research Question 1: What do YP experiencing poverty think helps them to learn at school? What do they think are the barriers to learning?

The majority of the data collected in the study was skewed towards answering this research question, suggesting that students have very definite ideas about what helps and hinders their learning in school. Data from three of the four themes detailed in Chapter 4 are included here. These are ‘Aspects of school that influence learning’; ‘Students are individuals’; and ‘Families, communities and role models’. The subheadings below summarise the main points extrapolated from the data.

Teacher attributes and relationships with teachers
Positive relationships with teachers were found to be central to effective learning and, on the flipside, negative relationships presented significant barriers to learning. This replicates research by Riley and Docking (2004) and Hirsch (2007). In addition to positive relationships, participants identified a number of teacher personal attributes that they viewed as helpful for learning. These included being fun, approachable, committed to students, caring, and energetic. Students also liked teachers that used pedagogies that were fun, engaging and age appropriate. This replicates findings by Gorard and See (2011), although their research was not specifically with YP experiencing poverty. Indeed Gorard & See (2011) stress that “When considering enjoyment of school and interest in lessons, there is little difference according to student family background (such as eligibility for FSM)” p.686. They go on to argue that enhancing enjoyment at school thus does not involve trying to change structural and socio-economic barriers that many other aspects of improving school for CYP experiencing poverty do.
Barriers to learning included conflicted, mistrustful relationships with teachers, where power differentials often seemed to play a part. The data suggests that students sometimes felt a lack of respect from teachers, describing feelings of humiliation in class; this replicated previous findings (Riley & Docking, 2004). Some participants were put off learning by teachers that they perceived as too strict, describing them as ‘scary’. Teachers’ lack of skills in managing challenging behaviour was also cited by some participants as being a barrier to learning. This suggests the need for teacher training in managing behaviour, which could include the exploring the emotional reaction that may be triggered by some students in some teachers. Another possible explanation of the data is that teacher stress could be contributing to the way that they interact with students. Stressed teachers may inadvertently pass their stress on to students. This provides a good argument for schools acknowledging and finding ways of addressing teacher stress.

Peer relationships
The data suggests the importance of the social aspects of learning in school. Friends were reported to provide support and seemed to be important as confidants e.g. to talk to about choosing subjects, or working out academic problems when stuck. This echoes findings from Save the Children (2013). Friends appeared to be a buffer for students who felt unfairly treated by teachers; participants reported that their friendship group protected one another.

Some participants talked about peers who presented barriers to learning. This was by being disruptive in class, or competitive and judgemental about academic levels; some students said that some of their peers also blamed others for things that they had done. The more negative aspects of peer relationships were not documented in any of the previous research on poverty-related educational inequality, although more general research acknowledges it to be a factor (e.g. Gorard & See, 2011).

Exclusion
Some participants felt strongly that internal exclusion (where the student was isolated within school) and external exclusion (where the student was not
allowed to come to school for a fixed period) stopped them from learning. Indeed, psychologists have long claimed that learning happens through social interaction, this is now backed up by neuroscience (Dumont et al. 2012). Frequent exclusions meant that students missed classroom learning, and resulted (they thought) in them being put down sets. Some participants were incredulous and angry about the punitive measures taken by school. This parallels research done by Riley and Docking (2004) with parents of ‘disadvantaged’ CYP, who thought that punitive practices in schools were one of the biggest barriers to their child’s learning. This study has shown that students themselves echo this view, although no comparable previous research was found in the area of poverty-related educational inequality.

School systems
Participants found some aspects of the curriculum confusing e.g. having 3 teachers for English. The data also showed that students wanted more subject choices in school, including more contemporary subjects e.g. games development. This backs up Riley and Docking’s (2004) claim that the curriculum can be rigid and may not suitable for all students. A major barrier, mentioned by all of the participants, was a paucity of careers advice in school. Some participants didn’t know what a careers advisor was. This is perhaps because the participants were in years 7 and 8 and considered too young for careers input. The data provides good argument for the provision of careers advice earlier in secondary school to assist students with choosing subjects and providing motivation. It backs up research by St Clair et al. (2011) and the Cabinet Office (2008) asserting that YP experiencing poverty often do not have knowledge of the strategies or pathways towards achieving their aspirations.

Relationships between home and school were found to affect learning, especially if a student/family felt that the school had a negative view of them. This may relate to Horgan’s (2007) assertion that CYP are very aware of their social position and the limitation this brings them. It backs up Hirch’s (2007) claim of the importance of good home-school relationships with YP experiencing poverty. It may also link with Yeager and Walton’s (2011) finding that the expectancy that one will be negatively stereotyped at school affects performance (which they refer to as stereotype threat). In addition, this finding
could be due to prejudice targeted at students/families experiencing poverty (although this is speculative). Perhaps training for school staff around the issues affecting CYP experiencing poverty, as suggested by a number of researchers (e.g. Beckett & Wrigley, 2014; Riley & Docking, 2004) may mitigate the effects of prejudice and help to nurture good home-school relationships.

**Pastoral support**

Students talked about how they had been supported in school, including counselling, attending a nurture base, and/or being supported through a CAF (see Chapter 4 for more details on the CAF). Connelly et al. (2014) suggest that the stress of living in poverty can increase social, emotional and mental health needs of students. The data from this study backs this assertion up, and some participants evidently needed (and enjoyed) extra pastoral support to address their stress.

The aspect of pastoral support also links in with relationships: the good relationships described by participants had a supportive element to them, as outlined above. Previous research also acknowledges the importance of relationships e.g. Beckett and Wrigley (2014). These authors proposed that more specialist pastoral staff could build relationships, provide for students’ social and emotional needs, and give teachers more time to focus on academic needs.

**School environment**

Participants identified the size of the school to be a barrier to learning; this was due to getting lost, and finding class sizes too big and cramped. This suggests that more support around negotiating the environment and/or smaller classes would boost learning. No comparable data was found from previous studies in this area. Thus it would be advantageous to explore this aspect of learning in further research.

**Preferred approaches to learning**

Participants were individual in their approaches to learning, indicating that different learning techniques work differently depending on the YP and there is no ‘one size fits all’. For example some students liked working on their own,
while others preferred working in a group; some liked reading, others preferred more practical and less literacy based learning. The data suggested that most participants had a growth learning mindset, although there were individual exceptions to this (see Chapter 2 for a discussion of mindsets). This fits with data from the USA, which found YP in low income groups tended towards having fixed learning mindsets and benefitted from interventions aiming to facilitate a growth learning mindset (e.g. Spitzer & Aronson, 2015). This is something that would benefit from more research in the UK, as the approach has been much lauded in the USA and requires relatively little resourcing. Schools could try this independently, ensuring that rigorous monitoring and evaluation was built in to the intervention.

Feelings
Analysis showed that positive feelings such as feeling safe, confident, supported, and having high self-esteem were thought to help learning. By contrast, students talked about negative feelings that were barriers to learning. These included anger, frustration, powerlessness, lack of confidence, stress, humiliation, low self-esteem, and feeling fearful. These findings were similar to those found by Save the Children (2013) and Hirsch (2007).

Feelings or emotions have been described as “the primary gatekeeper to learning” (Dumont, Istance, & Benavides, 2012, p.4) and have a significant effect on recall. Positive emotions facilitate long term recall, while negative emotions can interfere with the brain’s learning processes (Dumont et al. 2012). Thus it appears imperative that feelings are addressed at school.

Schools could address the issue of negative feelings in two ways. Firstly, they could seek to minimise the negative feelings that some students have at school by trying to ensure that school was a more positive experience for them. Secondly, they could increase support for students that needed it in being able to process and make sense of their feelings. These suggestions link with discussion around increased pastoral support (above). Adolescence is a time of transition and change for all students, as has been argued by child development theorists (e.g. Fuhrmann, Knoll & Blakemore, 2015). Some students are more
vulnerable during the transition to adulthood and need more support. The data suggests that a good place to get this support is in school.

Motivation
Participants were motivated to learn by getting good grades/reports, being given autonomy in class, and by having a special interest in a subject. De-motivators were finding a subject boring, anxiety about academic levels, lacking revision skills, and forgetting things that had been taught. While there has been a lot of psychological research around motivation, none was found that related specifically to YP experiencing poverty, thus no comparisons could be made.

Motivation provides a way for students to “acquire knowledge and skills in a meaningful way” (Dumont et al. 2012, p.4). This also relates to the psychological approach of meta-cognition, which is being increasingly adopted in UK schools (Baas, Castelijns, Vermeulen, Martens, & Segers, 2015; EEF, 2015). The approach encourages students to think about their learning and become aware of the ways in which different techniques work for them (or not). This links in with the ‘Students are individuals’ theme and could be an area for development for the school in which the study took place.

Families and communities
Homework was found to be an important issue in learning. Some participants received support from family members to complete homework; other students found it difficult to do homework due to a lack of help from family members, a lack of space, and no internet access at home. This backs Hirsch’s (2007) assertion that YP experiencing poverty tend to get less support to complete homework. This evidently puts them at an enormous disadvantage and suggests that schools should think creatively about solutions. One approach could be for schools to purchase laptops and/or internet dongles for students who do not have these facilities at home (e.g. using pupil premium funding). This would put them on a more level playing ground with their peers.

Some participants had intensive support from close family in planning for future careers. This proved to be crucial, as the YP were not getting this at school. For example, Freddie seemed to have almost given up on school due to his
frequent exclusions but he had very clear plans for the future; these aspirations appeared to have been nurtured by close family members, including his dad and his grand-dad. This contradicts researchers claiming that parents and YP experiencing poverty have low aspirations (documented in St Clair et al. 2011). It was quite the opposite in this study. Many students had positive role models within the family that they talked about – usually parents, grandparents, or siblings. These role models gave them ideas of the kinds of careers the YP would like to do themselves. These findings echo those of Elsely (2014) and Save the Children (2013). The data shows the importance of family factors when thinking about learning and future aspirations.

5.2.2 Research Question 2: What skills and resources do YP experiencing poverty think they bring to education? What additional skills do they think they need?

The data pertaining to this research question was contained in two themes: ‘Students are individuals’ and ‘Thinking about the future’. This question particularly focuses on the strengths of YP experiencing poverty, using a Positive Psychology approach advocated by Seligman (2000, 2002), and Biswas-Diener and Patterson (2011) who conducted a study that took a positive perspective in addressing poverty-related issues for YP at school.

YP’s skills

Participants had a wealth of skills e.g. bilingualism; creativity and design skills; outdoor skills; organisational skills; sports and physical dexterity; IT skills; customer service skills from work experience; musical skills; interpersonal skills; and more obscure skills such as gutting fish. Many of these skills did not seem to be capitalised or built on at school; perhaps teachers did not know about these skills. This parallels previous research e.g. Beckett and Wrigley, 2014, and Connelly et al. 2014. This could be seen as a missed opportunity to build student motivation and enhance learning. It also relates to the school curriculum (discussed above) which currently does not incorporate less academic skills students may have learnt out of the school context.
Skills YP would like to develop
Participants had many ideas for skills they would like to develop in school. This included personal skills such as confidence and independence. This supports Beckett and Wrigley’s (2014) assertion that more focus on ‘soft skills’ is key to closing the poverty-related attainment gap. Students also outlined academic skills they would like to develop, in order to broaden their choices for the future. These included skills in conventional subjects such as English, maths, science and art. As detailed above, some students expressed a need for the opportunity to study more and different subjects at school, including more contemporary subjects.

5.2.3 How do YP experiencing poverty think they could be supported in planning for the future?
Data that relates to this question was mostly contained in the theme ‘Thinking about the future’. The question focused on the hopes and dreams of participants, which they had in abundance.

Aspirations for the future: learning, jobs, and personal life
Participants had a range of hopes for the future. For the more immediate future, most students wanted to get good GCSE results and go on to Sixth Form College (or another form of further education). Participant ideas for a future career included interior designer, police officer, dog handler, landscape gardener, maths teacher and games developer. This backs up previous research showing that YP experiencing poverty often have high aspirations (e.g. EEF, 2014; Sinclair et al. 2010; Sosu & Ellis, 2014). Some participants mentioned more personal aspects that they aspired to developing in life, including being confident, kind, caring, having children, being near family, having a nice home or living in a different place. There was no previous research found relating to these ‘softer’ outcomes, meaning this aspect of the data cannot be compared.

Support needed to achieve aspirations
Although participants had aspirations for the future, most didn’t have a clear idea of how to reach their goals. All participants felt that they needed more careers advice in school. This backs up research by St-Clair et al. (2011) and
the Cabinet Office (2008) which documented that YP do not have knowledge of the strategies or pathways towards achieving their aims and need more support.

Some participants felt fearful about the future and expressed a desire to develop confidence and independence, and to get reassurance. It was suggested that role models were invited into school to talk about their journey. This is backed up by research in the USA by Spetzer and Aronson (2015). They argue that having access to a range of role models can counteract stereotype threat, particularly if role models explain challenges they faced in reaching their goals.

Participants thought teachers, other school staff, peers, parents and other family members could help them to reach their goals. They also recognised that they could help themselves.

The current section has laid out data gathered that provided some answers to the research questions. While this data explores the views of YP experiencing poverty, it could be argued that there is no difference between this group and more privileged YP. The next section details the data that has been interpreted to directly relate to poverty.

5.3 Poverty related aspects of the data

As discussed previously, participants were not directly asked about their socio-economic circumstances for ethical reasons. This means that interpretation was employed in ascertaining which data related to poverty-related educational inequality. Data in this section has been presented in more detail in Chapter 4 and section 5.3.

The data showed some participants had difficulties with a range of emotions including stress, anger, powerlessness and low self-esteem. As hypothesised by previous researchers (e.g. Connelly et al. 2014; Save the Children, 2013) the effects of poverty may trigger and maintain these kinds of difficulties. Another trigger for participants’ difficult feelings (e.g. anger, powerlessness or low self-
esteem) could be seen as students feeling that some school staff used them as scapegoats and humiliated them. One student felt her whole family were demonised by the school. It is possible that this was a result of prejudice or negative stereotyping on the teachers part towards YP experiencing poverty, as postulated by previous research (e.g. Beckett & Wrigley, 2014; HOCEC, 2014). However this is hard to evidence as no data was collected from school staff to back this up. An alternative explanation is that feelings of being demonised could be a result of internalised prejudice; as Horgan (2007) pointed out, YP are aware from a young age of their social position and the limitations this can bring.

Some participants talked about a lack of facilities at home, which seemed related to socio-economic circumstances. For example, one student described living in overcrowded housing. This impacted on her learning as it was difficult for her to find the space to study, and to access a computer. Two students reported not having the internet at home, which has a huge impact on completing homework, revising, and staying in touch with friends when not at school.

Some students’ parents couldn’t work due to health issues (e.g. Freddie and Leah). This would evidently have a negative impact on family finances. Other students said their parents were too busy to help them with homework or learning; perhaps they were working more than one low paid or unstable zero-hour contract job in order to make ends meet, leaving them with less family time. Parental employment status could have other knock on effects on participants, e.g. some participants had responsibility for younger siblings, which would impact on their ability to complete school work at home.

Floyd said he liked designer clothes, most likely to be influenced by peers and the media. This aspect of fitting in with peers is difficult for young people experiencing poverty as their parents are unlikely to be able to afford the latest styles.
Some participants said they didn’t like books or reading. This was perhaps because they were not exposed to them in the home environment due to families being unable to afford them.

As can be seen from this section, much interpretation has been involved in outlining data explicitly relating to poverty. It is difficult to say what the effects of poverty were on participants as they were not directly asked. However, it is the researcher’s view that this does not invalidate the responses given by participants throughout the study. Data gathered is important for understanding the 8 young people experiencing poverty in this study. As discussed in previous chapters, aspects of the data have the potential to be generalised to other young people experiencing poverty, as the themes constructed appear to be universal. This has been evidenced in the comparisons with previous research in the area of poverty-related educational inequality.

**5.4 How the findings link with School Effectiveness research**

Interestingly the findings of this study support the idea of systemic change as proposed by the school effectiveness movement. As discussed in Chapter 2, this movement evolved as a way to challenge the fact that CYP experiencing poverty and other minority groups were being failed by the education system in the USA (Lezotte, 2001). Themes in this study would fit into 8 of the 11 factors for effective schools postulated by Sammons et al (1995), these include: a learning environment; concentration on teaching and learning; purposeful teaching; high expectations; positive reinforcement; pupil rights and responsibilities; home-school partnership; and a learning organisation. The systemic issues this raises, and how EPs could fit into this, will be addressed later in the chapter.

The next section will briefly discuss the use of the LBBQ2 as a tool in the study.

**5.5 The Little Box of Big Questions 2 (LBBQ2)**

As outlined in Chapter 2, the LBBQ2 is a tool to elicit CYP’s views, with the explicit aim of linking responses to questions to actions for change and development (Gersch et al. 2014). Two cards from the LBBQ2 were used in the
research. Each participant was given the card to hold during the interview process. This was intended to give them some agency and control in the interview. The tool, along with the additional questions devised for the research, proved to be useful and appropriate for the research process, and resulted in the gathering of rich data.

Despite the fact that the data gathered was rich and broad ranging, there were some limitations of the study. These will be detailed in the next section, along with suggestions for future research.

5.6 Limitations of findings and implications for further research

There were a number of methodological limitations of the current study. Perhaps the biggest limitation was not discussing socioeconomic circumstance with participants. As detailed previously, this was done for ethical reasons, to protect the dignity of participants. Perhaps future psychological research could find a way around this difficult ethical issue.

The participants were selected by the school, after being given a brief by the researcher. The school was one in which the researcher was working in a TEP role, as part of her placement training requirements. In hindsight, it may have been better to have more discussion with school staff around participant selection. It seemed that the school conflated the researcher role with the TEP role and selected students according to need rather than the extent of poverty they were experiencing, or suitability for participating in research interviews. Two of the participants had a medical diagnosis (Autism Spectrum Disorder and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder), which could be argued to have skewed findings.

It was more difficult than envisaged through the initial design of the research to get the participants to open up and talk to the researcher freely. The fact that the research interview took place on only one occasion meant limited time for the researcher to build rapport with participants. A short video was used for later participants, intended as an ice-breaker and a prompt for conversation. While this appeared to be successful, it could have been coincidental that the
researcher had more reticent students initially, followed by students more ready to open up and chat later. It could be argued that the video also skewed later responses to interview questions, by imposing a view with the participants. However, the use of the video on the whole seemed to be positive; some participants referred to the character (Curtis) in the video during the interview, which showed that it was an effective prompt for further thinking.

Interviews took place in participants’ own time, to comply with the school’s request. This may have been a disadvantage; some participants appeared to be keen to get home at the end of the school day. Perhaps if the interviews had taken place during school time, the participants would have been more open to chatting.

The fact that there were only 8 participants, and that these participants were confined to years 7 and 8 may limit the generalisability and transferability of the data to other ages. It would be more illuminating for future research to interview more students from a range of ages and stages of education.

The study was confined to one school in one specific locality. This may further limit the generalisability and transferability of the data. However, previous research seems to suggest that solutions need to be tailored to suit the area, school, and individual. The fact that the study is limited in this way could also be interpreted as a positive aspect.

The existence of poverty-related educational inequality is argued throughout this thesis to be a political issue predominantly resulting from government management of the distribution of resources in society. Focusing on YP’s views, as this study has done, could be construed as taking an individualised ‘within child’ approach, rather than a systemic one. It could be interpreted as focusing on working with CYP to enable them to adapt to their environment, rather than adapting the environment to accommodate the needs of YP experiencing poverty. The researcher’s view is that this is a valid criticism. However, to counter this, YP experiencing poverty do need strategies to ensure they have some options and opportunities in the current political climate, which may
validate this research. The fact that the research is couched within a critique of the current political climate also counters this limitation.

Completing this study has illuminated the paucity of research in the area of poverty-related educational inequality from a psychological perspective. There were no UK educational psychology studies found. Most of the psychological studies discussed in Chapter 2 were from the USA. Despite this, the effect of poverty on educational attainment is currently a high profile political issue. It has become a major policy driver of the Scottish National Party (SNP). New reports are regularly published on the issue and it is seldom far from the news. This suggests that it is an important issue for EPs to research and be involved in. Research evidence could be used by schools in order to make best use of Pupil Premium funding allocated to students experiencing poverty. In addition, psychological research could add a wealth of useful information to the Sutton Trust Toolkit (EEF), which provides information on school interventions for disadvantaged students based on best evidence.

Because of the paucity of UK psychological research into poverty-related educational inequality, it seems that the implications for further research are wide-ranging. Beckett and Wrigley (2014) propose the need for “practitioner research which moves beyond the statistics and towards a critical and empathetic understanding of students’ lifeworlds, learning needs and schooling experiences” (p.222).

In addition to qualitative research, measuring the effectiveness of specific psychological interventions used with students experiencing poverty in the UK context would be extremely useful. Perhaps this could be based on research with a strong evidence base from the USA, to ascertain whether they are transferable to a UK context. For example mindset approaches, students writing about their stress and/or values that are important to them, the ‘possible selves’ approach, or stereotype threat.

Interventions that are already being used to support CYP experiencing poverty in the UK could also be scrutinised through a poverty-based research lens. For example nurture groups, relaxation techniques, or therapeutic interventions
such as cognitive-behavioural therapy. The burgeoning of character education in the USA and the UK could be subject to research, to ascertain whether it is helpful in addressing poverty-related educational inequality.

Despite the fact that research helps to build an evidence base, evidence in the UK seems to suggest that CYP, schools, and neighbourhoods need individualised, tailored approaches (e.g. Spitzer & Aronson, 2015). Thus an evidence base can only provide a rough guide in the area of poverty-related educational inequality, as transference from one context to another can be problematic. In reality, getting it right for CYP experiencing poverty may involve some trial and error, based on careful consideration of the context as well as previous research.

Arguably the best way of finding out what helps CYP experiencing poverty learn is by asking them, as has been done in this study. More qualitative research seeking the views of CYP experiencing poverty, taking a strengths-based perspective to counter the deficit narrative could be beneficial towards understanding more about what measures can address poverty-related educational inequality.

The next section details how participants will be fed back to on completion of the study.

5.7 Feedback to participants and the school

The researcher laid out the main findings of the thematic analysis in a series of sheets to give participants (see Appendix K). This was done in a graphic facilitation style in order to make it more aesthetically pleasing and accessible for YP. Information was arranged according to research question, as the researcher thought this would be a useful format for participants and the school to see. In addition to participant feedback, a synopsis of the research with the main implications of the study for the school was given to the SENCo (see Appendix L). It was hoped that this would be taken into account by the school for future planning.
In addition to implications for future research and for schools, this study has highlighted many potential issues for EPs around addressing poverty-related educational inequality. This will be detailed in the next section.

5.8 Implications for EPs

The current political agenda in the UK is placing more children into poverty each year (CPAG, 2015; Harrop, 2015). Thus it is imperative that EPs are well equipped to address this issue. The literature review in Chapter 2 highlighted that the EP role was barely acknowledged in the literature. It argued for EPs to raise their profile in addressing poverty-related educational inequality at multiple levels, including CYP, parents, schools, LAs and governmental departments.

Anecdotal evidence, based on day to day EP practice, suggests that EPs work with CYP affected by poverty perhaps on a daily basis; they can and do make a difference in this area. As discussed, one of the implications of this study is for EPs to generate more strengths-based research. This section will discuss the implications of this research study for the day-to-day role of the EP: in both systemic work and individual work with CYP.

Systemic work

Chapter 2 set out the argument that addressing the systemic causes of poverty at a societal, government policy level is the most effective way of eradicating child poverty and closing the poverty-related attainment gap. It could be argued that change at the societal level is beyond the remit of the EP role. However, EPs may be in a position to campaign and lobby for policy change, if their contract of employment allows them to be politically proactive. As part of this lobbying for change, EPs could lend their knowledge and skills to high profile lobbying groups, to support the construction of strong arguments (e.g. the Child Poverty Action Group; Save the Children). Psychologists Against Austerity\(^2\) is a growing movement of applied psychologists (mainly clinical psychologists) campaigning against, and raising awareness of, the psychological effects that austerity has on individuals and groups. Perhaps more EPs could join their

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2 https://psychagainstausterity.wordpress.com/
ranks, to raise their profile and to join with other applied psychologists to devise solutions.

Systemic interventions at the school level may arguably be the most influential way for EPs to address poverty-related educational inequality. Chapter 2 detailed that school quality appears to be a significant factor affecting the attainment of CYP experiencing poverty (e.g. Hopkins et al. 2014; Macleod et al. 2015; Riley & Docking, 2004). On a large scale, EPs are potentially in a position to contribute towards “the development of a series of potentially testable theories of systemic change in education” (Hopkins et al. 2014, p.257).

On a smaller scale, EPs could consult with schools around how best to support CYP experiencing poverty, including optimal use of pupil premium funding. Systemic approaches such as a no excuses culture; pastoral support; the tracking of data; adequate funding; finding alternatives to exclusion; curricular changes; careers advice; introducing evidence based interventions; effective pedagogies based on active learning; teacher training around poverty; nurturing positive relationships; or incorporating student voice into school reforms could be advised and/or delivered by EPs. Advice given to individual schools could be based on small scale surveys or research projects. For example the EP could gather information on the school system, and CYP experiencing poverty at the school could be asked questions similar to those in this study – how they learn best, their strengths and their aspirations for the future.

EPs could be more involved with parents in order to address poverty-related issues, which seem to be likely to escalate under the current government. For example, ensuring that parents are supported in addressing housing and other welfare issues; ensuring that home-school collaboration is taking place, and that parents feel involved in their child’s education (Ellis & Sosu, 2015). This could involve coaching parents on how to support their child to learn more effectively, assist with homework, or read with and talk to their child. EPs could raise awareness with parents around new school systems (marketisation) and give information on the choices open to them for their child’s education. Perhaps EPs could take on more therapeutic roles with families, where the stress of poverty may have taken its toll on family dynamics.
Change at a societal systemic level is a long term solution that requires governmental buy-in. As discussed, it is unlikely that the current government will buy-in to the structural changes needed to reduce and/or eradicate child poverty (Harrop, 2015). Thus, in the short term, EPs may have to participate in more direct work with CYP experiencing poverty, to mitigate against its effects. This is described below.

**Direct work with CYP**

Individual EP work with CYP experiencing poverty would involve a process of psychological assessment to ascertain what changes are needed for that individual. Once individual work is complete the EP would liaise with the school to ensure follow through for the CYP’s needs, and review regularly to ensure they stay on track.

A range of tools could be (and are) used in assessment when working with CYP experiencing poverty. For example, as in this study, the LBBQ2 (Gersch & Lipscomb, 2015) could be used to gather views about learning, strengths and aspirations; action planning can be built in to discussion. Personal construct psychology (PCP) could be useful in ascertaining CYP’s views about themselves and their learning. This was first introduced by Kelly (1955) and has been expanded on by Beaver (2011), who uses a range of drawing techniques to elicit children’s views. An awareness of the pertinent issues and asking the right questions with CYP experiencing poverty is crucial (Ravenette, 1999), the PCP approach includes a number of discursive techniques to use with CYP.

In addition to individual work, EPs could work with groups of CYP to reduce poverty-related educational inequality. EPs could design and facilitate group interventions for schools based on approaches used in the USA (discussed in Chapter 2). For example, growth and belonging mindsets; meta-cognitive strategies; writing about ‘possible selves’; writing about personal values; character education; and strengths based interventions e.g. Strengths Gym (Proctor & Eades, 2009). It is important to bear in mind that these interventions (with the exception of Strengths Gym) do not yet have an evidence base in the
UK. Thus, rigorous monitoring and evaluation of any interventions would be paramount to ascertain effectiveness.

5.9 Reflexivity: learning from the thesis

This section will be written in the first person to adequately reflect how the process of research affected the researcher’s thought processes and learning.

I have mixed feelings about this piece of research. It has presented me with valuable learning experiences, but also many challenges. I am passionate about poverty and inequality, and found it informative and stimulating to study in depth. This acquired knowledge is very relevant to my role as trainee EP. I have learned a huge amount about the process of research, and there are a range of considerations I would take into any future research projects, which are explored below.

Despite this learning, I think there are a number of limits to the study’s usefulness in a wider arena, particularly around the methodological limitations (outlined above). The lack of time, and the pressure I was under to complete other pieces of work associated with trainee placement, meant that the research process was not given the time and consideration I felt it should have been. In my opinion, the quality of the research suffered as a result of this.

The process of research took a long time and I found it very isolating. Although I had good support from university and placement supervisors and my peers, I spent long hours, days and weeks on my own, painstakingly transcribing and analysing data and then writing it up into this thesis. If I take part in research in the future, I would like to do this as part of a team; this may make it less of a lonely process.

I found the most enjoyable aspect of the research was interviewing the YP. I felt incredibly privileged to be the recipient of some participants’ innermost thoughts and feelings. However, it was more difficult than I expected for some students to open up and talk in the interviews. Despite meticulous planning on my part, some students seemed reticent, perhaps even intimidated. This prompted me to
reflect on things that I may have been doing (or not doing) to affect this dynamic. It seemed inevitable that, no matter how much I tried to reduce its effects, the power differentials between me and the participants were ever present. The fact that the research took place in a school, where power differentials between adults and YP are clearly demarcated, probably fuelled this dynamic.

On the other hand, some participants were very chatty, particularly Freddie. I reflected that Freddie was (understandably) upset and agitated on the day I interviewed him. He had been put in isolation for an incident that had taken place the previous week, and his parents had not been informed. The injustice of this clearly riled him and it seemed that he needed a space to express his feelings. Perhaps he would not have been so expressive had I interviewed him on a different day.

I met with participants only once as a group before the interviews, and each participant was only interviewed once as part of the process. In any future research I carry out, I will experiment with more ice-breaking tools, and I will endeavour to meet participants more frequently in order to develop rapport. As mentioned above, time constraints, as well as the research design prevented this in this study.

As set out in Chapter 1 my positioning in this study was from a social justice standpoint. I am in disagreement with current governmental policy that, in my view, increases poverty and inequality in the UK. This is an area in which I feel strongly and in this sense I sometimes found it difficult to remain impartial in interviews. I found myself wanting to become outraged on the participant's behalf if they were describing situations where they appeared to be the victim of prejudice or injustice. Part of me wanted to condemn teachers and schools, as they seemed to be implicated in the prejudice/injustice. However, I stayed 'meta' to this; I showed my empathy by acknowledging how difficult the situation must be for the YP. I also held in mind that I was hearing the participant's interpretation; behind the injustice described was perhaps a very stressed and unsupported teacher or other school staff trying to do their very best in the circumstances.
I found it difficult to separate the roles of researcher and TEP during the process. If a YP was describing difficulties they were experiencing, it was hard to be solely in the role of data gathering, and not to spend time acknowledging difficulties and/or trying to find solutions with the YP. For example, Freddie was facing many challenges at school; I think it would have been unethical for me to ignore the fact that he appeared to desperately need to be heard, understood and supported. I did spend some time with him jointly thinking about how he could approach the problems he was having at school. I also debriefed the school SENCo and Assistant SENCo after the interview took place, and indicated ways in which Freddie thought he could be supported. While this perhaps muddied my role as researcher, I also think that the process produced qualitative data that could be used in the findings.

The findings of the research are distinctive in that, as far as I know, no similar research from an EP perspective has been done in the UK. In addition there is a paucity of CYP’s voices in research around poverty-related educational inequality. While this study is important, it cannot be argued that it threw up groundbreaking discoveries in the data. The constructed themes are rather common-sense, and it could be argued that the research doesn’t really tell us anything new as many of the findings were similar to previous research. A counter argument to this could be that the process of research was perhaps as important as the outcomes. The process ensured that YP were listened to and their views were considered as important in order to find solutions. In addition, although many of the findings had been documented previously, some of the data had not in the research area of poverty-related educational inequality. The fact that the young people echoed academic arguments (e.g. those of the school effectiveness movement) reinforces possible changes that would reduce poverty-related inequality.

To conclude, while there are limitations to the research, it is in keeping with the kind of EP I want to be. I consider the EP role as being potentially powerful in challenging social injustice and mitigating the inequality that poverty currently brings to education. Conducting the process of research has provided me with valuable learning that I will bring into my role as a qualified EP.
5.10 Conclusion

This chapter has set out the data that has answered the research questions. The data collected was rich, and comparable to a range of previous research in the area of poverty-related educational inequality. This study was distinctive in that it took a psychological view to exploring the views of YP experiencing poverty.

The breadth of research discussed in this thesis indicates the complexity underlying poverty-related educational inequality, and implies that solutions will be similarly broad-ranging and complex.

While yielding interesting and useful findings, the context-specificity and small scale of this study limits the generalisation of findings. This implicates that further research is needed in the area of poverty-related educational inequality, from an educational psychology perspective and including student voice.

It could tentatively be surmised that the findings, along with previous research, indicate that a systemic approach (incorporating student voice) is arguably the most effective approach for EPs to address poverty-related educational inequality. However, this does not preclude EPs working with both individuals and groups of CYP to mitigate the effects of poverty on learning. These are evidently areas in which EPs can contribute, given their knowledge and skills in the psychology of systems and organisations, in addition to the psychology of groups and individuals.

This thesis has argued that it is imperative for the issue of educational inequality to be addressed as “providing a shelter from the impact of disadvantage is one of the main reasons for having and supporting a state-funded education system” (Gorard & See, 2011, p.687). To make changes, the political will needs to be there. The UK government argues that “The Children and Families Bill...underpins wider reforms to ensure that all children and young people can succeed, no matter what their background” (Department of Education, 2013, p.1). However, Fox (2015) argues that “the social lotteries of gender, race and class are not addressed by the Act and neither are the families’ or schools’
circumstances” (p.391-392). It seems evident that an analysis of poverty should be factored into any consideration of educational needs. In the researcher’s view it is time for the government to put their money (and more of their efforts) where their mouth is, and begin to seriously tackle the issue.
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APPENDICES

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Appendix A: Strategy for narrative literature review

The issue of poverty-related educational inequality has been analysed and researched in a range of academic disciplines. The purpose of the review was to bring this disparate literature together in a holistic overview. The reviewed literature was organised by broad themes: the voice of the child; the social and cultural capital of the family; school systems; and psychological factors.

The table below indicates searches performed on databases and terminology used in the search. Journal articles were sourced between October 2014 and January 2016. Green, Johnson & Adams (2006) state that the “minimum requirements for narrative reviews are that authors should state the database searched, a starting year, and the ending year and month of the search” (p.107).

Papers relating to poverty-related educational inequality and dated from January 2000 to January 2016 were included, due to the fast changing nature of the policy context. (With the exception of the Sammons, Hillman & Mortimore (1995) paper on the Key Characteristics of Effective Schools which was included due to its relevance to the review). Articles not relating to the UK or USA context were excluded, as the UK has a distinctive policy context which may not be comparable to other countries. Psychological research conducted in the USA was included, due to the dearth of research in the UK.

The search terms below were used in varying combinations on the listed databases. It was difficult to pinpoint articles that were relevant to the research questions, which is why so many search terms were used. Abstracts of articles were scanned and if they were relevant and fitted the criteria outlined above, they were included in the review. Reference lists in the articles selected for review were scanned to locate further relevant journal articles. This resulted in a total of 83 publications being used in the narrative review.

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Appendix B: Information sheet, letters and consent forms

Information sheet: for school
Closing the Gap: Young People’s Views on Attainment at School: Summary of proposal

The attainment gap between children and young people (CYP) experiencing poverty and their better off peers in the UK is widening, despite an increasing media and policy focus in this area. This is a complex area and there is no conclusive evidence in what works to close the attainment gap. There is a plethora of research on the impact of poverty on education, however very little of it includes the voice of CYP. Hearing the views of CYP is a central tenet of educational psychology, as is social justice and facilitating access to the curriculum for all students.

The aim of this research is to explore the views around attainment of young people (YP) experiencing poverty in [name of borough]. YP will be supported to discuss aspects of their lives (both in and out of school) that enable them to attain at school, and aspects that present barriers to attainment. The research will use Positive Psychology, taking a strengths based approach to explore the skills YP think they bring to education, and skills they would like to develop. In addition YP will be asked how they can be supported in planning for the future.

It is hoped that the study will highlight some themes in school that, if addressed, could potentially raise the attainment of CYP experiencing poverty. Education is seen as one way of lifting CYP out of poverty, giving them more options in their future careers.

The study will use qualitative methods. Questions from the Little Box of Big Questions 2 (LBBQ2) (Gersch & Lipscomb, forthcoming) will be used as a tool to elicit YP’s views in semi-structured interviews, in addition to questions devised by the researcher. Secondary school students in key stages three and four from a ‘deprived’ secondary school in [name of borough] will participate in the study.

[name of borough] falls within the 20% highest scoring boroughs in inequality, which measures the highest scoring localities with the lowest (Local Futures, 2010). Almost a quarter of children in the borough experiences poverty, compared with a fifth across England (Public Health England, 2014). [name of borough] has one of the highest attainment gaps in England, ranking 4th out of 326 districts with a gap of 38.4% (DfE, 2012). 66.8% of students not eligible for FSM in [name of borough] achieve five or more General Certificates of Secondary Education (GCSEs) at grade A-C, in contrast to 28.2% of FSM students (DfE, 2012).

The current government’s stated aim is to ‘ensure that a child’s socioeconomic disadvantage does not limit their educational outcomes by age 19, compared to their peers’ (HOCEC, 2014:5). A raft of legislation and interventions in the last decade has aimed to address the attainment gap, with varying success. Sinclair et al. (2010) assert that recent policy is distinct for its increased stress on individual responsibility rather than structural (or systemic) causes of disadvantage and social exclusion.
Letter to parent/guardian/s:

Dear Parent/Guardian

My name is Anna Griffiths and I am writing to ask for your support for your child to participate in a research project I am doing in [school name]. This is being done as part of my training to become an educational psychologist at the University of East London. I am on a two year placement in [name of borough] and have been working with staff and students at [school name] since September 2014.

I met with your child today to explain my research and they gave their consent to participate in the project. This means that I will be meeting with them to talk to them at school on a specified date. I will meet with them at 2.25pm, so they will be late home from school on that day.

I want to find out about things that young people think help them to do well at school, as well as things that are less helpful. I am also interested in the skills young people think they have, and the skills they would like to develop. I am particularly interested in young people who are entitled to pupil premium grants. It is hoped that information gathered from the project will help the school to support students to reach their potential at school.

I would like to talk to your child for around 60 minutes in school. I will ask questions about learning and hopes for the future. By the end of the interview each young person will have an action plan for things they would like to do over the next year. I hope to talk to eight young people all together.

Interviews will be audio recorded and written up anonymously; once written up, the recordings will be permanently deleted. This project will be written into a research thesis to be submitted as part of my training. All information gathered will be treated with the strictest confidence and any reports resulting from the study will not identify the names of participants.

Participation in the project is voluntary. Participants are free to withdraw at any time and do not have to give a reason. It is very unlikely that your child will feel any distress from participation. However, if this does arise, I will offer information on what provision is available in school or locally to support your child with any issues that may emerge.

Please contact me to ask me any questions. If you are happy for your child to continue you do not need to do anything; I will follow up this letter with a phone call to check that you are in agreement for the interview to go ahead. If you would not like your child to participate then please contact me. Please retain this invitation letter for reference.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this study, I look forward to speaking to you.

Anna Griffiths
E-mail: xxxx; Tel: xxxx
Letter for students:

Dear ...........................................

My name is Anna Griffiths and I am training to become an educational psychologist. I work with children and young people in [name of borough]. I am doing some research as part of my training and would be happy if you could take part.

I want to find out what young people think helps them at school, and things that may not help them. I am also interested in what skills young people have, and the skills they would like to develop. I hope that the information from the study will help the school to support young people to do their best at school.

I would like to chat to you for around 60 minutes in school, with a break half way through. I will ask you some questions about school, your learning, and your hopes for the future. I will be chatting to 7 other young people too.

I will record our chat, to make sure I remember what was said. Afterwards I will write about what I have learnt but I won’t use your name, so that no-one will know what you said. Once it has been typed up, the recording will be deleted forever.

If you agree to take part, you can withdraw from the research at any time without giving a reason. It will not affect the rest of school.

If you have any questions about this you can contact me – my details are below.

I hope to chat to you soon 😊.

Anna Griffiths

E-mail: xxxxx
Telephone number: xxxxx
Consent form for young people

My name is: _________________________________ I am in Year ____________

1. I have read the information and understand what Anna’s project is about:
   [ ] Yes  [ ] No (I would like to chat more about it)

2. I would like to take part in the project and chat with Anna:
   [ ] Yes  [ ] No

3. I am happy for Anna to record what I say so she can remember the discussion:
   [ ] Yes  [ ] No

Signature: ____________________________________________________________

Date: ________________________________________________________________

Thank you 😊
Letter for school:

Dear [school name]

Project Title: Closing the Gap: Young People’s Views on Learning in School

My name is Anna Griffiths and I am training to become an educational psychologist at the University of East London. I am on placement at [name of borough] Educational Psychology Service until summer 2016.

I am carrying out research as part of my training and I am writing to ask for your support for [name of school] to participate in my research study. I want to find out what young people think helps (and hinders) them to do well at school. I am also interested in what skills young people have, and the skills they would like to develop. I am particularly interested in young people who are in receipt of free school meals.

It is hoped that the information from the study will provide information to help schools to support lower income students to reach their potential at school. I hope to interview eight students (four male and four female) from key stages three and four at [name of school]. Each interview will take about 60 minutes (with a break half way through) and students will be asked questions about their learning and hopes for the future.

It would be necessary to obtain informed consent from the student, their parent/carer, and the school. Students will have the right to withdraw from the research at any time. It is unlikely that students will feel any distress from participation. However, if this does arise, I will offer information on what provision is available in school or locally to support with any issues that may emerge.

Interviews will be recorded and later I will write about what I have found out from the young people I have chatted to. This will be done anonymously and recordings will be then be deleted forever. All information gathered will be treated with the strictest confidence and any reports resulting from the study will not identify the names of participants.

Students are not obliged to take part in this study and should not feel coerced. Participants, if agreed to take part, will be free to withdraw at any time without disadvantage and without any obligation to give a reason.

Results of the study will be reported back to the school. I hope that the findings will help the school in planning for and supporting students from lower income households.

Please feel free to ask me any questions, my contact details (and those of my supervisor) are below.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this study.

Anna Griffiths
E-mail: xxxxx; Telephone number: xxxxx
If you have any questions or concerns about how the study has been conducted, please contact my Director of Studies: xxxxxx

or

Chair of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Sub-committee: xxxxxx

**Consent form for head teacher:**

Name of school: ........................................................................................................................................................

Please fill this in if you are happy for the selected young people from your school to take part in the research project: ‘Closing the Gap: Young People’s Views on Attainment at School’

1. I have read the information about the project and I understand what it is about:
   - Yes
   - No (I would like to chat more)

Signature: ............................................................................................................................................................

2. I am happy for the selected young people in the school to participate in the research project, pending permission from parents/guardians and young people:
   - Yes
   - No

Signature: ............................................................................................................................................................

3. I am happy for young people’s responses to be recorded and destroyed afterwards:
   - Yes
   - No

Signature: ............................................................................................................................................................

Thank you
Appendix C: Questions used in semi-structured interviews

Thanks to Small World Publishing and Professor Irvine Gersch for permission to reproduce the questions here.

LITTLE BOX OF BIG QUESTIONS 2 (LBBQ2): SELECTED QUESTIONS
(Highlighted prompt questions were taken from other cards in the box)

How do people learn things?
  - What helps you to do well at school?
  - Is there anything that stops you from learning at school?
- Who has been your very best teacher? Why?
- What do you think is the most important thing for you to learn about now?
  - Why?
  - Where can you learn about these things?
- What would you like to learn about in the future?
  - Why?

What are your dreams for the future?
- What sort of person would you like to be when you are an adult?
  - What are your key strengths? What do you love doing? What are your passions?
- What are your hopes and dreams for the future? How could you achieve your dreams?
  - If you definitely could not fail, what would you choose to do?
- What would you like to achieve in 5 years time? 10 years time? By the time you are a much older person? Who can help you?
- What plans or goals could you make for this year?

SUPPLEMENTARY INTERVIEW QUESTION:
- If you were advising the mayor of [name of borough] what would you tell him/her to do to ensure that every child/young person succeeded at school?
Thanks to Small World Publishing and Professor Irvine Gersch for permission to reproduce the cards here. Please do not copy.

Card 1:
What are your dreams for the future?

What sort of person would you like to be when you are an adult?

What are your hopes and dreams for the future?
How could you achieve your dreams?

What plans or goals could you make for this year?

What would you like to achieve in 5 years time? 10 years time? By the time you are a much older person?
Who can help you?
Appendix D: Example of Interview Transcription: Freddie
(please see Appendix M for all transcriptions)

1  Researcher: do you want some water?
2  Freddie: no thanks, I’m ok, I’ve got a bottle.
3  Researcher: no, oh ok. Right so to start off with, I’ve got a little
4     film clip to watch….Right let me just find it…
5  Researcher: so what time did that happen this morning?
6  Freddie: no, er last week
7  Researcher: Oh it happened last week?
8  Freddie: I went in yesterday, or I went in yesterday or
9     Monday. But they haven’t rung my parents or told my
10    parents or anything.
11  Researcher: right
12  Freddie: so, I’ve been isolated and my parents don’t even
13     know about it.
14  Researcher: ok, and it happened last week?
15  Freddie: yeah, they should have told my mum and dad first.
16     I told my mum and dad, they even said that he shouldn’t
17     have got in your face and I told them exactly what went on
18     and they say I was making up things or at assembly, they
19     made up something about my friend. My friend apparently
20     assaulted him, when he tapped him.
21  Researcher: right
22  Freddie: He said sir, like that, tapped him
23  Researcher: right
24  Freddie: he said it was assault and sent him out
25  Researcher: really. And does he have arguments with lots of
26     students, the teacher?
27  Freddie: yup, we are the main people that he would always
28     have a go at
29  Researcher: yeah, is he quite strict?
30  Freddie: no, he’s not strict he just seems to have a go at me
31     and N, or me and N and M and H
32  Researcher: right
33  Freddie: even if we are just, like, sitting down on our chair
34     doing nothing he’ll shout at us and send us outside. He

Freddie (male) – Y8
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35  don't do it to anyone else, like, say if we're talking he
36  sends us out but when everyone else is talking he don't
37  sent anyone else out.

38  Researcher: right, so it kinda feels like you're being picked on
39  Freddie: yeah

40  Researcher: yeah, and will you get a chance to sit down and
41  have a conversation with him about it?

42  Freddie: I don't want to

43  Researcher: you don't want to cos you're... will your mum and
44  dad have to come in?

45  Freddie: no

46  Researcher: no

47  Freddie: if I had to get sat down to talk to him though I would
48  end up going schizop

49  Researcher: what cos you still feel very annoyed about it?

50  Freddie: yeah

51  Researcher: yeah. Will you have him next year?

52  Freddie: hopefully not

53  Researcher: might you have a different teacher? So what do
54  you do when you are in isolation?

55  Freddie: nothing apart from work that's been set

56  Researcher: right so you've got work to do. yeah.

57  Freddie: I'm not learning anything in isolation cos it's not the
58  same as being in the actual class. So it's like I'm stuck in
59  isolation doing writing and work and then I get back into
60  class and they're doing a whole lot of different things.

61  Researcher: yeah, so you've missed a load of stuff. Yeah that
62  must be difficult.

63  Freddie: mm hmmm. I've been set these tests about 5 times
64  in a row now, to do

65  Researcher: that you're doing today, yeah?

66  Freddie: yeah, I've had to do it again, I've had to do art
67  again. I've had to do loads of different things again.

Freddy (male) – Y8
Researcher: so it feels like a bit of a waste of time? Because you've already done them.

Freddie: yeah

Researcher: yeah, yeah that must be frustrating. Right, so I've got a video here. Right this is just to give you a little bit of an introduction. It's a young person who lives in St Anne's, which I think is in Nottingham, I don't know if you know it?

Freddie: what?

Researcher: St Anne's, a place called St Anne's.

Freddie: no

Researcher: and he's talking about school, and his experience of school. OK?

VIDEO PLAYS

Researcher: that's it, what did you think of that?

Freddie: I thought it was right

Researcher: what's that?

Freddie: I thought it was right what he was saying

Researcher: everything was right, you agree with him?

Freddie: mm hmm

Researcher: yeah, so you feel the same sort of way? And have you ever had a teacher like, what he was talking about?

Freddie: yeah

Researcher: yeah, who was that?

Freddie: Miss T, she left. She's gone to a different school.

Researcher: Was that in [school name] or in primary school?

Freddie: she was here

Researcher: she was here, and what did she teach?

Freddie: erm, everything, I was in nurture.

Researcher: ah ok

Freddie: it was like a smaller class and there was only like 7 of us.

Freddie (male) – Y8
Researcher: yeah

Freddie: she taught us every single day, every lesson. But then she left us and like this year. So we haven’t got her any more. I’ve just got teachers who always argue with me.

Researcher: who are always?

Freddie: like arguing

Researcher: arguing with you

Freddie: like if they start saying things, and then I argue back

Researcher: right. So they kind of wind you up, rub you up the wrong way. Whereas Miss Tucker didn’t. So tell me about Miss Tucker, what was it about her that was good?

Freddie: she, she knew how to calm us down and everything

Researcher: yeah

Freddie: she knew how to handle, say if we got really badly told off and everything, and we would come into her class really annoyed she would know, she would leave us alone and let us calm down and then we would get on with our work or she would take me out of the class and talk to me

Researcher: right, and could you, could you talk to her about anything then?

Freddie: yeah

Researcher: yeah

Freddie: all of us could, everyone who was in the class could

Researcher: and so nurture didn’t continue into this year? Is there a nurture class still?

Freddie: no because she’s left.

Researcher: right

Freddie: she was the nurture teacher.

Researcher: yeah

Freddie: now she’s left

Freddie (male) – Y8
Reseacher: and did you know that she was gonna leave?  
Freddie: no  
Reseacher: ah, you didn't did you not get a chance  
Freddie: no-one knew she was gonna leave  
Reseacher: to say good bye then? No?  
Freddie: no-one knew she was gonna leave  
Reseacher: ahh. So it must have been quite difficult for you this  
year, coming back and she wasn't here and having to just  
get on with it without her  
Freddie: yeah  
Reseacher: yeah  
Freddie: I have one teacher but, er, em Miss F, she helps a  
lot  
Reseacher: right  
Freddie: you know Miss F don't you?  
Reseacher: oh, T...  
Freddie: yeah, T F  
Reseacher: yeah, yeah. So she teaches you as well.  
Freddie: no she don't teach me she just helps me with  
things  
Reseacher: right  
Freddie: like say if get annoyed I tell her and she would help  
me and everything else  
Reseacher: what so she would talk to you about what to do  
when you get annoyed and how to calm down and  
Freddie: how to calm down is different. I don't seem to calm  
down  
Reseacher: no?  
Freddie: if I get really annoyed, I do something stupid and I  
think why did I do that and then I think after  
Reseacher: so it's usually afterwards you kind of regret it?  
yeah? I suppose, with time, you'll be able to learn how to  
to control yourself a bit more. I mean it's not uncommon
that people your age, that sounds a bit patronising I know
but
Freddie: see it used to wind me up when people wind me up
and call me things
Researcher: mm hmm
Freddie: but, I just laugh at it now
Researcher: you just laugh now, well that's
Freddie: it ain't true so
Researcher: yeah. That's a step forward as well then, so you're
not reacting in a, you're not lashing out, you just laugh
and you just laugh it off
Freddie: mm hmm
Researcher: water off a duck's back
Freddie: I get annoyed sometimes when they take the mick
out of my friends and that
Researcher: yeah
Freddie: and when they cos the other day, em do you know
the Old Linn? Have you ever been down the Old Linn?
Researcher: no
Freddie: you haven't?
Researcher: no
Freddie: oh em, there's like a wall for the boats come up to
Researcher: yeah
Freddie: and er I was at work and me and my friend had
finished and me and my friend were just waiting over
there and we had these kids throwing water balloons over,
and then started throwing metal at us and all this
Researcher: right
Freddie: and then we shouted like, they were shouting
things and we told them to shut up, they threw water
balloons so we threw one back. One of them got annoyed
and come over, and then my mate just told him to shut up
and go away and one of them said something about his
mum. But his mum's dead

Freddie (male) – Y8
Researcher: right
Freddie: his mum died when he was young. And then he was swinging punches
Researcher: yeah
Freddie: and then the other one come over. He's in this school
Researcher: did they know him then? Did they know that his mum was dead?
Freddie: nah
Researcher: right
Freddie: but then em, oh the other one come over, his name was Shane or something like that and he was like, em, basically, he was throwing more metal at us and then as we were about to leave they were hiding behind a bush, a big group of them. There was at least 15 to 20 of them
Researcher: and did you
Freddie: waiting for me and my mate to go so they could beat us up
Researcher: and what did you do?
Freddie: we just waited them out. They got bored and then walked over there and then we went
Researcher: right. Ah, that sounds horrible. Were you scared?
Freddie: they have knives and that but, that's why I didn't wanna go past them
Researcher: yeah
Freddie: I mean my sister works in the shop still, but she was still in there, so she was waiting, they come over before, started mouthing off, and then my sister come out and
Researcher: so were you quite scared?
Freddie: yeah worried I was gonna get stabbed
Researcher: yeah
Freddie: cos they usually do have knives

Freddie (male) — Y8
Reseacher: and do you have a phone or anything, could you have phoned someone to come and get you? Like your Dad or...

Freddie: I wouldn't have phoned my Dad

Reseacher: no? Who would you phone?

Freddie: bikers

Reseacher: bikers?

Freddie: my Dad's in the Hells Angels

Reseacher: oh is he, right

Freddie: I would have phoned them and one of them would have come down and like let me get past them

Reseacher: yeah, just looked out for you. So you would have had someone to phone if you...if the worst came to the worst

Freddie: I got a shop and the sea going all the way down and then Peter Pan's all the way down there, just across the road and then down the road a little bit, that's where they all are, all the Hell's Angels

Reseacher: right

Freddie: they all go to the tattoo shop and that

Reseacher: so do you hang out with them sometimes?

Freddie: yeah

Reseacher: yeah

Freddie: my Dad used to work as a tattooist as well

Reseacher: ok

Freddie: used to ride with them and everything

Reseacher: so has your Dad got a bike then? Do you go on it with him? That sounds fun

Freddie: well he can't ride it any more

Reseacher: how come?

Freddie: he had a motobike accident 5 years ago

Reseacher: oh no

Freddie: em, he could have died. He had half a... he hasn't even got a spleen any more

Freddie (male) – Y8
Researcher: right
Freddie: hasn't got a spleen, half a kidney, he's got loads of things wrong with him
Researcher: yeah
Freddie: whole left hand side he can't use
Researcher: oh no
Freddie: but he still gets on the bike and rides it
Researcher: just, slowly I hope yeah. He still gets on it...
Freddie: flies down the road
Researcher: yeah. I think that's the thing. My uncle is really into riding bikes. He lives in the Isle of Man. Have you heard of the TT?
Freddie: nods
Researcher: so he's quite involved in the TT and there's lots of accidents in that I think
Freddie: yeah
Researcher: but the thing is that bikers just love it so much.
Freddie: (laughs) my Dad don't, he don't want to give the bike, he don't want to sell the bike, but he has to. It's just going to be sitting there rotting away
Researcher: yeah. And what about your Mum? Does your mum ride a bike?
Freddie: my mum loves the bike
Researcher: yeah
Freddie: my mum can't ride one cos she hasn't got a license, she's got a, she's got a tumour. Not a brain tumour but it's like em, she's got something wrong with her head
Researcher: an aneurism is it?
Freddie: yeah I think that's it
Researcher: right

Freddie (male) – Y8
304  Freddie: and then, she’s not allowed to do it just in case something happens when she’s driving
305  Researcher: ok
306  Freddie: and she crashes and she causes another crash and all this.
308  Researcher: yeah
310  Freddie: she’s not allowed to get a license, same as she can’t work and same as my dad can’t work now
312  Researcher: because of his, the way he’s been injured
313  Freddie: yeah
314  Researcher: right
315  Freddie: just like they’re getting things off the council and that, and then I go to work for my mum and that
317  Researcher: you work? Yeah. What do you do?
318  Freddie: I work down the fish shop. I go fishing and I work in the shop and everything
320  Researcher: oh wow. So you go fishing, what with the in one of the fishing boats. Or do you go like fly fishing
322  Freddie: on the fishing boats, sometimes
324  Researcher: yeah
325  Freddie: and then in the shop most of the time
328  Researcher: right. So the fishing boats like hauling in the big nets?
327  Freddie: yeah
329  Researcher: yeah, wow. That sounds pretty amazing. Do you enjoy it?
330  Freddie: yeah it’s fun but it stinks
331  Researcher: yeah
332  Freddie: you come home, you’re used to the smell in there, but when you come home it stinks.
334  Researcher: so what, do you just put your clothes straight in the washing machine and wash them?
336  Freddie: yeah go straight in, put them in the washing machine

Freddie (male) – Y8
Researcher: and leave your shoes outside the door?
Freddie: yeah I have wellies, so I leave them
Researcher: right. So how often do you work?
Freddie: only Saturdays
Researcher: right
Freddie: or like in the holidays, whenever you need it
Researcher: good for you
Freddie: whatever day it doesn't matter but em
Researcher: yeah, and how long have you been doing that?
Freddie: nearly a year
Researcher: wow. So how old are you now?
Freddie: 13
Researcher: so you have been doing it since you were 12? Wow that's really impressive. And did you want to do it?
Freddie: yeah
Researcher: or was it your Mum and Dad that suggested it?
Freddie: no I wanted to do it. My dad knew the owner and everything, so my dad talked to him and said yeah, I'll be able to work there
Researcher: yeah. So have you learnt quite a lot working there?
Freddie: yeah
Researcher: like different kinds of fish and fishing and...
Freddie: mm hhm
Researcher: I suppose you can gut the fish and...
Freddie: I can gut the fish, I can fillet flat fish and I can nearly fillet like normal fish. I can do quite a lot of things.
Researcher: yeah wow. And what about cooking, do you cook it?
Freddie: we don't cook it but we can cook it if they want to, we just serve fish but em some, the shops getting knocked down and then we're having a whole lot of, like basically like 3 shops put into one
Researcher: ok
Freddie: and then it's gonna be just massive

Freddie (male) – Y8
Researcher: yeah. So do you think you'll keep on working there or do you think it's more of like a job that...

Freddie: yeah I'll keep on working there

Researcher: yeah, even when you leave school

Freddie: yeah, just to get money and then I wanna be a tree surgeon

Researcher: a tree surgeon, ah ok. And what makes you want to be a tree surgeon?

Freddie: cos I love being outdoors

Researcher: yeah, so you spend a lot of time outdoors?

Freddie: yeah, me and my dad to camps and bushcraft camps and that

Researcher: ah. What so what is like organised...the bushcraft camps

Freddie: yeah

Researcher: is that with a lot of people would all get together, or is it just you and your dad?

Freddie: a lot of people sometimes and em and then we do like a meeting, there's like 5, 6 of us, we all just go out and camp wherever we want to camp

Researcher: yeah, so what kind of tent have you got?

Freddie: I don't sleep in a tent

Researcher: oh

Freddie: I sleep on the floor with a tarp over the top of me

Researcher: and just outdoors? Wow. So what do you have underneath you?

Freddie: just a roll mat

Researcher: a roll mat. And a sleeping bag?

Freddie: yup

Researcher: and what like a bivvy bag type thing?

Freddie: well, sometimes I take the bivvy bag but other times I don't.
Researcher: oh, that sounds amazing. I love camping but I've never, I think maybe 2 or 3 times in my life that I've slept outdoors, usually I'm in a tent. So where do you go?

Freddie: anywhere.

Researcher: is it mainly around this sort of area? Have you been to Scotland?

Freddie: no but me and my dad want to go to Scotland

Researcher: Scotland's amazing for camping. Really amazing. I think, yeah, if you are into sleeping outdoors and stuff you'd love it. Especially the west coast and the top of Scotland.

Freddie: we've been up north and down south.

Researcher: right

Freddie: down by past devon and somerset and that

Researcher: right

Freddie: and we've been all the way up to Leeds to camp

Researcher: right

Freddie: but that's basically it

Researcher: yeah, wow

Freddie: he's Dad's wanting to go further as well

Researcher: so are you gonna do that in the summer holidays?

Freddie: he wants to go to Scotland definitely

Researcher: yeah, oh you must go to Scotland. I think you, yeah, you and your dad would love it if you are into outdoorsy stuff. So tree surgeon

Freddie: yeah

Researcher: have you done anything like that before?

Freddie: yeah, my granddad is a tree surgeon

Researcher: ok, so has he taught you some stuff about it?

Freddie: yeah he's given me everything that he's got, like his chainsaws, his harnesses, all ropes, safety hats, and everything like that

Researcher: so he doesn't do it anymore?

Freddie: shakes head

Freddie (male) – Y8
Researcher: right. So you're just use them once you're... do you need a license to use a chainsaw?
Freddie: no
Researcher: cos they're pretty dangerous
Freddie: you need to be over 18 to use them
Researcher: right ok. Yeah, cos you need to be pretty careful with them. Wow. That's really inspiring, and you're only 13. I've got some cards here with questions on. So I'm just gonna give you the first one. So I think you'll be able to talk quite a lot about this, cos it sounds like you have learnt a lot. OK, so there's a main question on the front, and then some sub questions on the back and then I've got. I've got this, which has basically got the same questions on it. I'm just gonna get a pencil...
OK, so the main question - how do people learn things.
So if you think about you and I (alarm goes off)
Freddie: that's for people going to class
Researcher: oh right, it's not usually that loud in here
Freddie: dunno
Researcher: em, yeah so you've obviously learnt a lot of stuff out of school as well as inside of school. So, the question how do you learn things. It's about just in life in general.
So what about for you, how do you learn things best?
Freddie: em being it like, it being shown to me, how to do it.
Researcher: right ok, so like demonstration
Freddie: yeah
Researcher: and who are you with usually when you learn things well?
Freddie: my dad
Researcher: your dad, so he, he's taught you a lot
Freddie: mm hm
Researcher: about, the fish, the em
Freddie: fishing, camping
Researcher: yeah

Freddie (male) – Y8
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Freddie: all sorts of things

Researcher: outdoorsy sort of stuff

Freddie: yep

Researcher: yeah. And what about your granddad?

Freddie: he's taught me a lot of things about bonsai trees and that

Researcher: right

Freddie: he loves bonsai trees

Researcher: ok, have you got any bonsai trees?

Freddie: no, we haven't but I think I wanna get one for my birthday this year

Researcher: right. And has your granddad got quite a few then?

Freddie: he's, his garden's full of them.

Researcher: his garden? Oh right, wow

Freddie: you can't walk anywhere without seeing a bonsai tree

Researcher: right

Freddie: he's got a path going all the way around and everywhere there's, he got massive like greenhouses, and there like massive tunnels going all the way down

Researcher: yeah

Freddie: and all three of them just filled up, back sheds are filled up

Researcher: and does he sell them or does he?

Freddie: he sells them

Researcher: yeah, ok, I didn't...

Freddie: he's got a 185 year old bonsai tree as well

Researcher: wow

Freddie: which are the 2nd oldest bonsai trees

Researcher: and what, what kind is it?

Freddie: I don't know what kind it is, it's, he said it was like some Japanese something

Researcher: right, quite a sort of rare specialised kind

Freddie: yeah

Freddie (male) – Y8
Reseacher: wow, cos I always thought people kept bonsai trees indoors and they didn't have them in the garden
Freddie: right, in the summer he keeps them out. In the winter he puts them in the tunnels.
Reseacher: ok
Freddie: but in the winter he puts like bubble wrap over the top, layers it and then he puts heaters in it, cos they need to be warm, cos if they get cold and then they'll die
Reseacher: right ok, yeah that makes sense
Freddie: do you know, er normal trees they grow out and but he does it so they grow upwards and then out at the top, so it looks more
Reseacher: right, so they're a bit taller then than
Freddie: yep
Reseacher: right ok. Wow, so it sounds like you're you're quite a sort of practical sort of person and very hands on and really good with like handy things. What about at school, like with school subjects. How do you learn best at school?
Freddie: I don't know. I don't really learn much
Reseacher: you don't learn much
Freddie: I always get kicked out of. I always get kicked out of the classes and...
Reseacher: yeah. What about last year when you were in nurture class, how did you learn best?
Freddie: getting it shown to us and like, doing the lesson bit by bit
Reseacher: right
Freddie: so we'd have like, one part of the lesson and then we'd like do a little bit of the lesson, and then we'd like go on to play a game or something like that, and then we'll do the rest of the lesson
Reseacher: right
Freddie: so it's like

Freddie (male) – Y8
Researcher: so you're doing it in short chunks and then sort of coming back to it
Freddie: yeah
Researcher: yeah. And what about at primary school, what primary school were you at?
Freddie: eh [school name]
Researcher: oh ok. How did you learn best when you were at primary school?
Freddie: i didn't much
Researcher: you didn't learn much?
Freddie: no
Researcher: did you enjoy it. do you like going to school?
Freddie: no
Researcher: no, what about primary
Freddie: in primary school it was worse than it is here
Researcher: really?
Freddie: actually it is worse here than it was there
Researcher: yeah
Freddie: because primary school i was getting kicked out of my class or i was constantly being like, i was throwing things at teachers and all that
Researcher: so you don't, and you've never, did you enjoy school when you were younger? Like maybe in reception, year 1, year 2
Freddie: yeah, it was better back, it would have been better back then than it is now.
Researcher: yeah. So you've never really enjoyed school very much?
Freddie: nope
Researcher: so what kind of things do you think they should, what would make you enjoy school? What would they have to do in school for you to think in the morning, oh I'm looking forward to going to school today?
Freddie: more practical, more, instead of doing it about like things that we've done here before, doing something different but fun

Researcher: yeah. More things that you're interested in?
Freddie: yeah

Researcher: cos it sounds like you've got tonnes of interests, but none of them you really learn at school do you?
Freddie: nope

Researcher: so if there was more things like that at school, do you think you would look forward to going to school?
Freddie: yeah

Researcher: you would enjoy it. what else would make it better for you?
Freddie: i don't know. ...if the teachers can understand

Researcher: yeah, if the teachers are on the same wavelength as you, instead of, you feel like you're being picked on by the teachers.
Freddie: yeah

Researcher: yeah

Freddie: I know I do things wrong sometimes but other times I'm not doing something wrong, I always get blamed for doing something. That's why I usually get kicked out of the class and everything

Researcher: yeah, and when you get kicked out the class once do you just think the next time, I don't care, it kind of demotivates you does it?
Freddie: yeah, cos if I get kicked out of the class twice that's a call out, and in another lesson if I get another call out, that's isolation

Researcher: yeah

Freddie: and then if I get a callout from isolation, I'm excluded

Researcher: have you ever been excluded?
Freddie: yeah, a lot of times

Freddie (male) — Y8
Researcher: really, what for, arguing with teachers and
swearing, all different things

Freddie: arguing with teachers, shouting things out in class,

Researcher: right. So what, I mean obviously you have to go to
school don’t you? Cos it’s the law until you’re 17 at the
moment

Freddie: yeah

Researcher: and you’re 12, so what what would you hope to get
out of school for the next 5 years?

Freddie: i don’t know. Good GCSEs, Idunno

Researcher: good GCSEs, yeah. Have you chosen your
subjects yet?

Freddie: yeah

Researcher: yeah, so what have you, what have you chosen?

Freddie: eh geography and em wood tech

Researcher: wood tech?

Freddie: yup

Researcher: ah, so that sounds kind of up your street, do you
enjoy that?

Freddie: yeah

Researcher: yeah. So what is it, making things out of wood?

Freddie: yeah

Researcher: what have you made?

Freddie: a paper aeroplane shooter, at the moment we’re
making litter pickers

Researcher: litter pickers? And do you choose what you make
or does the teacher set it for you?

Freddie: the teacher sets it

Researcher: right

Freddie: and then when we get into year 9 or 10 then we
start choosing what we make and have to design it and
everything

Researcher: right, so wood tech sounds, and what was the other
one you said you’d taken, geography?

Freddie (male) – Y8
Freddie: mm hmm
Researchers: what else?
Freddie: well that's the only 2 I'm allowed to take
Researchers: and so all the other ones are compulsory
Freddie: yeah like I have to take, I have to do English
Researchers: mm hmm
Freddie: so I have to do probably triple English, double
maths, and triple science
Researchers: ok
Freddie: I know I have to do triple science, cos I gotta learn
plant cells and how they grow and everything like that
Researchers: yeah
Freddie: cos I've got to learn different species of trees,
where they are most likely to grow, and all that
Researchers: yeah, so you've taken that intentionally cos you
know you want to be a tree surgeon
Freddie: yep
Researchers: yeah. So some, not all of school is completely
irrelevant for you, some of it is actually good for you like
wood tech and
Freddie: it's like geography and history
Researchers: oh yeah
Freddie: it's like I gotta know the history of the trees, and all
that
Researchers: yeah. So it sounds like you're quite focused, that
you've got, you've got a goal. Something that you want to
do and you're kind of aiming for it
Freddie: yeah, and then I can't do it basically. Cos then I
usually get kicked out and it's all the same. Goes down in
every lesson
Researchers: every lesson is it, even...
Freddie: every lesson, I'll get either shouted at or kicked out,
even in maths lesson
Researchers: even the ones that you enjoy like wood tech and

Freddie (male) — Y8
Freddie: not not wood tech, because that is more practical
and we don’t really do writing

Researcher: yeah

Freddie: we just sat there and told what to do and then we
do it

Researcher: yeah

Freddie: just straight away. Cos it’s fun, we get to make
things and that.

Researcher: yeah

Freddie: everyone, no trouble, we all just get on with it

Researcher: right. So it’s more in classes where you have to
write?

Freddie: yeah, in maths every lesson, I can guarantee every
lesson for this whole year, I’ve been sent out, sent out and
call outs, every single lesson

Researcher: right. And do you ever try to go in, thinking, you
know like the guy said in the video, thinking right I’m not
gonna get in trouble this lesson, I’m just gonna...

Freddie: yeah I do that but then I still get kicked out, cos
something gets blamed on me

Researcher: yeah

Freddie: or someone’s getting told off for something, then
they blame it on me

Researcher: what someone, one of your friends in the class

Freddie: not one of my friends but if other people and then
like they’re sitting near me and they’ll go oh it’s his fault or
something like that

Researcher: and then the teacher would act on that?

Freddie: yeah

Researcher: yeah, and do you explain to someone else
afterwards that you felt that it wasn’t your fault, like Ms F?

Freddie: I’ve done it before, like because of that incident
what happened last week I reported him for getting in my
face

Freddie (male) – Y8
Researcher: yeah
Freddie: and I didn't do anything wrong, I wrote everything that happened
Researcher: yeah
Freddie: but yet I'm still in isolation
Researcher: yeah
Freddie: it's unfair
Researcher: what you feel that they listen to the teacher over you?
Freddie: yeah
Researcher: yeah. Yeah that does sound unfair.
Freddie: I just think cos he's an adult they listen to him more than they do me. Cos it's like he actually like, N tapped this other kid and then Sir said how dare you touch another kid, sir went how did you even tap him, and N went I tapped him like that. And then he reported him for assault and apparently N punched him in the arm and he got done for assault, when there was a camera right there pointing in our classroom and outside the classroom, and they didn't even look at the security cameras
Researcher: so N punched the teacher in the arm?
Freddie: poked him like that, literally just tapped him.
Researcher: oh poked him, I thought you said punched
Freddie: no that's what the teacher said he did, but he didn't Researcher: right
Freddie: I was standing outside at the same time, N was standing outside with me when sir literally came flying out the classroom, he just, in my face, proper that close
Researcher: sounds difficult
Freddie: it's really annoying, but then he'll get away with it
Researcher: and what about next year, what do you think it's going to be like?
Freddie: I think I'll get put down a set
Researcher: you'll be what?

Freddie (male) – Y8
Freddie: I put down a set now.
Researcher: in maths?
Freddie: yeah, I'm good at maths but then he kicks me out of the lesson so obviously my grades are going down down down down, cos I'm not there
Researcher: yeah
Freddie: and now I'm gonna be in set 5, the lowest set
Researcher: so you could have a strategy for next year
Freddie: yeah, have a different teacher
Researcher: yeah you will have a different teacher so you've got a new start, just keep your head down, cos I guess maths is gonna be useful for you in the future as well isn't it
Freddie: yeah
Researcher: for what you want to do. And what about English, how do you find that?
Freddie: it's ok. Depends what teacher I've got. I've got 3 different teachers and they all teach 3 different things
Researcher: right
Freddie: which is really confusing
Researcher: is it?
Freddie: yeah, cos you have 1 teacher doing 1 thing, the other teacher doing another, and then 1 teacher doing the same thing as what we did like 2 months ago
Researcher: ok
Freddie: so it's really confusing
Researcher: so what, what so one, one is doing revision
Freddie: yeah
Researcher: so she's going over what you have already done. And what are the other 2 then, is one literature and...
Freddie: they've done 2 different things
Researcher: is one literature, so it would be like books and stuff
Freddie: no it's not that. So we've got to work on one thing, we're doing something about em some thing that Shakespeare wrote or, yeah we were doing that and then

Freddie (male) – Y8
we went in the other one, we one of them is doing something else, had to write essays and all this.

Researcher: right ok
Freddie: and then the next one we had to do things that we did in that class about 2 months ago
Researcher: right, that does sound quite confusing. I wonder why they don't just have one English teacher
Freddie: that's what I mean, that's what I already said to them but then they said that just the (inaudible) that the teachers that the head teachers set and all this

Researcher: right
Freddie: it's really really confusing

Researcher: right, mmm. So, just to continue with these questions, what helps you to do well at school?
Freddie: nothing
Researcher: the teacher, cos you were talking about your teacher Ms T last year.
Freddie: she helped me but this year (inaudible)
Researcher: this year you feel just completely
Freddie: yeah
Researcher: you sound quite down about it
Freddie: it's just, I ain't learnt nothing this year
Researcher: you've learnt nothing
Freddie: no
Researcher: in any of your classes? What about wood tech? It sounds like that class goes well.
Freddie: I know, I already know what to do in wood tech, it's just like
Researcher: so it's kind of like you've already got the skills you're just
Freddie: I'm just waiting to do it while he's showing everyone else to do it

Freddie (male) – Y8
Researcher: yeah, so you’ve not actually learnt anything even though you’ve enjoyed it. And what do you think would help?

Freddie: I don’t know.

Researcher: to have different teachers? Certainly in maths, cos that sounds quite...

Freddie: oh I want a different teacher in maths.

Researcher: yeah.

Freddie: I’ve already asked if I can get, like, go in a different class.

Researcher: right.

Freddie: I don’t want to be in that class at all, next maths lesson I’m literally just gonna sit there doing nothing, cos I know he’s just gonna have a go at me if not. Cos last time, like I asked if I can have help.

Researcher: mm hmm.

Freddie: so he said yeah hold on I’ll be over in a minute, he walks outside, talks to some other kid, and then come back in, I asked him again, he told me to shut up.

Researcher: right.

Freddie: so I already asked him, and then I asked him again cos he’s already walked off and it’s been 10 minutes and then he just tells me to shut up.

Researcher: and he doesn’t give you any help?

Freddie: no. I just sit there doing nothing.

Researcher: well hopefully the teacher you get next year will be a bit more helpful.

Freddie: mm hmm.

Researcher: so there’s quite a lot of things that are stopping you from learning at school at the moment, mainly because you feel that the teachers are singling you out.

Freddie: yeah.

Freddie (male) – Y8
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841 Researcher: and you’re not being treated fairly. And I suppose
that kind of puts you into a certain frame of mind where
you are feeling just picked on and defensive
844 Freddie: yeah
845 Researcher: which probably just makes the situation worse, it
can go in a spiral then
847 Freddie: it's like, if I get in trouble, and if the teacher don't
like me saying something back. Or, it's like, when they
have a teacher shouting at me. Last time I asked them
like three four times will you stop shouting at me, and they
didn't stop shouting so I shouted back, they didn't like that
so they sent me up to Mr A upstairs
853 Researcher: mm hm
854 Freddie: and then he excluded me for disobeying any of the
teachers, like whatever the teacher told me to do I didn't
do it
857 Researcher: yeah
858 Freddie: but I explained to him about the shouting as well
and he said you shouldn't have shouted back at them and
I said they shouldn't have been shouting at me in the first
place
862 Researcher: mm hm
863 Freddie: cos I did ask them if they would stop, so I shouted
back, and they still didn't stop
865 Researcher: yeah, I mean at school I guess there is always
going to be a power imbalance isn't there? The teacher's
always gonna have more power than you are as a
student, and that's just something I think you need to
accept. Not that I think it's right, but that's just the way it is
870 Freddie: mm hm
871 Researcher: and I suppose it's just about how you can get
through school learning, and not feeling annoyed every
day and not feeling like yeah, just

Freddie (male) – Y8
Freddie: the fact the teachers think that they can like back you down like
Researcher: yeah
Freddie: make you feel small
Researcher: you feel like they try and, they try and humiliate you?
Freddie: yep, cos they do it in class, they embarrass you like, and they shout something out, or shout at me in front of the class, cos everyone would get annoyed about that, if like
Researcher: yeah of course
Freddie: whole class went silent, and then he was just shouting at you in front of the class
Researcher: yeah, yeah of course. But I guess, for you, it's about finding the best way to sort of negotiate your way through it and come out of school in one piece and be able to just go on and do what you want to do, like tree surgeon stuff.
Freddie: yeah, so when he goes at, so ain't gonna let him make a fool out of me. So I end up saying something back or
Researcher: yeah
Freddie: and then when they like when the teacher makes you feel like, all horrible, I don't like it so I say something back as well
Researcher: yeah. So you're trying to do the same thing back to them
Freddie: like, I'll try making them feel small
Researcher: yeah
Freddie: I've done that before and the teacher didn't like it and I got excluded for it. shouldn't have been doing it to me, trying to embarrass me in front of the whole class

Freddie (male) – Y8
Researcher: yep, I hear you. But then there is that power thing as well. So whenever, if you do something like that then you know that you're gonna get punished for it

Freddie: I don't care if they're older, I still will like shout at them

Researcher: you still would, yeah? So to do your tree surgeon, to do that job, do you do training for it, are there training courses?

Freddie: yeah, R College I'll be going to when I'm 16

Researcher: ok

Freddie: I'll be going, instead of going to sixth form and that I'll be going straight to R and I'll be going on the courses. And er, it's like there's garden design course

Researcher: uh huh

Freddie: or you've gotta design, they give you a hundred foot garden and then eh they give you all these different materials and everything and you've got to make this garden look as good as you can

Researcher: right

Freddie: and then competitions, and then you do other courses on eh like gardening and tree life and the best places where things grow, they take you round different places and it's just really good

Researcher: yeah, it sounds amazing. Have you got a garden at home?

Freddie: yeah, I got a hundred and fifty foot garden

Researcher: 150 foot? Sounds pretty big

Freddie: yeah it is

Researcher: so do you do a lot in that?

Freddie: yeah, I got mine and my dad's shed at the end, and then we've got tree house, and we've got a little carving bit, a clay oven, like a pizza oven sort of bit,

Researcher: right

Freddie: it's like all made out of clay and everything

Freddie (male) - Y8
Researcher: so the clay oven is for pizzas yeah?
Freddie: yeah
Researcher: It's not for firing your own pottery or anything
Freddie: mm, got a clay oven at the back and then we've got another fire right in front of it, by a little bit that we sit in
Researcher: yeah
Freddie: and then we've got a em, it's like a dome, but that's my mum's bit, and then the rest of the garden's just grass and
Researcher: right
Freddie: er, by the back door you've got a massive piece of concrete, and then we fenced that bit off, that's the dog's area, and then you've got this massive stone bit and then it goes onto grass and then all the way down to the back doors
Researcher: right, so do you grow any of your own veg or herbs or fruit or anything?
Freddie: yeah my mum, er just er from the stone bit my mum's got a massive allotment that takes over the front bit of the grass and then we've got like a little path going down the edge and going up and everything
Researcher: yeah, wow. And, have you got brothers and sisters?
Freddie: yeah, I got 2 brothers. One who lives in Scotland.
Researcher: ok
Freddie: one who lives in Leeds. But they're
Researcher: whereabouts in Scotland?
Freddie: I can't remember the place
Researcher: right
Freddie: but em, he's up there for plane engineering, cos that's the only place he can get a good course
Researcher: right
Freddie: and he's 19
Researcher: ok

Freddie (male) – Y8
Freddie: and my other brother's 16 so, he's in Leeds when
he's supposed to be in Scotland, but he's in Leeds with
his granny
Researcher: right. What's he doing in Leeds?
Freddie: well, he was at our house, he was gonna live with
us, because he was like being horrible to his mum and all
this
Researcher: right, so his, your mum isn't his mum?
Freddie: no
Researcher: right
Freddie: but ern, like they moved, he moved down here, and
then his nan come down and he said that like they're just
taking him out and then they he got all his packed all his
stuff, put it in the car and then went back to Leeds
Researcher: right, so 2 older brothers you've got.
Freddie: 2 older brothers, 2 older sisters, and a younger
sister
Researcher: right, and what are your older sisters in
[placename]?
Freddie: yeah
Researcher: do they...
Freddie: one lives in the ?? yeah, the other lives on her own
Researcher: right
Freddie: and little sister lives with me and
Researcher: what age is she?
Freddie: 10
Researcher: right. So do you all do kind of outdoor stuff together
or is it mainly just you and your dad?
Freddie: mainly me and my dad. Me and my mum and my
dad we all do that. But now everyone's left and everything
it's they do their own thing
Researcher: yeah
Freddie: we do whatever we need to do

Freddie (male) – Y8
Researcher: yeah. So to get into college then, you'll need GCSEs yeah?
Freddie: yeah
Researcher: and then you'll leave the year after your GCSEs so you'll be, after year 10 then yeah? So I guess that's just another 3 years that you're gonna be here until you go to college, sixth form college. And what are you gonna
Freddie: 2 years, not even 2 years
Researcher: oh yeah cos you're at the end of year 8.
Freddie: yeah
Researcher: I was thinking year 7
Freddie: so I'll be in, so it will be like a year and a half
Researcher: yeah another 2 years, yeah. 2 years goes past really quick
Freddie: a year and a half cos in year 10 we only have half a year cos we do our exams and then we leave
Researcher: right
Freddie: as soon as we finish the exams then we leave
Researcher: yeah
Freddie: like all the year 10s this year have left
Researcher: ok
Freddie: but then the, some year 10s stay, and then the other year 10s leave
Researcher: so if they're going somewhere else they leave
Freddie: yeah
Researcher: yeah. Well that's a good way of thinking of it, so you've only got another year and a half here. And what course are you going to apply for in 6th form, the gardening one?
Freddie: yeah R college, so I'm just gonna go straight to R college.
Researcher: R?
Freddie: yeah, that's where my granddad went to do his course
Researcher: oh really. And do they do a specific tree surgery course?
Freddie: I don't know
Researcher: cos I would imagine that's quite specialised, tree surgery
Freddie: yeah
Researcher: cos you'd have to do different things with different trees wouldn't you? OK, so you've got a year and a half to go, wow. So you've talked about the most important thing for you to learn about now, because you've got quite a good vision for yourself, what you want for the future and you know which subjects you're gonna need for that
Freddie: mm
Researcher: have you been in touch with R college to see what the requirements are, the entrance?
Freddie: yeah, I've already got em the books and leaflets and all that sent through
Researcher: right
Freddie: and me and my granddad went there and looked around and everything
Researcher: oh brilliant, and did you like the look of it?
Freddie: yeah
Researcher: yeah
Freddie: it's like, it's just like a massive building in the middle of a field but it looks really nice. And then it's like just massive, they've got fields and fields and fields
Researcher: yeah
Freddie: so it's just massive, you've got like woodland there, everything
Researcher: sounds exactly what you need and what you want and it's quite close by?
Freddie: not that far, just er, it's like, I would say just past [large city 40 miles away]
Researcher: oh ok, so it's, it's quite far then?

Freddie (male) – Y8
Freddie: yeah, I’ll get the train there. If not I’ll get my dad to drive me there.

Researcher: right. And will it be 5 days a week?

Freddie: 4 days

Researcher: right, that’s not so bad then

Freddie: it’s like Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday off and then Thursday and Friday. Or it will be like different days I’ll have off

Researcher: yeah, excellent. OK, now I’m gonna give you, I’ve got another card that I’m gonna give you. Your lunch is at 1 isn’t it?

Freddie: yeah

Researcher: yeah, I just didn’t want to keep you longer.

Freddie: well not at 1, it’s like 10 to 1, first bell goes

Researcher: oh is it 10 to 1

Freddie: and then we’ve got like basically, yeah from 10 to 1 we’ve got like half hour, 20 minutes

Researcher: OK

Freddie: but I’ll go straight back to the base

Researcher: have you got, where will you have your lunch?

Freddie: in the isolation base

Researcher: in there, they’ll bring it up to you in there yeah?

Freddie: yeah

Researcher: oh ok

Freddie: I’m not allowed out the base at all. Not unless there’s like something like this

Researcher: right

Freddie: or cos I’m going home at 2

Researcher: yeah, you’ve got an optician’s appointment haven’t you?

Freddie: yeah

Researcher: is there something, do you wear glasses?

Freddie: only to read and that but

Freddie (male) – Y8
Researcher: is it just like a routine appointment where they are checking?
Freddie: yeah
Researcher: yeah. Ok, what are your dreams for the future, so you already talked about that quite a lot. Em, what sort of person would you like to be when you’re an adult?
Freddie: dunno. I just wanna keep, when I’m older I just wanna keep myself to myself and just ... dunno
Researcher: yeah, carry on with what you’re doing cos it sounds like you get a lot of enjoyment out of all the stuff that you do when you’re not in school at the moment
Freddie: yeah
Researcher: and it sounds Freddie: I was doing all these things and out of my dad always said it’s keeping me out of trouble outside of school.
Researcher: yeah
Freddie: and getting in with the wrong people
Researcher: yeah. And do you see any of your friends outside of school?
Freddie: yeah, I see some of my friends outside of school. It's like my other friend who was here before and er he got kicked out, the teachers didn't like him because he would have always something to say back and me, and then he got kicked out, he got told by Mr R he needed to find another school by the end of such and such and leave, so he did
Researcher: was he in the same year as you
Freddie: yeah
Researcher: yeah
Freddie: I think he’s gone to [special school name]
Researcher: right
Freddie: or [another special school name], I don't know, one of them

Freddie (male) – Y8
Researcher: and he was quite a good friend of yours
Freddie: yeah
Researcher: so do you miss him then?
Freddie: yeah, he only lives down the road from me
Freddie: yeah, I don’t see him a lot, sometimes I’m not out
or he’s not coming out, it’s a load of different things
Researcher: right, and em so what kind of things do you do with
your friends outside of school?
Freddie: we just rather go swimming, go in the woods or just
play around in the garden and all that
Researcher: so it’s all kind of outdoors stuff as well?
Freddie: yeah
Researcher: and what about computer games or anything like
that, are you into them?
Freddie: no
Researcher: you’re not into them?
Freddie: I own a playstation but I only use it to watch things,
like, things on youtube and that
Researcher: right, you’re not that into it at all, you’d rather be
outside, yeah?
Freddie: it’s like when I’m grounded I’ll be in watching films
and that, but that’s it
Researcher: right
Freddie: that’ll be the only time I’ll be in
Researcher: what’s that?
Freddie: that’ll be the only time I’ll ever be in if I’m grounded
Researcher: yeah, do you get grounded much?
Freddie: no, not much.
Researcher: so in 5 years time,
Freddie: mm hm
Researcher: I guess you’re, you’ll still be at college won’t you,
you’ll still be at R. How long is the course?
Freddie: it’s like a year or two
Researcher: ok, oh so you might be finished then

Freddie (male) – Y8
Freddie: yeah
Researcher: so what would you like to be doing in 5 years time?
Freddie: owning my own business
Researcher: right, in [place name]?
Freddie: yeah, but like all the way round like [large city near place name] and [place name]
Researcher: and would it just
Freddie: just all the way round
Researcher: yeah, do you want to do just tree surgery or do you want to do like more sort of general gardening?
Freddie: it's like tree surgery, garden designing, and like I dunno, just that
Researcher: yeah, I think there's a lot of money to be made in that. I know someone in Scotland who does that, and he does really well.
Freddie: it's a lot of money because you're risking your own life
Researcher: cos you're what?
Freddie: you're basically risking your own life
Researcher: yeah
Freddie: cos you're going up a tree, even like storming or proper windy, with just the harness tied to the tree and if the wind blows too hard and that bit snaps that you're tied onto you're going down with it
Researcher: yeah, so I guess you need to be really super careful
Freddie: my granddad used to just climb up it with no harness or anything he used to just climb up it and cut it down
Researcher: really, and did, would he recommend that you did that?
Freddie: no
Researcher: does he tell you to use the harness, yeah
Freddie: yeah

Freddie (male) — Y8
Researcher: yeah
Freddie: but when you're cutting down a tree you need to
cut it at a certain bit, cos if they want the whole tree down
then you cut the whole tree down, if they want just the tree
trimmed down then you'll cut it in certain bits, so it can
grow back and then you cut it back down and everything
Researcher: yeah, so you need to know
Freddie: need to know where to cut it
Researcher: so what about in 10 years time? Where would you
like to be? What would you like to have achieved?
Freddie: I don't know. Move down to Devon probably.
Researcher: oh really, why's that?
Freddie: just nice out there
Researcher: mm hmm
Freddie: I'd like to own a little, my own little house, and then
some land
Researcher: down near the sea?
Freddie: shakes head
Researcher: a bit inland then?
Freddie: yeah
Researcher: and what about when you're much older? Like say
about 40?
Freddie: I'd still stay down there
Researcher: yeah, and would you like to have a family?
Freddie: yeah
Researcher: yeah, have your own kids and stuff yeah? OK, so
I've got a different question for you now. So i want you to
imagine that you're an advisor to the mayor of Southend
and the mayor is coming to the school and you had to
advise the mayor on what they needed to do to make sure
that every single child and young person succeeded at
school. What would you tell them to do?
Freddie: I would not know
Researcher: you would not know?

Freddie (male) – Y8
Freddie:  no
Researcher:  from your experience, cos it's, you've you've had quite a hard experience at school by the sounds of things but at the same time you've got loads and loads of skills that really haven't been capitalised on at school. That's my reading of it.
Freddie:  I just wouldn't know what to say
Researcher:  no, but you've talked a little bit this morning about things that you think should be different, imagine if it was just for you then at school, what would you tell the mayor in Southend needed to be different about school, so that you succeeded...
Freddie:  need to do more practical things
Researcher:  yeah
Freddie:  more fun things that people like, and learning things that are going on now
Researcher:  and have a bit more respect from the teachers?
Freddie:  yeah
Researcher:  would that be something?
Freddie:  a lot more respect from the teachers yeah
Researcher:  yeah
Freddie:  because I like to be, I treat people how I like to be treated. If they treat me in different ways then I treat them horrible
Researcher:  then you react to that yeah
Freddie:  yeah
Researcher:  and is there anything else you would tell them to do?
Freddie:  probably not
Researcher:  no, ok. Now I've got a card here, just gonna fill it. Oh it's only half past 12, we've got loads of time. So on the front it's just the things that we've been discussing really this morning. What's most important about your learning, what are your strengths, what do you love doing,
what plans do you want to make for next year, and who

can help you, what's most important to you in your life. So

it seems like your focus really is to get into college, to get

into R, it's called yeah?

Freddie: yeah

Researcher: em, did you say that you knew what you needed, in
terms of GCSEs, to get in?

Freddie: I just know I need to have a level in science, maths
and English

Researcher: yeah. So it might be good to get a bit more specific
information about that so you know what you've got to
work towards in each subject

Freddie: yeah, what grades and that

Researcher: yeah, so that could be one of your plans, so find
out what grades, what GCSEs grades are needed to get
in, is it [spelling college name], is that how you spell it?

Freddie: no, R

Researcher: oh R, right

Freddie: [spells college name]

Researcher: right, oh yeah, ok. What else would you like to put
in your top 3 plans for the next year?

Freddie: I don't know. Try not to get sent out as much,
definitely. Try not to as many lessons as I do

Researcher: right, try not to

Freddie: sometimes I do get sent out and I know why, but
other times I just get things blamed on me

Researcher: so sometimes you think you deserve it, cos you've
been misbehaving?

Freddie: yeah

Researcher: yeah, and sometimes you think you don't deserve it

at all

Freddie: no, cos I if I would do something usually and I'd
been sent out for it before, if someone else does it so like
the teacher always turns round and blames it on me.

Freddie (male) – Y8
Researcher: mm hmm
Freddie: cos I'm the one who would usually do it
Researcher: yeah
Freddie: but I just don't...
Researcher: it's not fair, yeah
Freddie: I explain it to them like I know, I know I've done it
before and everything but it ain't me this time and then
they would like get me a call out for arguing back
Researcher: yup, that sounds impossible really, unless you just
quietly go and don't say anything when it's, and that's
really unfair because you didn't do anything, and you get
sent out for nothing
Freddie: plus that goes on my record, and that goes for me
getting a job doesn't it?
Researcher: yeah, so what do you think...
Freddie: misbehaving and not
Researcher: yeah
Freddie: do something about like rules that have been given
Researcher: yeah it will go on your reference. What do you think
the best way of dealing it, dealing with it is gonna be?
Freddie: I don't know. I just think it's, usually I just walk
away
Researcher: mm hmm
Freddie: em I'll just let them say what they gotta say and
then just nod, and say oh yeah yeah
Researcher: mm hmm
Freddie: but, em
Researcher: so ignoring it? even when you think it's unfair
Freddie: yeah cos they tell me like I shouldn't have done it
and all this
Researcher: mm hmm
Freddie: it's like, I haven't done it
Researcher: so that's, that's definitely one where you're dealing
with it

Freddie (male) – Y6
Freddie: and I'll be like don't, don't try that, I heard you
(inaudible)
Researcher: so it's like you can't win
Freddie: I can't. I got sent out, I got basically nearly
excluded because er N was standing in front of me, and I
got kicked out for tapping the (inaudible) and disrupting
the class and sir was shouting at me so I started shouting
back
Researcher: mm hmm
Freddie: and I was about to get excluded
Researcher: it sounds impossible. And I don't blame you for
feeling so frustrated
Freddie: it's just impossible for me to say what actually went
on before they just jump down my throat and start saying
things that ain't true
Researcher: yeah
Freddie: that I know he going to start saying this that and I
ain't even said nothing yet so
Researcher: yeah, and what about if you ignored it and you
went out when they asked you to go out and then later, if
you give a bit of time for everybody to calm down a bit
later you could go back, or even write it down, write it
down when you're outside
Freddie: I've done that before but he just threw it straight in
the bin, he just looked at it and then threw it straight in the
bin, didn't say anything to me
Researcher: what about if you went along with it and you kept a
log yourself and then you would give it to Ms F afterwards,
not necessarily the class teacher, somebody else
Freddie: mmm
Researcher: who's a bit more objective. Do you think that might
help?
Freddie: yeah

Freddie (male) – Y8
Researcher: so, ignoring and writing down, well first of all it would be staying calm wouldn’t it? staying calm, writing down what happened. And who would be the best person to give it to, Ms F yeah? Writing down what happened

Freddie: like everything bad that happens, like anything that happens bad in that day I go and tell my mum and dad straight away

Researcher: yeah

Freddie: about what happened and what I said, what actually happened and then, because we have a TA and this in the class. So they’ll say one thing and then get the other teacher who weren’t even like, who didn’t even hear it or see it, get involved and then they’ll say oh yeah this, and then obviously cos there’s more people saying this they’ll, the head teacher or whoever dealing with it would say oh yeah to them and not to me. With the 2 of them against me

Researcher: so the teacher and the TA

Freddie: yeah, it’s only the teacher that would like say I didn’t hear this or something. It’s, it’s just stupid

Researcher: yeah it just sounds like a battle, like it’s like a power struggle

Freddie: mm hm

Researcher: and what do your mum and dad think? What do they advise you to do?

Freddie: they just think it’s stupid and they tell me things

Researcher: what do they tell you to do?

Freddie: calm down, ignore it

Researcher: yeah

Freddie: get on with whatever you’ve gotta say, or get on with whatever it’s at

Researcher: yeah, and I suppose the more you practice doing that the better you’ll get at it

Freddie: mm hm

Freddie (male) – Y8
Researche... and I know it's not always gonna be fair, but
sometimes maybe you just have to let it go. OK, so find
out what GCSEs are needed, try not to get sent out of
lessons, and what else, number 3
Freddie: don't know
Researche... what about working? Studying in the subjects that
you're gonna need?
Freddie: try and work a bit harder
Researche... yeah, try and work harder in the subjects that you'll
need?
Freddie: yeah
Researche... for R. Right I'm just gonna copy this onto another
one. And I'm gonna give you this to take away. Do you
want any sweets, or biscuits, there's some biscuits there,
help yourself if you want any. So do you do cooking as
well when you're camping?
Freddie: yeah, um me and my er, me and my dad and my
uncle went camping before
Researche... mm hm
Freddie: and um, it was like some weeks ago, I brought
some fish home - some trout and some bass, and I
butterflied the trout
Researche... right
Freddie: put it on sticks and cooked it over the fire like that.
And then wrapped the trout in dock leaves and then put
that in the fire and then cooked that up
Researche... ah, was it delicious?
Freddie: yeah it was really nice when it was cooked over the
fire, it tastes completely different
Researche... really?
Freddie: you would like taste the fish like, in the oven and
then you'd try that and you'd be like (inaudible)
Researche... laughs. The thing I find about trout is that it's quite
bony
Freddie (male) – Y8
Freddie: yeah

Researcher: like lots of little bones in it
Freddie: like we do in the shop we cut, basically if we're
butterflying it, we cut the main spine out and then we get
the knife and then we just slowly go across the meat and
it'll just put every single bone out the edge and then you'll
need to cut the first one and the middle one and then all of
them will come out at the same time

Researcher: ah
Freddie: cos it's all connected on like the little butt, the like
bone
Researcher: right
Freddie: it's like a massive piece of string going like that
Researcher: yeah
Freddie: and you'll pull the middle one and it'll just come
straight out and then you'll pull the back one
Researcher: and what about mackerel, can you debone that as
well? Cos mackerel
Freddie: mackerel
Researcher: is another one that's quite bony
Freddie: mackerel's tiny
Researcher: yeah. Cos some people eat them don't they, the
bones?
Freddie: yeah, their bones are like nothing, they're like jelly,
you can eat just chew straight through them
Researcher: sometimes, but then other times I find them quite
spiky
Freddie: depends how big it is
Researcher: right. What's your favourite kind of fish?
Freddie: my favourite, er, skate. It's gotta be skate
Researcher: oh, I don't, I think I might have tried that once or
something but I
Freddie: skate wings, you can only eat the skate wings and
the skate cheeks

Freddie (male) – Y8
Researcher: right, and what, is it a white fish?
Freddie: yeah it is
Researcher: so why, why is that your favourite?
Freddie: there's not many bones in it, and it's very meaty.
The taste of it is just really nice
Researcher: right
Freddie: I've actually never seen one of these (looking at sweets)
Researcher: you've never seen what?
Freddie: the moan sour strips
Researcher: oh have you not? They're, I quite like them. I think they're made by Haribo. So this, this plan is for the next 12 months
Freddie: OK
Researcher: we're gonna meet again, probably in about 6 months time, so it'll be in about December time, just to see, but it will be a much shorter meeting time, it will be like 15 20 minutes or something, just to see how you're getting on, and just to have another look at these and review it, and see how it's going
Freddie: will we just like, either, you know all the people that was in the class last time. Is it like, just with all of them?
Researcher: yeah, cos it's part of the, cos I'm doing a course at the moment, I'm studying to be an educational psychologist, so it's part of my research
Freddie: oh, you're not doing it in other schools, you're only doing it in this school?
Researcher: I'm just doing it in this school. Yeah, so I'm just doing 8 interviews with 8 young people and then I'm gonna write about it. But all the, it'll all be confidential
Freddie: there's not 8 of us is there?
Researcher: there was 8 of you yeah
Freddie: I thought there was only 7, although you had... yeah

Freddie (male) – Y8
Researcher: yeah
Freddie: you had [girl's name] in here as well
Researcher: yeah, so I think I'm seeing her tomorrow
Freddie: and you had 4 year 7s and 4 year 8s
Researcher: yeah
Freddie: yeah
Researcher: yeah, and I might, I don't know yet, I haven't tried yet.
Knock at the door,...
Researcher: yeah
JL (asst SENCO): hello
Researcher: hiya
JL: I'm just gonna to a class and give a student something.
Shall I come back for [interviewee's name] then?
Researcher: yeah, we've more or less finished, so whenever
JL: OK, I'll just take you back up Freddie. I keep calling you [wrong name] today
Freddie: I ain't called [wrong name] so's you come and get me
JL: OK, alright
Researcher: OK thanks. Em oh yeah, so I might go to a youth club. Do you know of any youth clubs in Southend?
Freddie: what do you mean?
Researcher: like places that young people go
Freddie: YMCA
Researcher: YMCA?
Freddie: yep
Researcher: Is it all, is that just boys?
Freddie: boys, girls, my sister goes there
Researcher: oh mixed, yeah?
Freddie: but they do like course and everything, and they do it for young people who are having a hard time at home

Freddie (male) – Y8
Freddie: hard times at school, and they go there and it's like, just a break basically, they all play games and

Researcher: oh ok

Freddie: it's like open for people to come in and that, yep, basically they've gotta go there, tell em and it all happens from there

Researcher: yeah

Freddie: and there's loads of different YMCAs

Researcher: cos when I saw YMCA I thought it was just for boys, cos it's young, young men's Christian association isn't it, that's what it stands for?

Freddie: I don't know

Researcher: yeah, but that's good to know that it's boys and girls cos it's

Freddie: cos my sister lives there, and my other sister's best mate lives there but it's all, it's all

Researcher: so all the young people live there?

Freddie: yeah

Researcher: ok

Freddie: my sister's living there til next year, and then she's getting given a flat

Researcher: right

Freddie: which she's gonna have to pay and it's all gonna go up

Researcher: yeah, and do people, can people come in who don't live there as well, or is it

Freddie: yep

Researcher: right

Freddie: they can come in, do courses, not courses but they can talk to 'em, and like...

JL: right Freddie, come on then

Researcher: ok, thanks a lot Freddie. Here, do you want to take this? Have you got a bag with you?

Freddie: no, my bag's in my locker

Freddie (male) – Y8
Researcher: Or you can just put it in your pocket can't you.

Thankyou very much, that was really good...Bye Freddie

Freddie (male) – Y8
Appendix E: Photo documentation of initial data analysis

a. Illustration of arrangement of initial cluster of data extracts from 1st transcription (see Appendix M for electronic copy)

NB. It is acknowledged that this photo is not clear or large enough to read the text, it is provided as an indication of the data analysis method and process.
b. Excerpt: School (became one initial theme) and initial clusters under this theme
Excerpt: initial data extracts clustered into similarities
d. Excerpt: initial data extracts clustered into similarities
e. Excerpt: initial data extracts clustered into similarities
Appendix F: Initial list of codes: 4 themes

**Theme 1: aspects of school that influence learning**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher has nice personality</td>
<td>Teacher unable to manage challenging behaviour</td>
<td>Can talk to the teacher about anything</td>
<td>Scared of teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher is approachable</td>
<td>Teacher wasting time telling people off</td>
<td>Teacher believes in student</td>
<td>Strict teacher can put you off a subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likes subject because of teacher</td>
<td>Teachers moan at you</td>
<td>Teacher is caring</td>
<td>Teacher shouts at you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of good teacher for learning</td>
<td>Won't discuss subject options with teachers</td>
<td>Teacher trusts the students</td>
<td>Teacher humiliates student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement in grades due to teachers</td>
<td>Provoke teacher to get them sacked</td>
<td>Teacher invested in student</td>
<td>Conflict with teachers – in the present and in the past (inc. primary school)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher as calm</td>
<td></td>
<td>Favourite teacher – tech teacher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher as fair</td>
<td></td>
<td>Good relationship with teacher/s – PE, NG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher as fun</td>
<td></td>
<td>Has to like the teacher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher as sporty</td>
<td></td>
<td>Someone has to know me in order to help me</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher is energetic and upbeat</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher is strict in a good way – helps to learn</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher motivates student</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher doesn’t mind repeating things</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher gives 1:1 support (Individual support – from teacher)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher gives support without student having to ask</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher good at explaining things</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher helps when you’re stuck</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Teachers could help to reach goals.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Peer relationships: supports**
- Has many friends in school
- Friends – feeling protective towards
- Friends in similar situation (feeling picked on)

**Peer relationships: challenges**
- Other students being disruptive in class – can’t concentrate
- Boys are more disruptive than girls
- Scared to tell friends about grades
- Other students are mean
- Scapegoating/blame by other students
- Sometimes believes other people’s lies. Can be gullible
- Everyone lies
- Doesn’t always believe what her friends tell her
- Likes playing on his own
- Rejection from peers if not academically high (in Egypt)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pastoral support</th>
<th>Exclusion leads to disengagement</th>
<th>School systems: challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• CAF – student and family supported by CAF; student enjoyed being supported by a CAF, wants to be back on CAF (now ended); had targets to work towards on CAF; made progress on the CAF.</td>
<td>• Being sent out of class</td>
<td>• Confusion with aspects of the curriculum – 3 teachers for English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Nurture – positive school experience, intensive support, small classes.</td>
<td>• Callout from class – often</td>
<td>• Detention – doesn’t attend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Counsellor in school for support with stress</td>
<td>• Delayed punishment (internal exclusion the week following incident)</td>
<td>• Doesn’t get much careers advice in school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• School environment is important for learning</td>
<td>• Detention - for not completing homework – doesn’t attend</td>
<td>• Lack of communication between school and home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pastoral support: challenges</strong></td>
<td>• Difficult to make progress, progress is hard</td>
<td>• Parents feel that family is demonised by the school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Withdrawal of support – closure of nurture base</td>
<td>• Grades going down due to exclusion</td>
<td>• Put down sets (in maths)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Prefers being out of nurture base</td>
<td>• Isolation – wasting time, not learning</td>
<td>• Student autonomy (or lack of) - choosing what to do in lessons (wood tech); choosing subjects (lack of autonomy/choice in GCSEs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School environment</strong></td>
<td>• Isolation in school</td>
<td>• Attending numerous schools (4 in 3 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Learning to negotiate the school environment (not getting lost)</td>
<td>• Doesn’t learn at school (exclusion)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Theme 2: students are individuals (different strokes for different folks) / personalised learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preferred approaches to learning</th>
<th>Feeling secure</th>
<th>Feeling Insecure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Learning as fun</td>
<td>- Dreams of minion helping her in school and being with her at home</td>
<td>- Negative experience in primary school - exclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Learning as relaxed</td>
<td>- Gained in confidence in England</td>
<td>- Sometimes misbehaves in class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Learning best by working on own</td>
<td>- Student coping mechanism</td>
<td>- Student can be distracted / Too many distractions at school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Learning by reading (e.g. instructions)</td>
<td>- Lack of confidence - Would like to have more confidence in school – to ask teacher questions</td>
<td>- Competitiveness at school – impacts negatively on self esteem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Learning by thinking of what you need to do</td>
<td>- Low self-esteem</td>
<td>- Cried about science mark, didn’t tell friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Learning by working hard</td>
<td>- Past experience (negative)</td>
<td>- Feelings – anger, annoyed in the past, stuck, frustrated, regret, demotivation, powerless, humiliation, respect, low self-esteem, stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Learning in small groups</td>
<td>- Stress</td>
<td>- Student being disruptive in class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Learning not based on literacy;</td>
<td>- Student using a computer</td>
<td>- Student coping mechanisms – laughing, getting angry,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Learning through mistakes</td>
<td>- Repetition helps learning /Need repetition to learn</td>
<td>- Bilingualism – helps learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Learning through practice</td>
<td>- More practical learning;</td>
<td>- Student strengths and interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Learns best by chunking – broken up lesson, learning in steps, graduated lesson</td>
<td>- Moving around when learning</td>
<td>- Bilingualism – helps learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Learns best by demonstration/being shown</td>
<td>- Prefers 1:1 with the teacher</td>
<td>- being creative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Learns by listening – auditory learner - has to like the person he is listening to</td>
<td>- Learns best at home</td>
<td>- being outdoors, camping, bushcraft, camping in new places; keeping bonsai trees, trees, plants, garden design, carving, fish, cooking, wood tech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Learns by understanding the work</td>
<td>- Learns at school (and at home)</td>
<td>- Feeling objective in disagreements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Learns by using a computer</td>
<td>- Learns on his own at home</td>
<td>- designs clothes (drawing) at home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Learns from looking at other people’s work (art)</td>
<td>- Teacher providing intensive support to small groups</td>
<td>- Job - fish shop &amp; fishing – since age 12 (13 now), holidays &amp; weekends; learnt many skills. Fishing, gutting/filleting/deboning fish, customer service, knowledge of fish, cooking,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Repetition helps learning /Need repetition to learn</td>
<td>- Listens to the teacher</td>
<td>- Good at organising / Organisational skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Silence helps learning</td>
<td>- Learns best when with Dad</td>
<td>- Interests: reading, minecraft; sports, PE, the body; computer games, seeing friends, going to the park; art; swimming and tennis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- more practical learning;</td>
<td>- Works things out on own</td>
<td>- Learning computer games – through practice and reading instructions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Moving around when learning</td>
<td>- Hasn’t tried studying with friends</td>
<td>- Likes: chart music; designer clothes; dogs – Labradors; computer games, sports; iPad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Prefers 1:1 with the teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Loves to play the piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Learns best at home</td>
<td>- Feeling secure</td>
<td>- Strengths – exercising, sports (basketball, rugby, throws, sprints, long jump); art, kind person, caring towards family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Learns best at school (and at home)</td>
<td>- Feeling Insecure</td>
<td>- Student strengths and interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Learns on his own at home</td>
<td>- Hasn’t tried studying with friends</td>
<td>- Bilingualism – helps learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Teacher providing intensive support to small groups</td>
<td>- Feeling secure</td>
<td>- being creative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Listens to the teacher</td>
<td>- Feeling Insecure</td>
<td>- being outdoors, camping, bushcraft, camping in new places; keeping bonsai trees, trees, plants, garden design, carving, fish, cooking, wood tech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Learns best when with Dad</td>
<td>- Low self-esteem</td>
<td>- Feeling Insecure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Works things out on own</td>
<td>- Past experience (negative)</td>
<td>- Bilingualism – helps learning</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Stress</td>
<td>- being creative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Student being disruptive in class</td>
<td>- being outdoors, camping, bushcraft, camping in new places; keeping bonsai trees, trees, plants, garden design, carving, fish, cooking, wood tech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Student coping mechanisms – laughing, getting angry,</td>
<td>- Feeling Insecure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Bilingualism – helps learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### Theme 2 (continued): students are individuals (different strokes for different folks) / personalised learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivators</th>
<th>De-motivators</th>
<th>Student fixed mindset</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivation – in preferred/favourite subjects – e.g. wood tech, art, maths, technology, ICT, PE, drama, tech, music, media studies, history, English</td>
<td>Attending numerous schools (4 in 3 years)</td>
<td>Fixed mindset – some people are born clever, some not; impossible for me to do that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing interests in subjects – didn’t like maths in primary</td>
<td>Doesn’t like/find subject interesting – hard to make progress</td>
<td>I wasn’t born clever</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likes learning (about people)</td>
<td>Boring work stops learning</td>
<td>Science is difficult, no matter how much I study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjects I am good at</td>
<td>Hates all subjects except PE</td>
<td>Sometimes feels helpless at school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of prior knowledge for learning</td>
<td>Barriers to learning – gendered subjects – dance isn’t for boys</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School work – good reports. Did well in most subject tests</td>
<td>Covering skills already learnt (e.g. wood tech)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gets good grades at school</td>
<td>Music at school is dull</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levels at school really matter</td>
<td>Not interested in school / Hates school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wants to learn and do well at school</td>
<td>Likes to do things on his own, doesn’t think he needs help</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student doesn’t like to get into trouble at school</td>
<td>Books not important, don’t like reading</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levels improved in England (compared to Egypt)</td>
<td>Doesn’t enjoy school – in the past or now</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working hard to learn</td>
<td>Anxiety around school levels in comparison with peers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studies – when she needs to</td>
<td>doesn’t know how to revise</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feels positive about school</td>
<td>Doesn’t want more help – help can make him stressed (certain people)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoyment in school</td>
<td>Forgets things that have been taught</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have fun and work hard at the same time</td>
<td>Too much silence doesn’t help learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinks she is reaching her potential at school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clear instructions and expectations;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likes having autonomy in classes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Has a tangle to help concentration in class</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning to prioritise time</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Small classes</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sources of knowledge</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finds things out by asking parents</td>
<td>Finds things out on the internet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learns new things from other people or on phone</td>
<td>Learns by using a computer at home</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learns from TV</td>
<td>gets inspiration from others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uses the internet at home for designing</td>
<td>Uses the school website to find out what’s on</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Theme 3: looking to the future/ in an ideal world

**Aspirations: supports**
- Teachers, school, parents and family can help to achieve goals/ reach targets
- Has chosen subjects
- I can help myself – by thinking about what I want to do; by making a list/plan; try and be good; research requirements for chosen career; try and be good
- Important subjects to learn – English, maths, science, art
- School can ensure a good life later
- Working hard at school can help to achieve dreams
- Need qualifications for getting a job
- Some school work relates to job aspirations (e.g. tree surgeon)
- Would like to be a more independent designer
- Thinks about the future a lot
- Aspirations – next 5 years/in 5 years time –
  - Do garden design; found out about requirements; been to visit college. Get good GCSEs.
  - move to Devon. Stay in Devon, have a family
  - to have a car

**Aspirations: challenges**
- No dreams/ideas for the future
- Doesn’t want to go to college – it’s boring
- Doesn’t want to think about the future
- Too young to think about the future
- No-one can help reach goals
- Doesn’t want help – likes to do things on his own
- Resistance to making plans for the future
- Little careers advice from the school
- Unclear about career pathway for job
- Careers advice at school not individualised
- Careers advisor – doesn’t know what that is
- Fear of the future – if good grades aren’t secured
- Would like to develop more confidence
- Worried about the future - GCSEs
- Sometimes it’s difficult at school – to keep applying yourself
- May be moving back to Egypt in the next year
- Parents bragging about their child’s achievements
- School is very hard in Egypt
- Uncertainty over the future – sabotaged the chance of moving to a school in Egypt
- Emphasis on ‘being clever’ in Egypt

### Aspirations – job
- Web designer, maths teacher
- to be a policeman
- to be a landscape gardener & tree surgeon, own his own business.
- To run multiple businesses. To be an architect, fashion designer, business woman. Wants to study business or art at university
- try and get a job in games development

### Aspirations – when older
- wants to be a kind person. Wants to be near family in future, to stay in [home town]
- Wants to be a nice, caring, nice looking person as an adult. Known and loved by everyone. A nice home; confidence, good job; pay taxes; independent; polite children. May have moved back to Egypt. May go to university in Egypt.
- move to Devon. Stay in Devon, have a family
- to have a car
### Theme 3 (continued): looking to the future/ in an ideal world

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Targets – things I can do in the next year</th>
<th>If I could wave a magic wand at school</th>
<th>Misc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• In the next year – 1. work harder, 2. increase confidence and independence, 3. increase levels. Also be more organised, take school more seriously; find out more about requirements for careers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Find out re GCSE/grade requirements for college; try not to be sent out of class so much; ignoring conflict with teachers, even if it seems unfair; write down what happened and tell another teacher; work harder in subjects needed for college</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Talk to friends about choosing subjects;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Get help and guidance in choosing subjects; learn more stuff; more information on pursuing career path</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Keep making progress; to get computer account fixed – to be able to access homework club; try not to get in trouble any more</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Keep doing the same – being organised, enjoying school, enjoying friends</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• don’t be too strict,</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Don’t give detention/punish students for not wanting to learn</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ensure teachers aren’t cocky – don’t humiliate students</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Fire the horrible teachers, bring back the nice ones</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ensure that teachers are fair</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ensure that teachers are not boring</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teachers should be tested for their commitment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• more respect from teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• more understanding teachers;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• teachers who see the students as individuals;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• have a different teacher if you don’t get on</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• sack boring teachers,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ensure that schools have enough staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• school more relaxed, less forcing things onto you, could take time;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• important to consider different ways of teaching;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Make classes smaller (20 students)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teacher providing intensive support to small groups</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Someone in class to help understand the questions (that doesn’t make me feel stressed);</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• make learning age appropriate;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Talking to someone about subject choices for career options</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• provide students with role models, examples of success;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• don’t make students scared of what may happen if they don’t succeed;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ensure that students know that their life choices may be limited if they don’t work at school; Would do up the school environment – YP want to learn in a nice environment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• school environment is important for learning;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Wouldn’t make any changes to the school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Make school / lessons / learning fun</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Have more/different subjects at school: more practical subjects; more contemporary subjects e.g. games development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Get rid of PE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• YP should learn about things that they like</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Give students more freedom/autonomy – to learn in the best way for them</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• working by yourself</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• important to feel safe at school;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• acknowledge that children have different backgrounds;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• would take over the country, be prime minister – be stricter on immigration, pay more to nurses, sack fat teachers,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Theme 4: Families, communities and role models

#### Learning/Homework: supports
- Help with learning/homework etc.: mum and dad; mum, Nan and great great Nan; Older sister
- Usually completes homework (not always)
- Finds space upstairs to do homework
- Uses the library for learning – out of school
- Uses mum’s computer for homework
- Less distractions at home – learns more
- Listens more at home
- Understands more at home

#### Learning/Homework: barriers
- Homework – completes without help from family members
- Doesn’t have the internet at home (x2)
- Doesn’t get help with homework from family members
- Mum can’t help with homework – not good at maths
- Mum and dad too busy to help with learning
- Homework – doesn’t do, then gets detention and doesn’t attend
- Parents – doesn’t always listen

#### Role Models
- Adult role models (outside family)
  - Camping, bushcraft meetings
- Parents
  - Learns from parents
- Mum – role model
  - Nice garden set up at home; student goes to work ‘for mum’;

- Dad – role model –
  - Interests (bikes), bushcraft, camping, exploring new places/travelling
  - Is an artist, business man
- Granddad – role model
  - Used to be a tree surgeon; taught about bonsais & tree surgery; went to same college
- Older brother – role model
  - Studying engineering in Scotland
  - Computer engineer
  - Sister in law – role model – child therapist

#### Adult relationships: Supports
- Adult role models
- Adult support outside school (other than family)
- Interested in finding out about people
- Someone has to know me in order to help me

#### Family relationships, role models & supports
- Large family
  - 2 brothers, 3 sisters
- Reassurance and support from family
- Will be both happy and disappointed if the family moves back to Egypt
- Usually picks up brother from primary school
- Honest communication between student and parents.
- Mum –
  - Feels protective towards
  - Helps to learn things at home e.g. learning how to talk
  - Works as college volunteer
- Parents expressing honest opinion about school staff.
- Siblings – sister works the same job; 4 younger siblings
- Support from family –
  - Protection from older sister; dad helped to get a job, will drive him to college, encourages outside interests to keep him ‘out of trouble’; granddad took him to look around college; advice on how to deal with conflict with teachers
- Looking after sibling – picking him up from school
- Nan
### Theme 4 (continued): Families, communities and role models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family relationships: barriers</th>
<th>Family: barriers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Sometimes feels embarrassed about little brother</td>
<td>• Parental/family health issues –</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Close family member ill in Egypt</td>
<td>o Dad – bike accident, health issues, can’t work, prohibited from driving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Student thought parents didn’t care when student was in trouble at school</td>
<td>o Mum – aneurism, health issues, prohibited from driving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Parents aren’t always honest with their children</td>
<td>o mum, nan – health issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sibling/s –</td>
<td>o mum – couldn’t get a job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o don’t help with learning; doesn’t get on well with sister; doesn’t play with siblings</td>
<td>o shares bedroom with 2 sisters; nan sleeps on sofa, dad sleeps on floor in living room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Student health issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mum</td>
<td>Peer group: supports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o couldn’t get a job (due to unspoken incident)</td>
<td>• Friends (outside school)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o student thinks she is not interested in his school life</td>
<td>• Gets on with sister’s friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o has health issues (aneurism) preventing her from getting a job &amp; driving.</td>
<td>• Friends outside school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Dad</td>
<td>o 1 was excluded and now attends special school; play outdoors, not computer games;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Has health issues preventing him from getting a job &amp; driving</td>
<td>o Play games online with friends;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships: barriers</td>
<td>o Play outdoors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lots of fat people are good at maths</td>
<td>Peer group: barriers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fat people have made themselves fat</td>
<td>• Conflict with other YP outside school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fat people should be living on the streets</td>
<td>• People that are good at maths should be living on the streets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• People shouldn’t be allowed to smoke in the street</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix G: 2nd list of codes: 11 themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 1: the importance of teachers</th>
<th>Theme 2: systemic structures in school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Supports</strong></td>
<td><strong>Supports</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can talk to the teacher about anything</td>
<td>• CAF – student and family supported by CAF; student enjoyed being supported by a CAF, wants to be back on CAF (now ended); had targets to work towards on CAF; made progress on the CAF.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Improvement in grades due to teachers</td>
<td>• Nurture – positive school experience, intensive support, small classes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Individual support – from teacher</td>
<td>• Counsellor in school for support with stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Likes subject because of teacher</td>
<td>• School environment is important for learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teacher as calm</td>
<td><strong>Barriers</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teacher as fair</td>
<td>• Classes are too big for learning (no of students)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teacher as fun</td>
<td>• Confusion with aspects of the curriculum – 3 teachers for English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teacher as sporty</td>
<td>• Detention – doesn’t attend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teacher believes in student</td>
<td>• Doesn’t get much careers advice in school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teacher doesn’t mind repeating things</td>
<td>• Lack of communication between school and home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teacher gives 1:1 support</td>
<td>• Learning to negotiate the school environment (not getting lost)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teacher gives praise</td>
<td>• Parents feel that family is demonised by the school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teacher gives support without student having to ask</td>
<td>• Put down sets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teacher good at explaining things</td>
<td>• Student autonomy (or lack of) - choosing what to do in lessons (wood tech); choosing subjects (lack of autonomy/choice in GCSEs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teacher has nice personality</td>
<td>• The environment makes no difference if the YP doesn’t want to learn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teacher helps when you’re stuck</td>
<td>• Withdrawal of support – closure of nurture base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teacher helps with regulation of anger – knows how to calm you down</td>
<td><strong>Barriers</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teacher helps you to grow up</td>
<td>• Classes are too big for learning (no of students)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teacher invested in student – wants them to learn</td>
<td>• Confusion with aspects of the curriculum – 3 teachers for English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teacher is approachable</td>
<td>• Detention – doesn’t attend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teacher is caring</td>
<td>• Doesn’t get much careers advice in school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teacher is energetic and upbeat</td>
<td>• Lack of communication between school and home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teacher is strict in a good way – helps to learn</td>
<td>• Learning to negotiate the school environment (not getting lost)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teacher motivates student</td>
<td>• Parents feel that family is demonised by the school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teacher trusts the students</td>
<td>• Put down sets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teachers could help to reach goals.</td>
<td>• Student autonomy (or lack of) - choosing what to do in lessons (wood tech); choosing subjects (lack of autonomy/choice in GCSEs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teachers help learning</td>
<td>• The environment makes no difference if the YP doesn’t want to learn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Barriers</strong></td>
<td>• Withdrawal of support – closure of nurture base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Doesn’t like subject because of teacher</td>
<td>• CAF – student and family supported by CAF; student enjoyed being supported by a CAF, wants to be back on CAF (now ended); had targets to work towards on CAF; made progress on the CAF.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Scared of teacher</td>
<td>• Nurture – positive school experience, intensive support, small classes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Some teachers are boring, and make the lesson/subject boring</td>
<td>• Counsellor in school for support with stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Strict teacher can put you off a subject</td>
<td>• School environment is important for learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teacher doesn’t explain well - when I’m stuck</td>
<td><strong>Barriers</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teacher doesn’t help you – to make plans</td>
<td>• Classes are too big for learning (no of students)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teacher humiliates student</td>
<td>• Confusion with aspects of the curriculum – 3 teachers for English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teacher shouts at you</td>
<td>• Detention – doesn’t attend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teacher unable to manage challenging behaviour</td>
<td>• Doesn’t get much careers advice in school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teacher wasting time telling people off</td>
<td>• Lack of communication between school and home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teachers don’t listen</td>
<td>• Learning to negotiate the school environment (not getting lost)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teachers moan at you</td>
<td>• Parents feel that family is demonised by the school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Won’t discuss subject options with teachers</td>
<td>• Put down sets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• CAF – student and family supported by CAF; student enjoyed being supported by a CAF, wants to be back on CAF (now ended); had targets to work towards on CAF; made progress on the CAF.</td>
<td>• Student autonomy (or lack of) - choosing what to do in lessons (wood tech); choosing subjects (lack of autonomy/choice in GCSEs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Nurture – positive school experience, intensive support, small classes.</td>
<td>• The environment makes no difference if the YP doesn’t want to learn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Counsellor in school for support with stress</td>
<td>• Withdrawal of support – closure of nurture base</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Theme 3: students are individuals (different strokes for different folks)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supports</th>
<th>Barriers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>being creative</td>
<td>Anxiety around school levels in comparison with peers – levels at school really matter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilingualism – helps learning</td>
<td>Attending numerous schools (4 in 3 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing interests in subjects – didn’t like maths in primary</td>
<td>Barriers to learning – gendered subjects – dance isn’t for boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clear instructions and expectations;</td>
<td>Books not important, don’t like reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>favourite subjects – provide motivation</td>
<td>Boring work stops learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finds things out by asking parents</td>
<td>Boys are more disruptive than girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a tangle to help concentration in class</td>
<td>Covering skills already learnt (e.g. wood tech)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have fun and work hard at the same time</td>
<td>Doesn’t enjoy school – in the past or now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework is important to do</td>
<td>Doesn’t find school homework club helpful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of prior knowledge for learning</td>
<td>doesn’t know how to revise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning as fun</td>
<td>Doesn’t learn at school (exclusion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning as relaxed</td>
<td>Doesn’t like/find subject interesting – hard to make progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning best by working on own</td>
<td>Doesn’t want more help – help can make him stressed (certain people)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning by doing - more practical learning;</td>
<td>Fixed mindset – some people are born clever (I wasn’t born clever), some not; impossible for me to do that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning by reading (e.g. instructions)</td>
<td>Forgetting things that have been taught</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning by thinking of what you need to do</td>
<td>Hasn’t tried studying with friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning by working hard</td>
<td>Hates all subjects except PE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning in small groups;</td>
<td>Homework – doesn’t do; too hard; too much</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>learning not based on literacy;</td>
<td>Likes learning but not learning in school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning through mistakes</td>
<td>Likes to do things on his own, doesn’t think he needs help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning through practice</td>
<td>Music at school is dull</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning with/from friends</td>
<td>Negative experience in primary school - exclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learns best by chunking – broken up, steps, graduated</td>
<td>Other students being disruptive in class – can’t concentrate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learns best by demonstration/being shown</td>
<td>Science is difficult, no matter how much I study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learns best when with Dad (4)</td>
<td>Sometimes feels helpless at school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learns by listening – auditory learner</td>
<td>Sometimes misbehaves in class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learns by understanding the work</td>
<td>Student can be distracted; too many distractions at school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learns by using a computer</td>
<td>Too much silence doesn’t help learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learns from looking at other people’s work (art)</td>
<td>Wasting time in school (isolation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learns new things from other people</td>
<td>Would like to have more confidence in school – to ask teacher questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learns things on the internet/phone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Theme 4: The importance of relationships in learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School relationships: Supports</th>
<th>School relationships: Barriers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Adult role models</td>
<td>• Attending numerous schools (4 in 3 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Adult support outside school (other than family)</td>
<td>• Conflict with teachers – in the present and in the past (inc. primary school)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Favourite teacher – tech teacher</td>
<td>• Different versions of events – staff/students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Friends (in school)</td>
<td>• Disrespect from teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Friends (outside school)</td>
<td>• Doesn’t like subject because of teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Gets on with sister’s friends</td>
<td>• Feeling picked on by teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Good relationship with teacher/s – PE, nurture group,</td>
<td>• Other students are mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Has to like the teacher to learn</td>
<td>• Power differentials between student and teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Interested in finding out about people</td>
<td>• Scapegoating/blame by other students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Learning with/from friends</td>
<td>• Scapegoating/blame of certain students by teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Learns best when with Dad (3)</td>
<td>• Someone has to know me in order to help me</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Miscellaneous
- People shouldn’t be allowed to smoke in the street
- Teacher humiliating student – teachers as cocky
- Teachers don’t care about students
- Lots of fat people are good at maths. Fat people have made themselves fat. Fat people should be living on the streets
- Sometimes believes other people’s lies. Can be gullible. Everyone lies

### Theme 5: feelings affect learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feeling secure</th>
<th>Supports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Dreams of minion helping her in school and being with her at home</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Competitiveness at school – impacts negatively on self esteem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cried about science mark, felt very disappointed about science level, didn’t tell friends about science mark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Feelings – anger, annoyed in the past, stuck, frustrated, regret, demotivation, powerless, humiliation, respect, low self-esteem, stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fixed mindset – that's impossible for me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hates all subjects except PE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hates school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• lack of confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Likes to do things on his own, doesn’t think he needs help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Low self-esteem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Not interested in school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Past experience (negative)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Self regulation – hard to calm down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Student being disruptive in class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Student coping mechanisms – laughing, getting angry,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Travelling from Egypt on day of science test</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Theme 6: looking to the future

Learning to facilitate getting a job: supports
- Important subjects to learn
- Need qualifications for getting a job
- School can ensure a good life later
- Some school work relates to job aspirations (e.g. tree surgeon)

Learning to facilitate getting a job: barriers
- Careers advice at school not individualised
- Careers advisor – doesn’t know what that is
- Doesn’t have ideas of what to do in the future

Aspirations: supports
- Aspirations – as an adult
  (a nice, caring, nice looking person; kind person; nice home; independent; confidence, good job; pay taxes; polite children; known and loved by everyone; live in Egypt; go to university in Egypt; live near family; stay in home town; move to Devon, run a business, have a family; no dreams for the future; have a car)
- Aspirations – job
  (web designer; maths teacher; policeman; landscape gardener & tree surgeon; architect; fashion designer; business woman; study business or art at university; games development; run multiple businesses)
- Future learning interests
  (how to make websites; games developer; get good GCSEs)
- Aspirations – next 5 years/in 5 years time – (college; university in Egypt; do garden design course; doesn’t know; still be at school; hang out with friends; have 7 GCSEs with high grades; 6th form college; learn and do well at school; work hard at school)
- Aspirations: barriers
  - Doesn’t want help – likes to do things on his own
  - Doesn’t want to go to college – it’s boring
  - Doesn’t want to think about the future
  - Emphasis on ‘being clever’ in Egypt
  - Fear of the future – if good grades aren’t secured
  - Little careers advice from the school
  - May be moving back to Egypt in the next year
  - No dreams for the future
  - No-one can help reach goals
  - Parents bragging about their child’s achievements
  - Resistance to making plans for the future
  - School is very hard in Egypt
  - Sometimes it’s difficult at school – to keep applying yourself
  - Too young to think about the future
  - Uncertainty over the future
  - Unclear about career pathway for job
  - Worried about the future - GCSEs
  - Would like to develop more confidence

Targets – things I can do in the next year
- Teachers, parents and family can help to reach goals
- Think about what I want to do
- Make a list/plan – think about what I need to do
- Increase confidence and independence
- Increase school levels
- Be more organised
- Learn more stuff
- Take school more seriously
- Find out about requirements for preferred career (GCSE subjects/grades)
- More information on pursuing preferred career path
- Try not to be sent out of class / try not to get in trouble / try and be good
- Ignore conflict with teachers, even if it seems unfair
- Write down what happened and tell another teacher
- Work harder in subjects needed for college
- Talk to friends about choosing subjects
- Get help and guidance in choosing subjects
- Keep making progress in school
- Get computer account fixed
- Keep doing what I’m already doing – being organised, enjoying school, enjoying friends, getting help from teachers, parents, family
- Has chosen subjects for GCSEs

Who can help
- teachers, parents and family can help
## Theme 7: Student strengths and interests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Learning out of school</th>
<th>Interests/strengths</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• School subjects:</td>
<td>• Learning computer games – through practice and reading instructions</td>
<td>• Creativity / art - gets inspiration from others. designs clothes (drawing) at home inc. using internet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(wood tech, media, drama, PE, art, technology, ICT, tech, music, history, English, maths)</td>
<td>• Learning to prioritise time</td>
<td>• Being objective in disagreements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Gets good grades at school</td>
<td>• Learns best at home</td>
<td>• Bilingual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Homework – good reports, success in maths,</td>
<td>• Learns best at school (and at home)</td>
<td>• chart music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Listens to the teacher</td>
<td>• Learns by using a computer at home</td>
<td>• computer games e.g. minecraft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• School work – good reports</td>
<td>• Learns from TV</td>
<td>• designer clothes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Usually does homework</td>
<td>• Learns on his own at home</td>
<td>• dogs – Labradors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Wants to learn and do well at school</td>
<td>• Kind and caring</td>
<td>• Favourite clothes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Working hard to learn</td>
<td>• Organisational skills</td>
<td>• Favourite possession - iPad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Studies – when she needs to</td>
<td>• Outdoor activities: camping, bushcraft; keeping bonsai trees, trees, plants, garden design, carving, fish, cooking</td>
<td>• going to the park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Playing the piano</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Reading,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Seeing friends,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Skills learnt from job: fishing, gutting/filleting/deboning fish, customer service, knowledge of fish, cooking,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Learning computer games – through practice and reading instructions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Learning to prioritise time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Learns best at home</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Learns best at school (and at home)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Learns by using a computer at home</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Learns from TV</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Learns on his own at home</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Theme 8: exclusion leads to disengagement

- Asked to leave the class (thrown out)
- Being sent out of class
- Callout from class – often
- Delayed punishment (internal exclusion the week following incident)
- Detention - for not completing homework – doesn’t attend
- Difficult to make progress, progress is hard
- Grades going down due to exclusion
- Isolation – wasting time, not learning
- Isolation in school
- Not learning due to exclusion
- Provoke teacher to get them sacked – dreams of

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Theme 9: in an ideal world</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teachers</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Ensure teachers aren’t cocky – don’t humiliate students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Teacher providing intensive support to small groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Teachers should be tested for their commitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- don’t be too strict,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Ensure that teachers are fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Ensure that teachers are not boring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Fire the horrible teachers, bring back the nice ones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- more respect from teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- have a different teacher if you don’t get on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- more understanding teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- teachers who see the students as individuals;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- make learning/lessons fun,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- make learning age appropriate;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- students could take time with their learning;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Get rid of PE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Make classes smaller (20 students)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- More/different subjects incl more practical subjects and more contemporary subjects e.g. games design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Someone in class to help understand the questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- important to consider different ways of teaching;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Ensure that schools have enough staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Ensure a nice school environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- school more relaxed,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Students</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Give students more freedom/autonomy e.g. to learn in the best way for them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- less forcing things onto students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Being able to work by yourself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- YP should learn about things that they like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- important to feel safe at school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- acknowledge that children have different backgrounds;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Future planning/career</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Talking to someone about subject choices for career options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- provide students with role models, examples of success;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- don’t make students scared of what may happen if they don’t succeed;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- ensure that students know that their life choices may be limited if they don’t work at school;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Discipline</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Don’t give detention/punish students for not wanting to learn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Theme 10: Families, role models and the impact on learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Homework: supports</th>
<th>Home Environment</th>
<th>Theme 11: Peer group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homwork – completes without help from family members</td>
<td>Less distractions at home – learns more</td>
<td>Doesn’t always believe what her friends tell her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family help with learning – homework etc. (Mum, Dad, Nan and great great Nan, older sister)</td>
<td>Listens more at home</td>
<td>Has many friends in school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually completes homework (not always)</td>
<td>Understands more at home</td>
<td>Likes playing on his own</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finds space upstairs to do homework</td>
<td>Nice garden setup at home</td>
<td>Conflict with other YP outside school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses the library for learning – out of school</td>
<td></td>
<td>Rejection from peers if not academically high (in Egypt)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses mum’s computer for homework</td>
<td></td>
<td>Friends in similar situation (feeling picked on)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework: barriers</td>
<td></td>
<td>Friends in school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doesn’t have the internet at home</td>
<td></td>
<td>o Will discuss subject options with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doesn’t get help with homework from family members</td>
<td></td>
<td>o Friends – feeling protective towards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents - mum and dad too busy to help with learning</td>
<td></td>
<td>o Friends outside school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework – doesn’t do, gets detention (doesn’t attend)</td>
<td></td>
<td>o 1 was excluded and now attends special school; play outdoors, not computer games;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Models</td>
<td></td>
<td>o Play games online with friends out of school;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult role models (outside family)</td>
<td></td>
<td>o Play outdoors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Mum, Dad, Granddad, Older brother, sister in law)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family relationships, role models &amp; supports</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large family</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reassurance and support from family</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone has to know me in order to help me</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will be both happy and disappointed if the family moves back to Egypt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually picks up brother from primary school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honest communication between student and parents.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Misc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>would take over the country, be prime minister – be stricter on immigration, pay more to nurses, sack fat teachers, get rid of cocky teachers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix H: Final list of themes, subthemes and codes – with poverty highlights

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subthemes</th>
<th>Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher attributes</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher is calming</strong></td>
<td>Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positives</td>
<td>Fun – teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trusts the students</td>
<td>Nice personality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>See students as individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive</td>
<td>Helpful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relaxed</td>
<td>Gives support without student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committed</td>
<td>having to ask</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disrespectful</td>
<td>Approachable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strict (in a bad way)</td>
<td>Teacher humiliates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make me stressed</td>
<td>Unable to manage challenging behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boring</td>
<td>Doesn’t listen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relationships with teachers</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good relationship</td>
<td>Confiding in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has to like teacher to learn</td>
<td>Trusts students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favourite teachers</td>
<td>Likes teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Challenges</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher humiliates</strong></td>
<td>Caring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher scapegoating student</td>
<td>Invested in student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers don’t care</td>
<td>Teacher believes in student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scared of teacher</td>
<td>Helps student grow up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Peer relationships</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer support</td>
<td>Learning with/from friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Students scapegoating peers</strong></td>
<td>Other students mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefers being solitary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exclusion leads to disengagement</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolation</td>
<td>Exclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not learning</td>
<td>Grades going down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wasting time</td>
<td>Hates school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Challenges of school systems</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Home-school communication</strong></td>
<td>Curricular confusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pastoral support</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurture base</td>
<td>CAF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress is hard</td>
<td>Withdrawal of support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School environment</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learns best at school</td>
<td>Nice environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 1: Aspects of school that Influence learning</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Themes**

- Aspects of school that Influence learning
- Teacher attributes
- Relationships with teachers
- Peer relationships
- Exclusion leads to disengagement
- Challenges of school systems
- Pastoral support
- School environment
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subthemes</th>
<th>Preferred approaches to learning</th>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Theme 2: Students are individuals (personalised learning)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preferred approaches to learning</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positives</td>
<td>Small classes</td>
<td>Same teacher – continuity</td>
<td>Learning through demonstration Favourite subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chunking learning</td>
<td>Fun – learning</td>
<td>Repetition Autonomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-literacy based learning</td>
<td>Clear instructions/expectations</td>
<td>Some noise Making mistakes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Silence</td>
<td>1:1 teaching</td>
<td>Internet Small groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inspiration from others</td>
<td>Thinking of what you need to do</td>
<td>Learning with/from friends Creativity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learning through practice</td>
<td>Enjoyment</td>
<td>Solitary learning Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moving around when learning</td>
<td>Using a computer</td>
<td>Understanding Working hard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Practice</td>
<td>Uses tangle</td>
<td>Listening (auditory) Reading Relaxed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Practical learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenges</td>
<td>Too much repetition</td>
<td>Fixed mindset</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Forgets things</td>
<td>Can be distracted</td>
<td>Don’t like reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Feelings</strong></td>
<td>Calm</td>
<td>Respect</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positivity</td>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Happy</td>
<td>Supported</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>Frustration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Powerlessness</td>
<td>Humiliation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Uncertainty</td>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stress</td>
<td>Unconfident</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disrespected</td>
<td>Unsafe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenges</td>
<td>Too much repetition</td>
<td>Fixed mindset</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Forgets things</td>
<td>Can be distracted</td>
<td>Don’t like reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strengths and interests</strong></td>
<td>Work experience</td>
<td>Customer service</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Knowledge of fish</td>
<td>Fishing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Travelling/exploring</td>
<td>Bushcraft</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Garden design</td>
<td>Keeping bonsai trees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carving</td>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prioritising</td>
<td>Organised</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Curious</td>
<td>Technology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Designer clothes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Art</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Favourite subject</td>
<td>Customer service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Being told off (fear of)</td>
<td>Changing interests</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Future dreams</td>
<td>Good grades/reports</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enjoyment</td>
<td>Important subjects</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Getting a job</td>
<td>Subjects I am good at</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Studying</td>
<td>Positive attitude</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Having fun</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenges</td>
<td>Exclusion</td>
<td>Isolation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>More study strategies</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dislike reading</td>
<td>Detention</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fear of future</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Repetition – demotivation</td>
<td>Lack of enjoyment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subthemes</td>
<td>Themes</td>
<td>Learning/</td>
<td>Positives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspirations for learning</td>
<td>Theme 3: Thinking about the future</td>
<td>More practical subjects</td>
<td>Different subjects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Learning relevant to career</td>
<td>Flexibility (able to change teacher)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>More fun</td>
<td>Tell another teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ignore conflict</td>
<td>Work harder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Write things down</td>
<td>Levels matter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positives</td>
<td>Working hard</td>
<td>Age appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Importance of school</td>
<td>Feel safe in school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Stay at school</td>
<td>School more relaxed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>Websites</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Solitary learning</td>
<td>Learn more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Keep making progress</td>
<td>Access to computer/ internet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>Fair teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Challenges</td>
<td></td>
<td>Small classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aspirations for jobs</td>
<td>Move away</td>
<td>Garden design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tree surgeon</td>
<td>Architect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sport</td>
<td>Good job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fashion designer</td>
<td>Police officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Multiple businesses</td>
<td>Maths teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positives</td>
<td>More careers advice</td>
<td>No dreams for the future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tree surgeon</td>
<td>Garden design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sport</td>
<td>Architect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fashion designer</td>
<td>Good job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Multiple businesses</td>
<td>Police officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aspirations for personal life</td>
<td>Tree surgeon</td>
<td>Garden design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sport</td>
<td>Architect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fashion designer</td>
<td>Good job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Multiple businesses</td>
<td>Police officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Maths teacher</td>
<td>Garden design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learning/</td>
<td>Uses the internet</td>
<td>Designs things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>homework</td>
<td>Learns from TV</td>
<td>Solitary learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positives</td>
<td>Sibling support</td>
<td>Uses library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Uses the internet</td>
<td>Designs things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Learns from TV</td>
<td>Solitary learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sibling support</td>
<td>Uses library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Challenges</td>
<td>Too much homework/doesn’t do</td>
<td>No computer/internet at home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family, role models, adult relationships</td>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>Sibling support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Learning with family</td>
<td>Shared interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Large family</td>
<td>Honest communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Parental health issues</td>
<td>Parental unemployment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Family not local</td>
<td>Parents sometimes dishonest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of sibling support</td>
<td>Family health issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peer group</td>
<td>Friends (outside school)</td>
<td>Conflict (outside school)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix I: Ethical approval from University of East London

NOTICE OF ETHICS REVIEW DECISION

For research involving human participants

BSc/MSc/MA/Professional Doctorates in Clinical, Counselling and Educational Psychology

SUPERVISOR: Laura Cockburn REVIEWER: Elizabeth Attree
STUDENT: Anna Griffiths

Title of proposed study: Closing the Gap: Young People’s Views on Learning at School

Course: Professional Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology

DECISION (Delete as necessary):

APPROVED

APPROVED: Ethics approval for the above named research study has been granted from the date of approval (see end of this notice) to the date it is submitted for assessment/examination.

APPROVED, BUT MINOR AMENDMENTS ARE REQUIRED BEFORE THE RESEARCH COMMENCES (see Minor Amendments box below): In this circumstance, re-submission of an ethics application is not required but the student must confirm with their supervisor that all minor amendments have been made before the research commences. Students are to do this by filling in the confirmation box below when all amendments have been attended to and emailing a copy of this decision notice to her/his supervisor for their records. The supervisor will then forward the student’s confirmation to the School for its records.

NOT APPROVED, MAJOR AMENDMENTS AND RE-SUBMISSION REQUIRED (see Major Amendments box below): In this circumstance, a revised ethics application must be submitted and approved before any research takes place. The revised application will be reviewed by the same reviewer. If in doubt, students should ask their supervisor for support in revising their ethics application.

Minor amendments required (for reviewer):
Major amendments required *(for reviewer)*:

Confirmation of making the above minor amendments *(for students)*:

I have noted and made all the required minor amendments, as stated above, before starting my research and collecting data.

Student's name *(Typed name to act as signature)*:
Student number:
Date:

ASSESSMENT OF RISK TO RESEARCHER *(for reviewer)*

If the proposed research could expose the researcher to any kind of emotional, physical or health and safety hazard? Please rate the degree of risk:

- [ ] HIGH
- [ ] MEDIUM
- [X] LOW

Reviewer comments in relation to researcher risk (if any):

Reviewer *(Typed name to act as signature)*: Elizabeth Attree

Date: 16/02/2015

This reviewer has assessed the ethics application for the named research study on behalf of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee (moderator of School ethics approvals)

PLEASE NOTE:

*For the researcher and participants involved in the above named study to be covered by UEL's insurance and indemnity policy, prior ethics approval from the School of Psychology (acting on behalf of the UEL Research Ethics Committee), and confirmation from students where minor amendments were required, must be obtained before any research takes place.

*For the researcher and participants involved in the above named study to be covered by UEL’s insurance and indemnity policy, travel approval from UEL (not the School of Psychology) must be gained if a researcher intends to travel overseas to collect data, even if this involves the researcher travelling to his/her home country to conduct the research. Application details can be found here: [http://www.uel.ac.uk/gradschool/ethics/fieldwork/](http://www.uel.ac.uk/gradschool/ethics/fieldwork/)
Appendix J: Pen portraits of participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Year Group &amp; age</th>
<th>Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aliyah</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Y7 12y 2m</td>
<td>Aliyah spent the first years of her education in Egypt; her first language is Arabic. Aliyah moved to the borough with her family (mother, father and younger brother) at the beginning of Year 5. Her father is a businessman. Aliyah had been in 4 different schools since arriving in the UK. Academically, Aliyah is performing above age-related expectations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holly</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Y7 12y 5m</td>
<td>Holly is from a large family, and lives with her 4 sisters, mother, and mother’s partner. Her mother is unemployed. There is a history of domestic violence in the family, and Holly, her mother and sisters spent some time in a women's refuge. Academically Holly is performing below age-related expectations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ava</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Y8 13y 0m</td>
<td>Ava lives with her mother; her older sister and father live in separate accommodation. Academically Ava is performing below age-related expectations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leah</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Y8 13y 1m</td>
<td>Leah is from a large family (6 siblings); she lives with her mother, father, 4 of her siblings and maternal grandmother. Both of Leah's parents are unemployed. The family live in a 3 bedroom house; Leah's Nan sleeps on the sofa. Academically Leah is performing slightly below age-related expectations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bertie</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Y7 12y 6m</td>
<td>Bertie lives with his mother and 3 older siblings; his father recently died (Jan 2015) after a long illness; he was in a care home for the last years of his life. His mother is unemployed. Bertie is affected by progressive sight loss. Bertie shares a room with 2 of his brothers. Academically Bertie is performing slightly below age-related expectations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dennis</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Y7 12y 7m</td>
<td>Dennis lives with his mother, father and 4 siblings. Dennis’ parents were reported to be long term unemployed. Dennis has diagnoses (from paediatrician) of learning difficulties, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Oppositional Defiance Disorder (ODD). The diagnoses were queried by Dennis’ EP and primary school in 2012. School staff felt his needs were more in the area of social communication. Academically Dennis is performing at age-related expectations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freddie</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Y8 13y 6m</td>
<td>Freddie lives with his mother, father, and older sister. His mother and father are both unable to work due to health issues. Academically Freddie is performing below age-related expectations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floyd</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Y8 12y 10m</td>
<td>Floyd lives with his mother and 4 younger siblings, he does not have any contact with his biological father. Floyd has a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (made in January 2013). Academically Floyd is performing significantly below age-related expectations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix K: Feedback for participants and school

- Teachers who (are)
  - invested in their students
  - have a nice personality
  - fun
  - give 1:1 support
  - give support without the student having to ask
  - approachable
  - energetic
  - good at explaining things
  - helpful
  - fair
  - students can talk to
  - trust the students
  - give students autonomy in class
  - have clear instructions and expectations
  - calm
  - give praise
  - supportive
  - help students to grow
  - help students to calm down
  - know their students
  - caring
  - strict (in a good way)
  - make work fun
  - relaxed
  - make sure there is lots of repetition
  - committed
  - see students as individuals
  - make lessons age appropriate
  - understanding
  - patient
  - motivating
  - use different teaching methods
  - believe in the students

- when students can use different ways of learning
- what do young people think helps them learn in school?

- support in school
  - counselling
  - nurture base
  - being on a CAF or EHA
  - adequate number of staff
  - small classes
  - intensive support from teacher
  - different pedagogies (ways of teaching)

- feeling
  - safe
  - confident
  - supported
  - good self esteem
  - happy
  - calm
  - respected
  - enjoyment
  - positive

- friends/students who
  - are good to talk to about things (e.g., choosing subjects)
  - are supportive
  - can learn together
  - protect each other

- homework: getting help from family/friends; having space to do homework; finding homework manageable
  - using the library
  - having supportive parent/s
  - learning from dad
  - less distractions at home
  - adult role models outside school

- motivators/things the student does
  - getting good reports
  - favourite/preferred subjects
  - getting good grades
  - being independent
  - knowing a bit about a subject before learning more (prior knowledge)
  - able to prioritise time
  - enjoyment
  - wanting to learn and do well
  - doesn’t like to get into trouble
  - working hard
  - doing homework
  - fun and works hard
  - feeling positive about school
  - using tools for concentration
  - thinking about future job/career
  - planning
  - having a ‘can do’ attitude
unsupportive • aren't good at explaining • scary/too strict • don't help you • don't listen • disrespectful towards students • find it difficult to manage challenging behaviour • boring • waste time telling people off • humiliate students • emphasise power differences • don't care about students • pick on certain students • make lessons babyish • scare students about what may happen if they don't succeed • treat all students the same (don't acknowledge different backgrounds and learning styles) • don't understand students

school

difficult to find classes (as the school is so big) • too many students in one class • cramped • being excluded • isolation • having three teachers for English is confusing • lack of detention • lack of careers advice • being put down sets • lack of home-school relationship and communication

unsafe • helpless • like things are impossible (fixed mindset) • unconfident • unsupported • angry • frustrated • regretful • powerless • humiliated • de-motivated • stressed • low self esteem • disrespected • stuck • excluded • distracted • uncertain • anxious • fearful (about the future)

outside

no help with homework • no access to internet at home • health issues in the family • mum and/or dad unable to work • lack of space at home to do homework

What do young people think are barriers to learning?
What skills, interests and resources do young people think they bring to education?

Bilingualism • Creativity • Outdoor skills e.g. bushcraft • Cooking • Gardening • Being objective • Designing e.g. clothes, interior design • Music e.g. plays piano • Reading • Fishing inc. filleting fish • Sports e.g. swimming, tennis, throws, basketball, rugby, sprints, long jump • Computer games • Customer service • Socialising • Animals e.g. dogs • Exercising • Camping • Carving • Organised • Biology/the body • Caring • Kind • Work experience • Travelling/exploring • Curiosity

What additional skills do young people think they need?

Future hopes

Good GCSEs • 6th form college • Interior designer • Garden design • Business • Join the police • Dog handler • Tree surgeon • Games developer • Maths teacher • Fashion designer • Run multiple businesses • Study art at university • Kind person • Caring person • Gain in confidence • Have a nice home • Have children • Move to a different place/country • Stay near family • Have a car

What needs to be done?

Thinking about what to do after leaving school • Making a plan/list • Researching requirements for chosen career/college subject • Studying important subjects for later life e.g. English, maths, science, art • Working hard at school • Gaining qualifications to get a job • Trying not to be excluded from class • Talking to friends about choosing subjects • Accessing homework club • Having more/different subjects at school • More practical and more contemporary e.g. games development • Giving students more freedom/autonomy

How do young people think they could be supported in planning for the future?

Advice for choosing subjects • Careers advice in school • Someone to talk to about the future • It’s scary to think about • Advice for how to pursue chosen career/interests e.g. what subjects/grades are needed • Developing more confidence • Reassurance • Help to get good grades • Developing independence • Role models/examples of people who have succeeded

Who could help?

School • Teachers • Parents • Students themselves • Other family
Appendix L: Feedback and implications for school and/or EPs

Anna Griffiths (Trainee Educational Psychologist): Research Project
Closing the Gap: Young People’s Views on Learning at School

This handout summarises the main points made by participants in the study. In addition it recommends some interventions that have been shown to be effective by previous research.

Participants shared their ideas about an ideal school, where they learnt to the best of their ability. This would be a school where:

- Good relationships between teachers and students are nurtured. A central finding of the research was the impact of student-teacher relationships on learning.

- School staff are supported to understand and address challenging behaviour, including exploring how student behaviour can trigger emotional reactions in staff.

- A spirit of cooperation and support among individual peers is nurtured.

- Good home-school relationships are nurtured and encouraged, including guidance and advice for parents/guardians to help their child with homework.

- Internal and external exclusion as a punitive measure is limited. If, as a last resort, a student is excluded adequate learning materials are provided, so progress is not compromised.

- Aspects of the curriculum can be changed to be more engaging for students e.g. introducing games development as a subject choice.

- Individual student skill-sets are known to staff and capitalised on in school.

- Careers advice and coaching on how students can reach their goals is provided for all age groups to ensure that they are aware of the pathways towards their aspirations.

- Training is provided for school staff around issues affecting CYP experiencing poverty.

- There is adequate pastoral staff to provide social and emotional support to students through existing systems e.g. CAF/EHA, counselling or (re)introducing new systems e.g. nurture group.

- Focus on developing soft skills in students e.g. confidence and independence.
• There is support for (new) students to negotiate the school environment e.g. maps, extra staff to help new students find their way.

• Class sizes are small for students who may be struggling with aspects of their learning.

• Students have a voice and are consulted about issues affecting them at school.

• Students who do not have access to technology at home are supported e.g. using pupil premium funding to purchase laptops and dongles for home use.

• Staff acknowledge that individuals learn in different ways, and ensure a range of pedagogies to suit different learning styles are used in school.

• Teachers are supported to manage any stress they may experience in the job.

• New interventions are tried out, with rigorous monitoring and evaluation built in. Previous research suggests that successful interventions for closing the poverty-related attainment gap could be:

  o Mindset interventions; *Mindsets in the Classroom* by Mary Cay Ricci has lots of suggestions for classroom activities incorporating the mindset approach that could be used in whole class activities. Some useful resources and information on the growth mindset can be found on www.perts.net/ or www.mindsetworks.com/

  o Belonging mindset approaches are also an effective way of engaging students and nurturing learning. This fosters the belief that young people ‘belong’ in school.

  o Meta-cognitive strategies, where students are encouraged to think about how they learn, and what works best for them. Part of this could be teaching revision strategies.

  o Arranging for role models to come into school to support students reach their goals. Especially those who had to struggle to get to where they are today.

  o Interventions that focus on students’ strengths and characteristics e.g. using the VIA character strengths survey: http://www.viacharacter.org/www/The-Survey or interventions such as Strengths Gym (Proctor & Eades, 2009). These can be done individually, in small groups, or at a whole class level.

  o Interventions based on students writing about their ‘possible selves’ and/or their personal values have been shown to nurture learning in research carried out in the USA.
Appendix M: Contents of Accompanying CD:

1. Transcripts of all interviews: Freddie, Bertie, Floyd, Dennis, Aliyah, Leah, Ava, Holly.

2. Videos used at the beginning of 4 interviews:
   a. Student Voice Curtis: a 7 minute video of a young man talking about his experiences of growing up in a ‘deprived’ community. Curtis shares that one teacher, Mr Boss, changed his school experience in a positive way.
   b. Spoken Word - Why I Hate School but Love Education: a 6 minute spoken word performance about education.

3. Digital photos of initial data analysis.