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Title: Using 'Write, Draw, Show and Tell' to Explore the Views of Primary Pupils Reintegrating into Mainstream and Specialist Provision

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Using ‘Write, Draw, Show and Tell’ to explore the views of primary pupils reintegrating into mainstream and specialist provision.

Rebecca Glazzard

A dissertation submitted to the University of Bristol in accordance with the requirement for award of the degree of Doctorate in Educational Psychology in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Law

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Abstract

‘Reintegration’ has been used to describe the efforts to support pupils on their full-time return to mainstream or specialist provision, following exclusion from school. Statistics published by the Department for Education indicate an increase in exclusion rates across all state-funded primary, secondary and special schools from 2014/15 to 2015/16 (DfE, 2017). Consequently, the topic of positive reintegration experiences is a pertinent issue within education. Secondary school pupils, their parents/carers and educational practitioner views have been the main focus of existing literature concerning school exclusion and reintegration. A lack of research regarding reintegration into provision other than mainstream settings was also identified.

This study aimed to address such gaps in the literature by using the ‘Write, Draw, Show and Tell’ (WDST) creative method (Noonan et al, 2016), to explore primary aged pupil’s perceptions of reintegration into mainstream or specialist provision, including support they felt would be beneficial.

Eight male pupils aged 7-11 from two separate Local Authority Pupil Referral Units took part in an ice-breaker and drawing activity, followed by a semi-structured interview. Data from these multiple sources was triangulated and analysed according to Braun and Clarke’s (2006) stages of thematic analysis. This indicated five themes related to participant’s anticipated and actual experience of reintegration, as well as what contributed to positive reintegration experiences from their perspectives. It was concluded that reintegration experiences were impacted on by participant’s levels of self-awareness and perceptions of a new beginning. Specific concerns related to reintegration were dominated by thoughts concerning a sense of belonging and to feel fully included within their receiving settings. Factors perceived to support reintegration included; relationships and support provided through friendships, family members and teaching staff, the school environment and procedural factors as part of the reintegration process.

Findings were discussed in relation to the existing literature and through the lens of Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) eco-systemic perspective and social model of disability. Consideration was given to participant’s level of involvement in decision-making and the extent to which their voice was present during their reintegration. Implications for school staff and Educational Psychologists as a means to further support reintegration processes were provided. This included a focus on the methods by which children and young people’s views were elicited and through the development of a proposed checklist to support reintegration planning. Strengths and limitations of this study, alongside possible directions for future research were proposed.
Acknowledgements

Undertaking this research has been both rewarding and challenging, whilst contributing to my development as an aspiring Educational Psychologist.

I wish to thank my placement supervisor, who has gone above and beyond for me on many occasions, in sharing her knowledge and experience and supporting me in shaping this study.

My biggest thanks goes to the pupils and their parents/carers for agreeing to give up their time and in sharing their personal insights with me. It was a pleasure and privilege to hear their experiences. Thanks also goes to the staff members involved in offering their time and in supporting the crucial recruitment process.

I am grateful to my dissertation supervisors, Dr Sandra Dowling and Dr Rob Green for their time, attention and guidance, and to the wider DEdPsy course team for their encouragement and support throughout. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to enter into a career I always hoped to be able to pursue.

To my fellow ‘TEPs’; I am thankful for the opportunity to have shared this journey with people I have made life-long friendships with and whom I could not have been without. The ‘memes’ have frequently provided much needed comic relief.

Finally, to ‘The Glazzards’ and our wider family, thank you for your unwavering belief, support and reassurance now, and as ever.
Author’s Declaration

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University’s Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes and that is has not been submitted for any other academic award. Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, the work is the candidate’s own work. Work done in collaboration with, or with the assistance of, others, is indicated as such. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

Signed: 

Date: 7/9/18
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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Overview

Limited research, which acknowledges pupil voice and reintegration failure, has been identified (Jalali & Morgan, 2017). Consequently, this study sought to add to existing literature and understandings of primary aged pupil’s experiences of reintegration into mainstream or specialist provision. This study used a creative method to gather data, namely; the ‘Write, Draw, Show and Tell’ (WDST) (Noonan et al, 2016) technique. The types of support which pupils felt they would benefit from was a key area of investigation within the exploratory approach adopted.

The following chapter will outline the research study and detail some of the key factors which were instrumental in its design. An insight into the research setting and methodological orientation will be discussed before the research aim is highlighted. A summary of the remaining chapters within this thesis will then be provided.

1.2 Significance of topic

The Department for Education (DfE, 2017) statistics indicate an increase in both permanent (resulting in a pupil attending an alternative school or educational provision), and fixed-term exclusions (where a pupil returns to the same school following their exclusion), across all state-funded primary, secondary and special schools for the 2015/16 academic year. This increase is not confined to one year, with statistics illustrating an increase in primary and secondary exclusions over a number of years (Jalali & Morgan, 2017). Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) are the most frequent form of alternative provision for excluded pupils. PRUs have been described as settings for pupils who have been “excluded, who are at risk of exclusion and those who are sick, pregnant or without a school place” (DfES, 2007: 3). PRUs also cater for those at risk of permanent exclusion. This was true for PRUs in each of the two Local Authorities (LAs) in which data collection for this study took place. A commissioned place was therefore viewed as a preventative measure to permanent exclusion.

Given the continued rise in exclusion statistics, attention in policy and literature has turned to the quality of alternative provision as well as the process of reintegration. Reintegration refers to LA and school efforts to return pupils who are “absent, excluded or otherwise missing from mainstream education provision” (DFES, 2004: 5). Specific to this study, reintegration relates to the process of supporting pupils towards their full-time return to
mainstream or specialist provision, following permanent exclusion or a commissioned PRU placement after multiple fixed-term exclusions¹.

The increased attention surrounding reintegration practice alongside the emphasis on pupil voice and an Educational Psychologists (EPs) role in facilitating this, served as part of the rationale for considering this topic. Following the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the requirement to elicit children and young people’s (CYPs) views and concerns, has been protected by UK law (Greig et al, 2014). Whilst there has been a shift in strengthening how CYP are heard, linked to the emphasis in current policy and legislation (Birnbaum, 2015; DfE, 2014), within an educational context, putting CYPs rights into practice can be challenging. Instead of promoting flexibility and independence, educational practice often focuses on ‘telling’ and ‘controlling’ pupils (Roffey, 2013). The extent to which CYP have the ability to share their insight could therefore be questioned. Greig et al (2014) assert that EPs have a critical role in empowering CYP and to encourage practice that develops their confidence to express their views. A previous EP Working Group Report (DfEE, 2000), illustrated that EPs are professionals who have the ability to elicit pupil views and effectively represent these in proposed plans.

The manner in which CYPs views are elicited and represented has also been observed to have been given increased attention. This has included interest in participatory experiences, demonstrated through the use of creative methods including art, photography, video and music, in seeking to embrace CYPs competencies and experiences (Hunleth, 2011). In addition to these considerations, my own personal and professional background contributed to the choice of research topic.

1.3 Personal and professional background

Previous academic and vocational accomplishments including a BA Hons Degree in Sport and Psychology and role as a Research Assistant, Learning Support and Teaching Assistant and Graduate Psychologist afforded me the knowledge, research and professional skills in preparing for the role of EP.

Professional experiences including working with three different LA EP services as part of my Doctoral training have included individual casework as well as work at group and systemic levels, e.g. delivering training and facilitating inclusive practice through problem-solving

¹Whilst it is acknowledged that some LAs may not regard attendance at a specialist setting as ‘reintegration’, the LAs in which data collection took place defined possible next steps as part of the reintegration process as possibly including; a return to mainstream school or a place in a specialist provision or school which could provide more appropriately for a pupil’s needs, on their respective websites.

2
interventions such as Solution Circles (Forest & Pearpoint, 1996), Circle of Adults (Wilson & Newton, 2006) and Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope (PATH) (Falvey et al, 2003). My training and placement experiences have therefore been influenced by solution-focused, systemic and consultative principles. In moving away from medical and child deficit models, I have developed an interest in removing barriers to participation in mainstream education, as advocated in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (DfE, 2014). As such, this study embraced the social model of disability, which EP practice is seen to reflect, through the exploration of reintegration into mainstream or specialist provision following time spent at a PRU after permanent exclusion or a commissioned PRU placement to prevent permanent exclusion.

Having attended an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) conference led by professionals who were responsible for meeting the needs of pupils aged between 5 and 16 who could not be taught in a mainstream school for an amount of time, as part of my second year of training, I was particularly inspired by two Psychology Professors from the University of Westminster who presented their research related to supporting children and young adults with ASD to remember experienced events (Mattison et al, 2016). Within the context of the criminal justice system, the Professors discussed the ‘Mental Reinstatement of Context’ (MRC) method to enhance witness retrieval, which was designed with typically developing adults in mind. They reported that although UK guidance advocates this technique, it was particularly cognitively demanding for children, especially for those with ASD. As such, they sought to introduce ‘Sketch Reinstatement of Context’ (Sketch-RC) to improve interview situations for those with ASD.

Their study consisted of a between-subjects design with two independent variables; ‘Interview’ on three levels (Sketch-RC, MRC and Control) and ‘Group’ on two levels (children with ASD and typically developing children), involving 90 children. Participants viewed a short film of a non-violent criminal offence and were then allocated to one of three retrieval conditions; Sketch-RC (participants were supplied with drawing materials as the free recall component and asked to draw as much as they could related to the film they observed), MRC (verbal instructions were provided which encouraged participants to mentally reinstate the environmental and personal context surrounding the film) and Control (participants were given verbatim instructions of free recall) (Mattison et al, 2016). The study found that typically developing children recalled more correct information than those with ASD during the probed (MRC) and free recall (Control) phases. It was reported that sketching during free recall (Sketch-RC) reduced the number of incorrect items reported for both groups, but the effect of sketching on retrieval accuracy was greater for those with ASD. As such, although those with ASD did not recall as much as their typically developing peers, what they did
recall in the Sketch-RC condition, was as accurate. The researchers emphasised the benefits of developing approaches that were sensitive to specific impairments, as was the case for those with ASD in their study.

I viewed such an approach as being person-centred and began to consider in relation to my own practice, how it could be possible to access the potentially inaccessible, i.e. children’s voices to contribute to an Education, Health and Care Plan, or in respect of any decision being made for an individual. With the benefits of sketching as a method of aiding children’s recall being identified here, I considered whether the same method could be used to support eliciting pupil voice, given the emphasis in policy and legislation to do so. This stimulated my interest in research involving sketching and creative methods and any particular documented models/methods which aimed to elicit pupil voice. This further shaped the topic under investigation in this study.

1.4 Aims of the research

This study aims to explore the views of primary aged pupils who were in the process of reintegrating into a mainstream or specialist provision, following time spent at a PRU after permanent exclusion or being allocated a commissioned place to prevent permanent exclusion. Particular emphasis will be placed on the support they would like to receive as part of their reintegration and what this may look like, as well as factors which are valued in relation to this experience.

The use of the WDST method (Noonan et al, 2016), was selected as an approach to enable participants to express their views. Consequently, this study also gives attention to how children’s voices are elicited and included in their reintegration process. Potential implications for professionals including school staff and EPs in eliciting children’s views and in supporting the process of reintegration, will be considered.

1.5 Methodology

To fulfil the aim of this study, a qualitative, exploratory methodology was selected. In seeking to explore participant’s views of support as part of their reintegration process, a constructivist epistemology was adopted. This enabled the exploration of multiple realities. Semi-structured interviews shaped by the WDST method (Noonan et al, 2016), which included the use of a topic guide consisting of open ended questions as part of the ‘Tell’ element of this method, were conducted with eight primary aged pupils. Interviews were recorded, transcribed and analysed alongside each individual drawing, according to Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six stages of thematic analysis. This systematic process enabled themes within the data to be identified. This method of data analysis was deemed most appropriate
to the present study due to the flexibility of the approach supporting analysis of three separate streams of data that the WDST method (Noonan et al, 2016) generated. It was also compatible with the ontological and epistemological position adopted within this research.

Two separate settings formed the basis of the data collection. The first six interviews took place with a primary PRU as part of a large, rural LA in which the vast majority of pupils were of white British heritage and came from areas of socio-economic disadvantage. An overwhelming majority of pupils were male and all pupils were identified as having special educational, physical, emotional and/or medical needs. In order to enhance this study, a further two participants were recruited from a separate primary PRU setting within a different LA. The second PRU setting belonged to a smaller LA in a new town\(^2\), with higher levels of cultural diversity than the first LA, although the majority of pupils attending the second PRU were also of white British heritage. Again, the overwhelming majority of pupils attending were males, and those in receipt of pupil premium (further funding for pupils eligible for free school meals or in the care of the LA) was well above average.

1.6 Chapter summary and structure of dissertation

This chapter has identified relevant background information related to school exclusion and reintegration. The significance of this topic was demonstrated through highlighting recent trends in statistics, which will be discussed in greater depth in chapter two, and in policy and legislation, which increasingly advocates for the inclusion of CYPs views in plans which are proposed for them. A key component of this research related to children being empowered to give their views, an interest sparked from previous professional and training experiences.

Following this chapter, chapter two will explore existing literature related to exclusion and reintegration and situate the present study within this context. An overview to selecting relevant literature to this study will firstly be provided, including a description of why eight peer-reviewed articles were selected for critical review. Key terms will then be defined as well as statistics and the history of alternative provision being identified. The literature review will then examine reintegration experiences from two perspectives; pupils and stakeholders (parents/carers and teaching staff), before grouping together factors within this research which were identified as contributing to a successful reintegration. This chapter will then consider a range of theoretical frameworks relevant to the literature including eco-systemic perspectives, solution-focused and humanistic perspectives, a cognitive behavioural perspective and the social model of disability. The remainder of the literature review will then be dedicated to historical policy and legislation related to the inclusion of children’s

\(^2\) Refers to a town that was planned and developed, rather than a town which developed gradually.
perspectives and methods for eliciting pupil voice. The methods employed in each of the previously discussed studies will be identified and comments related to the perceived advantages and disadvantages of each of these methods offered. Attention will then be given to the use of creative research methods before introducing the WDST technique (Noonan et al, 2016). The development of this method will be plotted before a chapter summary and the overall aim and research questions are defined. The review of literature was integral in defining the aim and research questions and in providing the rationale for this study.

Chapter three documents the methodology for this study and will begin by stating the purpose of this research. The chosen research paradigm will then be discussed in line with ontological and epistemological considerations before the qualitative design and exploratory approach are introduced. Details on the research participants will then be provided. This will include the sampling method employed, size of the research sample, participant inclusion and exclusion criteria and recruitment process. The WDST method (Noonan et al, 2016), will then be defined as the chosen method of data collection and the procedure documented. A description of the six stages of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), will be offered alongside the researcher activity linked to this. The methodology will next discuss ethical considerations related to seeking and gaining ethical approval, informed consent and ensuring confidentiality, data protection, the protection of participants and researcher safety. Finally, the ways in which valid and reliable data were sought in accordance with Yardley’s (2008; 2000) four quality assurance dimensions will be presented.

Chapter four presents the findings of this study derived from participant’s interviews and subsequent thematic analysis. Prior to the findings being introduced, this chapter offers an overview of the research context as a means to an informed appreciation of the study and understanding of the nature of the data. Reflections on, and learning points resulting from the completion of two pilot interviews will then be offered. The findings of this study will then be presented at two levels; themes and sub-themes, alongside participant quotes, images of their drawings and grid references (referring to particular aspects of a participant’s drawing which correlates to their verbal responses), in order to reflect their views and experiences.

Chapter five will critically examine this study’s findings in relation to existing literature and relevant theoretical models. Comments related to eliciting pupil voice using the WDST method (Noonan et al, 2016), will also be provided. This chapter will identify implications for educational settings and EPs at a variety of levels and end with a proposed checklist of considerations for pupils due to commence the reintegration process. Suggestions for further
research will be woven throughout this chapter and illustrated as they become relevant to each of the identified themes.

Chapter six will begin with a succinct summary of the study's findings. It will also highlight observed positive features as well as limitations of this study. A reflexive account will then be provided based on the experience of planning, conducting and finalising this research, before final concluding remarks are offered.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Overview

This chapter aims to examine existing research related to school exclusion and reintegration so that the present study can be situated in the wider literature related to this topic. Studies which have considered the views of pupils who have been excluded and experienced reintegration, including primary and secondary aged pupils, parents, school and Local Authority (LA) professionals are critically reviewed. Attention will be given to the theoretical frameworks which these studies were guided by, as well as those that are anticipated to be relevant to this study. Additionally, empirical studies focusing on obtaining the views of those identified as having Social, Emotional and/or Mental Health (SEMH) needs, or as previously referred to, Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD), which have given attention to specific methods used to capture pupil voice, are examined. This will also include a discrete section highlighting policy and legislation related to pupil voice. This is followed by an exploration of creative methods to elicit pupil voice, before a chapter summary, aims and research questions for the present study are provided.

2.2 Literature review methodology

A systematic review of the literature related to exclusion and reintegration was carried out in order to identify the evidence currently available and gain an insight into the strengths and limitations of this published research (Boland et al, 2014). A systematic review is intended to “locate, appraise and synthesise the best available evidence” (Boland et al, 2014: 3). This supports researchers to provide evidence-based answers to specific research questions. As documented by Boyle et al (2016), a number of key processes and decisions were involved in the systematic review. These included:

1. Formulating a review question – Given the continued rise in UK exclusion figures and subsequently greater attention being given to the quality of alternative provision and reintegration processes, questions kept in mind during the completion of the systematic review included; what were pupil experiences of the reintegration process and what supported/hindered positive reintegration processes.

2. Defining inclusion and exclusion criteria – As can be seen in Table 1, a set of inclusion/exclusion criteria were determined to ensure the literature was relevant to this study. Only studies written in English and which had been published from the year 2000 were selected as these were deemed to be the most recent. Qualitative and/or mixed methods studies were sought in line with the qualitative approach adopted within this study. Studies/articles from outside of England were excluded given the variation in
practice/educational systems outside of England and the intention to provide recommendations to settings/Educational Psychologists based on settings operating within English systems. Initially only studies concerning primary aged pupils were going to be included. This was based on prior knowledge that the majority of studies within this field concerned secondary aged pupils. However, due to the very limited number of studies which focused solely on the views and experiences of primary aged pupils, the decision was made to broaden this criteria to include studies of secondary aged pupils.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inclusion Criteria</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Context</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Studies focussing on fixed term or permanent exclusion</td>
<td>• Studies not focussing on fixed term or permanent exclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Studies focussing on the reintegration process</td>
<td>• Studies not focussing on the reintegration process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Studies seeking the views of children and young people (CYP) identified as having SEMH needs or BESD</td>
<td>• Studies not seeking the views of children and young people (CYP) identified as having SEMH needs or BESD, e.g. seeking the views of parents/carers, teaching staff/professionals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Studies of primary and secondary aged pupils</td>
<td>• Studies of the Post-16 population</td>
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<td>• Any gender</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Time and place</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Studies or articles within England</td>
<td>• Studies or articles outside of England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Written in English</td>
<td>• Not written in English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Studies published from the year 2000</td>
<td>• Studies published prior to the year 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Study type</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Qualitative and/or mixed methods studies seeking the views of CYP in relation to reintegration</td>
<td>• Quantitative studies not seeking the view of CYP in relation to reintegration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Studies with an emphasis on the means by which to elicit the voice of CYP</td>
<td>• Studies which do not refer to the means by which to elicit the voice of CYP</td>
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<td>• Full text</td>
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*Table 1: Inclusion and exclusion criteria*
3. **Develop search strategy and locate studies** - Electronic database searches were conducted in October and November 2017 using terms related to the context of this study (e.g. ‘school’, ‘exclusion’, ‘reintegration’), terms related to population (e.g. ‘child*’, ‘pupil’ and ‘young person’) and outcome related terms (e.g. ‘pupil voice’, ‘experience’, ‘perspective’ and ‘views’). See Appendix 1 for a list of search terms used. Online searches of EBSCO Host Databases (including; British Education Index, ERIC, Child Development & Adolescent Studies and Education Abstracts), PSYCINFO and Web of Science were carried out. The titles and abstracts of these studies were screened and duplicates removed. Full copies of texts were then gathered and the pre-determined inclusion and exclusion criteria applied. An inclusive approach was adopted when screening titles and abstracts to avoid papers which contained potentially important information, which was not referred to in the abstract, being discarded.

Additional searches of relevant journal articles including; ‘Educational Psychology in Practice’, ‘Educational and Child Psychology’ and ‘Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties’ were accessed. Internet search engines including Google Scholar, were used in addition to identify articles, websites and government policy and legislation related to exclusion and reintegration. Manual searches of relevant books were also undertaken using the University of Bristol library catalogue. Three unpublished theses relevant to this topic were identified via the doctoral research theses service EthOS, and each of the reference lists screened for potentially relevant articles.

4. **Select studies** - As represented in Figure 1, initial electronic searches identified 1,254 studies. Titles and abstracts were screened and 65 papers remained. An additional 13 papers were identified after studying the reference lists of relevant papers, journals and theses. After duplicates were removed, the inclusion and exclusion criteria (Table 1), were applied to the 59 remaining references. 51 papers were excluded from the critical review according to the above exclusion criteria meaning that 8 articles were selected for critical review.
5. **Extracting data, assessing study quality and analysing and interpreting results**

Papers which met the inclusion criteria were reviewed using critical appraisal tools. These included the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) (2013) and Leonidaki’s (2015) appraisal tool for interview studies. The lack of an agreed epistemology and distinct set of principles in qualitative research has led to controversy surrounding the use of appraisal tools (Leonidaki, 2015). As a result, using the same tool for the critical appraisal of different qualitative studies could result in the failure to acknowledge differences between qualitative methods (Willig, 2013). There is also a risk of inflicting standards which were devised for a specific methodology to a different qualitative method (Reicher, 2000), and in turn, compromising the flexibility of qualitative studies (Watts, 2014). Whilst there are risks, using critical appraisal tools is argued to enhance the validity and reliability of qualitative research (Elliott et al, 1999). They were therefore used to support the process of critically reviewing studies which met the inclusion criteria for this study. Appendix 2 contains a summary of
each critically reviewed empirical study based on questions posed by the CASP (2013) and Leonidaki’s (2015) appraisal tool which centred on; a clear statement of the aims, a qualitative methodology/research design/recruitment strategy being appropriate, the relationship between researcher and participants/ethical issues being adequately considered, data analysis being sufficiently rigorous, a clear statement of findings, the research having impact and value and evidence of reflexivity.

Findings from the review of relevant literature indicated four key areas that inform the issues to be addressed in this study. These include; exclusion, reintegration, pupil voice and creative methods. Articles concerning each of these areas will now be presented prior to relevant theoretical models being considered and policy and legislation related to these key areas is highlighted.

2.3 Exclusion

As part of the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice (CoP) (2014) (DfE, 2014), the Department for Education and Department of Health share their vision for all children and young people (CYP) to achieve in their early years, across school and college and to lead happy and fulfilled lives. They assert that aspirations for CYP should be raised by focusing on life outcomes (e.g. employment) and promoting independence (DfE, 2014). For many CYP, school presents as a positive experience. For others, this is not the case. Particular groups find themselves repeatedly excluded from school and frequently at risk of permanent exclusion (Hart, 2013). The importance of studying this group is evident when considering statutory guidance published in relation to exclusion (DfE, 2017b), and in statistics which illustrate the number and rate of permanent and fixed period exclusions continues to increase across all state-funded primary, secondary and special schools in England (DfE, 2017). Ensuring that students with SEMH difficulties remain included in mainstream education however, is a significant challenge (McCluskey et al, 2015). Learners who are considered at risk of, and who demonstrate SEMH difficulties tend to achieve the poorest academic outcomes (Osher et al, 2007). The risk of them being excluded from education is higher than for any other population of learners (Visser et al, 2005; Jalali & Morgan, 2017).

Given the importance of studying this group, the following section seeks to provide an overview of the topic of exclusion through defining a number of separate categories and presenting statistics related to the rate of exclusion and its prevalence amongst particular groups. Finally, the primary aim of Pupil Referral Units (PRUs), as the most frequent site of alternative provision for excluded pupils (McCluskey et al, 2015), will be introduced.
2.3.1 Definitions

In the UK, school exclusion is defined as a “disciplinary sanction that prevents a pupil from attending school either for a fixed period or permanently” (Gazeley, 2010: 294). The 1944 Education Act permitted Head Teachers to exclude pupils, although the subject of exclusion drew little political interest until the early 1990s when monitoring exclusion data nationally, became available (Lown, 2005). Early guidance outlined the exclusion categories; permanent, fixed and indefinite. The indefinite category was removed in 1993 due to dissatisfaction with its use (Ofsted, 1993).

A fixed term exclusion refers to a pupil being excluded from school for a set time period. This may involve part of the school day and does not have to be for a continuous period. A pupil may be excluded for one or more fixed periods, up to a maximum of 45 school days in a single academic year (DfE, 2017b). In exceptional circumstances, an additional fixed term exclusion may be issued immediately after the first period ends, or a permanent exclusion may be given which begins after the end of the fixed period (DfE, 2017).

Statutory guidance indicates that permanent exclusion should only be used following a serious breach or repeated breaches of a school’s behaviour policy, and in circumstances whereby allowing a pupil to continue attending would harm the welfare or education of this pupil or others in the school (DfE, 2017). For permanent exclusions, the LA must arrange suitable full-time education (or as close to this, with a pupil’s welfare in mind) to begin no later than the sixth day of an exclusion. Full-time education is defined as offering English and Maths as part of 21-25 hours of guided learning per week. Despite this requirement, research indicates that individuals frequently receive less than this (Evans, 2010).

2.3.2 Statistics

An increase in permanent exclusion rates across all state-funded primary, secondary and special schools from 5,795 in 2014/15 to 6,685 in 2015/16 has been reported by Department for Education statistics (DfE, 2017). This translates to approximately 35.2 permanent exclusions per day in 2015/16, an increase from an average of 30.5 per day in 2014/15. The majority of permanent exclusions (815) occurred in secondary schools at a rate of 0.17% (the equivalent of 17 pupils per 10,000) which was an increase from 0.15% in 2014/15. The permanent exclusion rate for primary schools remained the same at 0.02% (DfE, 2017).

Persistent disruptive behaviour accounted for the most permanent exclusions (34.6%), in 2015/16. 12.3% of permanent exclusions were explained by physical assault against another pupil, 10.9% for physical assault against an adult, whilst 9% were recorded as verbal abuse/threatening behaviour against an adult and 4.7% against a pupil. Differences in
statistics were observed across the primary and secondary age range, for example, 9.5% of
exclusions in secondary schools were drug and alcohol related, a finding not consistent with
primary data, with 0 exclusions reported for this reason. Physical assault against an adult
was far more prevalent across the primary age range at 32.3% compared to 5.9% across the
secondary age range (DfE, 2017).

Fixed term exclusions across all state-funded primary, secondary and special schools were
also reported to increase from 302,975 in 2014/15 to 339,360 in 2015/16. This translates to
approximately 1,790 fixed term exclusions per day in 2015/16, an increase from
approximately 1,590 per day in 2014/15. The number of fixed term exclusions increased
from 49,655 in 2014/15 to 55,740 in 2015/16 in state-funded primary schools (DfE, 2017).

Exclusion has been described as a complex and systemic concept which reflects decisions
made by schools and is impacted on by external factors, e.g. national policies (Rustique-
Forrester, 2005). The context of exclusion is much wider than individual causes, which within
a behaviourist framework, place emphasis upon an individual’s behaviour. A variety of
reasons may affect the decision to exclude a pupil. Reasons may include; the pressure felt
by schools due to assessment targets, the impact of schools being ranked and results being
published, as well as the obligation for exclusion statistics to be reported. Consequently,
schools may demonstrate limited tolerance and resort to excluding individuals whose low
attendance and assessment performance could have a negative impact on school
performance indicators (Rustique-Forrester, 2005). Such thinking serves as a reminder of
the caution which must be taken when interpreting statistics. More broadly, the multiple
external factors which may be involved in any individual’s exclusion should be considered.

2.3.3 Alternative provision

Alternative provision was introduced in the UK in 1994. This was viewed as a response to
concerns held in relation to the educational and social outcomes for pupils excluded from
mainstream education due to their challenging behaviour (Jalali & Morgan, 2017). PRUs are
the most common site of alternative provision for excluded pupils (McCluskey et al, 2015).
The aim of a PRU is to provide alternative provision for a limited period of time, and in doing
so, prepare individuals for a successful return to mainstream school (Ofsted, 2007). In earlier
work, Hill (1997) illustrated that PRUs aim to address the negative effects of exclusion by
providing respite, which in turn, supports the aim of a pupil’s reintegration into mainstream
school, to be achieved.

Figures indicate that in 2015/16, 330 PRUs catered for 15,015 pupils, a figure which has
increased each year from 2013/14 (DfE, 2017b). Whilst it is difficult to obtain accurate
figures, research suggests that there has also been an increase in alternative education
programmes being established in the USA in the last 20 years (Farouk, 2014). Similarly to PRUs in the UK, the purpose of these is to provide education for pupils who demonstrate disruptive behaviour and who may have been excluded from school (Brown, 2007). In Germany, local government continues to have the mandate to transfer excluded pupils to another equivalent education placement, whilst in recent years, France has changed its policy from reintegrating students excluded from school to another mainstream school, to placing them in school rehabilitation facilities for one year, or a longer period if necessary. Comparing other educational systems outside of the UK suggests an increase in the use of alternative provision for excluded pupils (Farouk, 2014). The existence of such provision however, has been argued to be contrary to the spirit of inclusion with PRUs being viewed as confirmation that for those demonstrating SEMH needs, inclusive thinking was yet to be established in practice (Garner, 2000). Other researchers have viewed such provision as a ‘quick fix’, and an example of exclusionary practice, which segregates some and labels them as ‘a problem’ (Pennacchia & Thompson, 2016). They question the ability to ‘fix’ individuals so that they can return to unchanged mainstream contexts (Pennacchia et al, 2016). This idea is captured in the “repair and return” (Heinrich, 2005: 26) phrase, illustrating the desire for individuals to acquire skills to cope with mainstream environments which are themselves not expected to change. Such an approach situates the problem solely within an individual and does not encourage schools to reflect on their practice and how such practice may serve to alienate particular groups of learners (Pennacchia & Thomson, 2016).

With the increasing number of students accessing alternative provision in the UK, the government shifted their agenda to ensure students received high quality education (Taylor, 2012). This was further heightened by the 2015 policy paper; ‘Children outside mainstream education’ (DFE, 2015) which reported that only 1% of 15 year-olds attending PRUs, achieved the government target of five GCSE grade A* - C or equivalent (DCSF, 2008). It would be an oversight however to ignore the fact that many pupils arrive at a PRU late in their school career and may only spend a limited time at such a setting. They may therefore have been failing academically prior to their arrival at a PRU (Taylor, 2012).

As reintegration forms such an integral part of the service which PRUs provide, this is an area which will now be discussed. Attention will be given to factors identified within current literature and legislation which contribute to successful reintegration and those which are viewed as barriers to a successful reintegration.
2.4 Reintegration

Reintegration has been defined by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) (2004) as:

*the efforts made by LAs, schools, and other partners to return pupils who are absent, excluded or otherwise missing from mainstream education provision* (DfES, 2004: 5).

The responsibility to reintegrate pupils to the most suitable provision following permanent exclusion, falls with LAs. Suitable provision could include; mainstream or special schools, a permanent PRU placement, continuing to further education, employment-based training or employment placement arrangements (DfES, 2004b). Within this study, ‘reintegration’ refers to the process of supporting pupils on their full-time return to mainstream or specialist provision, following permanent exclusion or a commissioned PRU place following multiple fixed term exclusions.

The term, ‘reintegration’ has been disputed by Thomas (2015), who argues that if pupils’ needs are to be met following time in alternative provision, ‘re-inclusion’, might be a better term to reflect a school’s willingness to include that child. Thomas (2015) views this as a basic precursor for successful reintegration. Such a view links to the ideas of inclusion and integration. Integration refers to further support a pupil receives to help them to ‘fit in’ with a specific setting. In contrast, inclusion, a notion which emerged together with the social model of disability (Shakespeare, 2006), refers to the practice of a school making adaptations to meet a pupil’s needs (Lambert & Frederickson, 2015). Inclusion is therefore viewed as going beyond the confines of integration (Thomazet, 2009). Inclusion focuses on adapting systems within schools (Hart, 2013), as advocated for in the social model of disability, and therefore removes itself from a child deficit model. This model emphasises the critical role of the environment in facilitating or hindering a child’s development (Fox, 2015). It is therefore anticipated that this may be a relevant model through which to consider findings of this study, alongside further theoretical frameworks, to be discussed later in this chapter.

Representing CYP’s voices and the views of their parents/carers is interpreted as an element of inclusive practice (Vlachou et al, 2016). With this in mind, studies which have focused on CYP and their parents/carer views of reintegration, will now be critically reviewed.

2.4.1 The perspectives of pupils and stakeholders

In early work within this area, Lown (2005) identified that little was known about the outcomes for pupils who were excluded who returned to mainstream schools, as
reintegration was a new concept. It was therefore essential to study the experiences of those who had reintegrated to help guide future policy and practice. More recent studies continue to assert that; YP who are at a high risk of exclusion from school frequently have limited chances for their voices to be heard (Thomas, 2007); the views of those with BESD are often the least sought (O’Connor et al, 2011; Cefai & Cooper, 2010); and that there is limited research which addresses why reintegration may fail from the perspectives of pupils (Jalali & Morgan, 2017). A thorough literature search revealed numerous studies which explored the views of excluded CYP, staff and parents/carer concerning reintegration into mainstream schools.

Lown (2005) explored the perceptions of permanently excluded pupils (in Years 9 and 10 and two who had finished school), their families, school staff and LA support staff regarding their experiences of pupils returning to a new mainstream school. Views about factors perceived as contributing to successful reintegration were elicited through semi-structured interviews and one focus group. Of 27 pupils who met the criteria of having maintained their place in a mainstream school for three school terms, five pupils became the focus of the research which was organised according to pupil ‘case-sets’. Pupils and those involved in their reintegration took part in semi-structured interviews. Eight members of the behaviour support team also took part in a focus group. This concerned their perceptions of factors which were important to sustained successful pupil reintegration. Data analysis, constructed from grounded theory, revealed three core categories which supported reintegration success; relationships, support and pupil characteristics. Sub-themes within the relationship category included; positive relationships with adults and pupils (pupils talked about being liked and supported by adults), positive relationships between mainstream school staff and parents (linked to frequent communication) and positive relationships between pupils and peers (having good peer networks and social support). The support category referred to academic support, in addition to parental support in facilitating effective reintegration. The final category; pupil characteristics, revealed that ‘within-child’ aspects, e.g. academic ability, resilience and goal motivation, were particularly significant.

The triangulation of the perspectives of different stakeholders was viewed as a strength of this study and demonstrated the importance of listening to pupil views. Despite this, limited participant details were provided, e.g. their ages, and it would be interesting to note whether identified categories were consistent across the primary and secondary age range. It is also unclear how the views of each of the stakeholders were weighted and whether this was consistent across the five pupil ‘case-sets’. This study was limited by a small sample size which was acknowledged by the researcher. Consideration was given to implications for
practice at several levels. This included practical advice for schools, and processes recommended to LAs and support professionals.

Studies which have also sought the views of CYP alongside support staff, include those by Hart (2013) and Levinson and Thompson (2016). Hart (2013) adopted a resilience perspective to explore the views of six pupils aged 9 – 13 years, who had received several fixed term exclusions, about factors they perceived to be helpful in achieving positive social and academic outcomes. Studies which considered the experience of reintegration following fixed term exclusions were included in this literature review as a number of participants within this study were reintegrating into mainstream/specialist provision after accessing a commissioned PRU placement following fixed term exclusions. The views of four PRU staff were also obtained with a focus on whether children possessed resilience factors which supported them to achieve positive outcomes. Within-child factors was a theme which also arose in Lown’s (2005) study. Any differences in the factors that children and staff highlighted were also considered by Hart (2013). Questions which were included as part of the semi-structured interviews were based on themes which had been recognised in educational resilience research. This was viewed as a strength of this study as data analysis was guided by research which had gone before it, instead of the researcher’s interest. The author argued that linking the findings to previous research increased the power of researcher interpretation. Interviews included the use of picture sheets and scaling activities to draw comparisons and it was felt that the use of these additional approaches validated the meaning of the data. Thematic analysis revealed relationships (fostering relationships between staff and pupils, pupils and pupils and staff and parents/carers), teaching and learning (specific lessons, learning being personalised to individuals, focusing on life skills, progress and school ethos), expectations (having high expectations and consistency of approach) and environment (reference to size and emulating the features of a mainstream environment), were key themes identified by pupils and staff which related to protective factors within a PRU. Within-child factors including being extroverted and being willing to take risks in learning were identified by staff as necessary for a pupil’s placement to be considered effective. Consistency was observed across the themes that both pupils and staff identified. Staff labelled what is was they felt supported pupils, e.g. life skills. In contrast, pupils described their lessons. It was noted that staff were aware of the mixed feelings pupils reported in relation to their reintegration (Hart, 2013).

Ten students aged 11-16 and five members of staff (Teachers and Teaching Assistants) took part in Levinson and Thompson’s (2016) study. This study aimed to examine participant’s views related to the reasons for attending alternative provision, cultural differences between mainstream and alternative provision, and feelings related to
reintegration. Although the researchers explored student’s views about the reasons for attending an alternative education setting, their reason for attendance was not made clear, i.e. whether this was a result of multiple fixed term exclusions or permanent exclusion. Data collected through semi-structured interviews, where students were interviewed in pairs to create more equal power relationships, revealed similar factors which supported or hindered a successful reintegration that were consistent with previous research and those presented so far in this chapter. Factors identified included the importance of the relationships between staff and students, provision being supported by the wider family and community and the timing of transitions. Levinson and Thompson (2016) moved beyond identifying factors to questioning the suitability of mainstream provision to meet the standards for reintegration back into mainstream schools. They commented on the nature of secondary schools and particularly focused on their size and impersonal nature, as being different to alternative provision cultures. All participants reported that positive relationships, a flexible curriculum, pupils feeling valued and alternative provision settings representing a family, were factors which pupils highly valued. The authors therefore proposed factors which mainstream schools should be adopting and questioned whether the aim of a PRU should be to quickly prepare pupils for their reintegration. Within this, they highlighted the importance of a gradual reintegration, emotional support from members of staff, tolerance and flexibility. The importance of an integrated approach which included school settings, PRU, pupil and their family, was stressed. In summary, linked to the ethical considerations related to the existence of PRUs previously discussed through consideration of the “repair and return” (Heinrich, 2005: 26) phrase, the authors here concluded that practice should focus on changing the cultural climate of mainstream school to better support reintegration processes.

The authors highlight methodological limitations of each of these studies which may have resulted in an element of response bias. For example, Hart (2013) illustrated that pupil’s responses, which were gathered using scaling techniques, may have had an element of ‘leniency error’ (Karsten & John, 1994), with pupils using the extremes of a scale to represent their views. Secondly, although initially viewed as a strength of this research, the fact that it was heavily guided by previous research, particularly when devising the semi-structured interview topic guide, can be criticised as data was arranged into themes which had already been identified. In a similar manner, Levinson and Thompson (2016) drew upon the lived experiences of pupils and staff in one PRU, although they offered limited comments on the potential bias and influence that may have occurred as one of the researchers was also a member of staff within the setting that the research was conducted. This may have resulted in response bias from participants attempting to please the researcher with whom they had some familiarity. This may also have applied to participants being interviewed in
pairs. Although this was an attempt to address the power dynamic between researcher and participants, this could have had the effect of students expressing views which did not truly reflect their own, but were instead expressed in the context of sitting with a peer.

Pillay et al (2013) adopted a qualitative research approach within an interpretivist constructivist paradigm to explore the reintegration experiences of 13 learners (aged 11-14 years) with BESD. Again, it is unclear whether pupils had been permanently excluded or whether they attended alternative provision following fixed term exclusions. All 13 pupils, who during the previous 12 months, had reintegrated back into mainstream provision following time spent at alternative provision, finished a number of incomplete sentences and wrote a life essay. Four of the 13 pupils were then selected to take part in an unstructured interview, based upon the richness of their initial essay. Professionals who were described as having an interest in pupil reintegration also took part in an unstructured interview. Data gathered from each of these sources was triangulated. This resulted in a detailed account of pupil’s reintegration experiences. From this, three overarching themes were acknowledged; emotional experiences (linked to experiencing pride and optimism, levels of academic and social ability, having a positive future vision and receiving praise from teachers), relationships (having positive relationships with staff, family and peers), and reintegration practices (procedural factors, e.g. a gradual reintegration, close communication between parents and school and reintegration meetings being held). The researchers identified that each of these themes could serve as ‘promotive’ or ‘risk’ experiences in the overall experience of reintegration. Risk factors were argued to have the most significant impact on pupil’s reintegration experiences (Pillay et al, 2013).

A strength of this research was observed when findings, drawn from the use of varied and more creative methods, were used to propose a resilience-based reintegration programme (RRP). This was organised according to three strands, congruent with the themes identified; developing emotional competence, developing promotive relationships and reintegration route (Pillay et al, 2013). The study therefore contributed to the development of policy and practice through its proposal of the RRP. Whilst it is acknowledged that the varied perspectives gathered through multiple means contributed to developing an understanding of pupil’s experiences of reintegration into mainstream education, it can be questioned whether the aim of this research (to explore pupil experiences), was truly addressed given that only four pupils had their experiences represented. This number was outweighed by the number of parents and professionals who were involved in this study. Limited details are provided by the authors as to what constituted an invitation to take part in an unstructured interview. It could be surmised that this sampling method enabled only those of higher
intellectual ability to express their views, or those who were motivated to take part in a written task.

2.4.2 Pupil perspectives

Additional studies have solely focused on the views of CYP who experience SEMH difficulties in relation to factors which enable, or present as a barrier to securing positive outcomes and reintegration success. This was the case in Michael and Frederickson’s (2013) study, who explored the views of 16 YP, aged 12-16, from two separate PRUs (one Key Stage 3 and one Key Stage 4), following permanent exclusion from mainstream school. A number of pupils who made up this sample received their education within the PRU setting, whilst others had an individualised programme which included off-site education as well as sessions at the PRU. The sample of YP reflected the gender breakdown of pupils attending PRUs in the UK (DfE, 2017b), with a higher ratio of male participants. The ethnic makeup of this sample reflected the ethnic profile nationally. Semi-structured interviews, followed by thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), revealed five themes that supported pupils to achieve positive outcomes. These included; relationships (having positive relationships with school staff, peers and family), curriculum (extra-curricular activities, relevance/engagement and personalisation), discipline (effective sanctions being implemented), learning environment (in relation to size) and self (personal qualities e.g. self-motivation and self-discipline). Themes which were viewed as a barrier to achieving positive outcomes included; disruptive behaviour (including the pupil’s own behaviour and ineffective management strategies), unfair treatment (related to how discipline was applied, being blamed by teachers and related to being labelled by others) and failure to individualise the learning environment (learning tasks not appropriately differentiated to suit learner needs). A discrete theme; ideas for change, which concerned the learning environment, approaches to learning being flexible and pupil views being heard and understood, was identified by YP. Findings of this study were consistent with research presented thus far. Themes of relationships, curriculum, environment, and within-child characteristics are frequently cited throughout the literature in respect of supporting reintegration processes.

Whilst the author reported that the findings of this study were consistent with those which had been highlighted by the limited previous research within this area, this study extended existing findings by identifying a number of original considerations, e.g. the role of extra-curricular activities. Initial suggestions can be drawn from the findings of this study which enhance professionals’ understanding of how to engage pupils with SEMH difficulties, who have been permanently excluded. The research also offers a direction for the future development of PRU practice. Implications for professionals, specifically Educational
Psychologists (EPs) are referenced. These relate to their role in devising and implementing strategies which support the development of positive relationships with staff and pupils within PRU settings (McGrath and Noble, 2010).

Qualitative research concerning reintegration experiences has predominantly focused on secondary aged children. This has been true for studies that have been critically reviewed in this chapter thus far. The critique of such papers has revealed that where the views of multiple stakeholders have been gathered (parents/carers, teachers, LA workers), it is unclear whose voice governed findings and whose voices represented the final data sets. It is also acknowledged that key factors and themes identified are based upon self-reports at one specific point in time. Changes in perception over time are therefore not accounted for. As a result, Hart (2013) argued that additional investigation into factors which pupils perceive to be helpful at different times, would be insightful.

Jalali and Morgan’s (2017) study can be seen as an attempt to address a gap in the literature related to primary aged pupils’ experiences as well as seeking to identify whether student views changed over time. Through phenomenological investigation, they sought the views of 13 students aged 7-16 years (5 secondary and 8 primary pupils) from three different PRUs (one secondary and two primary) in southern England, related to factors they viewed as supporting them to make progress and specifically, how they viewed mainstream school and reintegration. Emphasis was placed on whether their views changed after their transition from primary to secondary school. Semi-structured interviews in which participants completed a timeline of their ‘educational journeys’, based upon life grids (a visual tool which enabled participants to map key events in their lives), and subsequent phenomenological data analysis, revealed eight core themes. These themes echoed the experience of school for all participants. They included; attribution (pupils attributed their difficulties in behaviour to external factors), anger (being unfairly blamed), equality (pupils demonstrated a strong desire for equality), change, mainstream (the majority of students wanted to return to mainstream education), relationships, self and challenge. Findings suggested little variation in pupil views across primary and secondary education, although a number of themes related to their age were highlighted, e.g. secondary aged pupils expressing the impact of environmental factors (home circumstances and relationships with teachers). Secondary aged participants also expressed views which appeared to be more generalised across education. This was linked to their age and greater experience of school, when compared to primary students. Age specific themes included understanding and physical restraint for the primary population, and helplessness, recognition, routine, teachers, home influence, abnormality and support for the secondary population (Jalali & Morgan, 2017).
The authors are explicit about the contribution this study makes to existing knowledge and how this has been expanded by including the primary population. Directions for future research are noted when limitations of the study are highlighted, e.g. the small scale of the research impacting on how broadly findings could be generalised, and the types of research question being better suited to longitudinal research. Implications for the development of policy are presented, whilst the researchers also advocate collaborative working between mainstream settings and sites of alternative provision. As with other studies previously discussed, the role that EPs could play in providing systemic support and developing a shared understanding between professionals, is illustrated.

2.4.3 Summary of promotive factors

Following the critical review of articles concerning reintegration experiences from the perspectives of CYP, parents/carers, school staff and professionals, a number of themes relating to factors that promote and/or support successful reintegration emerged. Table 2 provides a summary of these factors according to each of the empirical studies:

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*Table 2: Factors highlighted within literature as supporting reintegration*
Each of these factors have been summarised further and are seen to fall within four main categories; relationships, individual pupil characteristics, teaching and learning environment and wider support, as illustrated in Figure 2 below:

![Factors that support reintegation into mainstream education](image)

*Figure 2: Summary of research findings into the factors that promote successful reintegration*

Each of the four categories identified can be seen as taking place at various levels including the individual, group and wider system. As such, the theoretical frameworks which each of the cited studies were guided by, will now be considered.

### 2.5 Theoretical Frameworks

According to the literature within this area, reintegration success is dependent upon factors located at different levels. These include; the individual, family and wider community (Lown, 2005; Pillay et al, 2013; Jalali & Morgan, 2017). Researchers have argued that actions and behaviours can only be understood if they are considered in context, at these different levels, given that CYP do not exist in a vacuum, but within complex and interrelated systems (Rendall & Stuart, 2005).
2.5.1 Eco-systemic perspective incorporating risk and resilience

Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) eco-systemic perspective has been observed as the framework which guides much of the research in this area and can be helpful in exploring factors which impact on actions and behaviour. Within this perspective, four distinct components are identified, with the relationships between each of these considered. The four components include:

- **The Micro-system** concerns the child’s immediate setting and has the most direct impact on their development. Peers, parents, family, school and local community are included here. The interactions and relationships at this level are reported to be bi-directional e.g. parental attitudes impacting on CYP attitudes.

- **The Meso-system** describes relationships within the micro-system, e.g. connections between families and schools or families and the local community.

- **The Exo-system** relates to wider social systems which could have an indirect influence on a child, e.g. a child’s difficult home life could be the result of a parent losing their job which results in an increase in familial stress and consequently, disrupted parent-child interactions.

- **The Macro-system** includes the cultural context in which a child lives. This includes factors such as socio-economic status and ethnicity, and wider influences, e.g. laws, legislation and media. As with each of the systems, it is possible for this system to influence interactions at the micro-, meso- and exo-system.

Levinson and Thompson’s (2016) findings related to factors which support success in alternative provision settings can be plotted according to Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) four components. Interactions between staff, students and family members (the micro-system level) were determined by the relationships between staff and students. A crucial factor in these relationships was said to be the skill and commitment shown by staff (the meso-system level). At the exo-system level, the researchers shared reservations regarding the suitability of mainstream secondary schools in meeting the needs of reintegrating pupils, due to their size, impersonal environment, and the intensity of social relationships in the current era, which make them daunting sites for some CYP. Comments viewed as relating to the macro-system included the current cultural context involving policy which overlooks some CYP requiring longer-term, high quality, alternative provision, that is not necessarily provided at present.

Pillay et al (2013) combined both Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) exo-systemic perspective and resilience theory into a theory of bioecological resilience as the theoretical foundation for their research. Central to this theory were the links between risk and promotive factors to
resilience throughout reintegration. Micro-systemic resilience factors which were found to impact on reintegration experiences included the influence of; family, peers, significant adults, neighbourhood and wider community. Meso-systemic resilience was related to understanding the connections of risk and promotive factors to resilience as part of the relationships within an individual’s micro-system. Exo-systemic resilience was said to include the larger social system which impacts on the development of the learner, e.g. parents’ workplaces, schedules and related economic stressors, community-based resources, quality schooling and health care systems. Macro-systemic resilience was observed to represent cultural values, customs and laws of wider society. Government policy and legislation in this study was found to impact on exclusion and reintegration experiences. It was concluded that an exo-systemic resilience perspective provided a useful theoretical foundation for understanding how pupils experienced reintegration due to the ability to highlight promotive factors to support reintegration success. Such factors included; a gradual reintegration into mainstream settings and positive communication between parents and school, e.g. attendance at reintegration meetings (Pillay et al, 2013).

In a similar manner, Hart (2013) incorporated a risk and resilience perspective to explore the potential protective factors of a PRU. Attachment relationships, adult support and personalised learning were identified as specific protective factors for learners being educated at a PRU. Hart (2013) acknowledged that whilst one specific PRU appeared to offer a context which was protective for CYP, staff commented that CYP were unable to be fully protected from the influence of factors in other systems, an idea which is captured in Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) eco-systemic perspective. Approaches which incorporate systemic thinking to promote potential protective factors were therefore advocated.

2.5.2 Solution-focused and humanistic perspectives

Lown (2005) adopted a solution-focused view to explore the factors facilitating long term reintegration success. This was defined as pupils who remained in new settings for at least three terms. The potential for ‘solutions’ to be offered to receiving mainstream settings through introducing measures to ensure reintegration success was observed as an outcome of this study. Solution-focused practice creates the expectation of change and allows for different understandings of solutions (O’Connell, 2007). The basic assumption here is to build upon competencies and resources an individual or group already has, to achieve their preferred outcomes (Simm & Ingram, 2008). In Lown’s (2005) study, the focus underpinned by this approach was on factors that support excluded pupils to achieve reintegration success.
In line with humanistic thinking which focuses on the exploration of perceptions and feelings (Ayers et al, 2014), Michael and Frederickson (2013) sought students’ perceptions in relation to factors that they perceived to support or hinder their achievement of positive outcomes. Humanistic thinking and solution-focused approaches have been closely linked due to an individual’s concept of the self, influencing their self-worth. This in turn affects how an individual sees the world and behaves towards it. Similarly to Lown (2005), a solution-focused approach was particularly relevant to Michael and Frederickson's (2013) study. The authors identified enabling factors and advocated building on these at the expense of factors identified as impeding the achievement of positive outcomes. A solution-focused approach was also prevalent in students' identification of ‘ideas for change’. Their ideas related to; adjustments to the learning environment, curriculum flexibility and feeling that others understood and listened to them.

2.5.3 Cognitive-behavioural perspective

Cognitive-behavioural theory focuses on the cognitive processes (beliefs, attitudes, expectations and attributions) which account for behaviour (Ayers et al, 2014). As such, elements of this approach are seen to underpin the work of Jalali and Morgan (2017), who, in seeking the perceptions of primary and secondary age pupils in relation to alternative provision, identified attribution as a key theme. The researchers gave attention to external factors which pupils attributed their behavioural difficulties to. The findings of this study highlighted that pupil’s cognitions had a negative impact on their emotional and behavioural responses. This, combined with pupils seemingly failing to understand their behaviour, resulted in them attributing their behaviour to external factors. Their motivation to change and response to intervention were then adversely affected (Tony, 2003). For the majority of pupils who took part in this study, the thought processes which guided their behaviour remained unaffected, despite spending time at a PRU, which was seen to illustrate the ineffectiveness of PRUs in supporting long term behavioural change. As a result, such thinking could contribute to further occasions of exclusion, with pupils adopting negative views of themselves and their education. Jalali and Morgan (2017) suggested that for secondary aged pupils, the impact of this could result in the experience of mental health difficulties, characterised by feelings of low self-worth. It was therefore argued that the impact of negative cognitions on reintegration and possible mental health difficulties, has not been recognised. Support for this idea comes from Thomas (2015), who proposed the idea of ‘readiness to return’, to emphasise how psychological factors are a key factor in determining reintegration success.
As has been highlighted here, the research concerning exclusion and reintegration experiences has been interpreted as being underpinned by a combination of three main theoretical frameworks; eco-systemic incorporating risk and resilience, solution-focused and humanistic perspectives and a cognitive-behavioural perspective. A common feature of all of the research that has been critically reviewed thus far has been eliciting the views, perceptions and thoughts of CYP. As such, the topic of pupil voice will now be turned to.

2.6 Pupil voice

Pupil voice has been defined as the views and perceptions of pupils (Cefai & Copper, 2010). The effort to gain the views of CYP is fundamental to the work of EPs as well as to participatory processes. The lived experiences of CYP can only be accessed by listening to their own voices (Hardy & Hobbs, 2017), a view which provides the rationale for the previously discussed studies which have explored pupil views regarding reintegration experiences. Consequently, the following section will provide an overview of the policy and legislation related to pupil voice and review the methods used to elicit pupil views. Attention will be given to creative methods used to explore pupil perceptions, before the development of a ‘draw and write’ approach is plotted.

2.6.1 Policy and legislation

It was not until the 1970s, following work carried out by the UKs first EP Service, led by Sir Cyril Burt, that children’s views were directly sought in the field of Educational Psychology. The interest by some, particularly Dr Tom Ravenette, in developing Personal Construct Theory (Kelly, 1955), to gain an understanding of children’s attitudes and core constructs, was observed (Gersch et al, 2017). Since the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) eliciting the views of CYP on issues which relate directly to them, is a requirement that is protected by UK law (Greig et al, 2014).

The broadening of the EP role, illustrated by the DfEE (2000) and Farrell et al (2006), together with the Every Child Matters initiative (DfES, 2003), illustrated evidence of EPs working with CYP in creative ways and developing ways of listening to them (Gersch et al, 2017). The emphasis on including the perspective of CYP was further strengthened in the Children and Families Act (2014). The SEND CoP (DfE, 2014), and resulting move from issuing Statements of Special Educational Need to Education, Health and Care Plans, makes explicit the responsibility of professionals to have regard for:

the views, wishes and feelings of CYP; the importance of CYP participating as fully as possible in decisions; the need to support CYP in order to facilitate their development and to help them achieve the best possible educational and other outcomes, preparing them effectively for adulthood (DfE, 2014: 8).
As shown here, the SEND CoP (DfE, 2014) stresses a clearer focus on the participation of CYP in decision-making at both individual and strategic levels. The work of EPs has been argued as critical in advocating the empowerment of CYP and in encouraging practice which promotes their ability to express their views (Greig et al, 2014). The history of research, policy and legislation into the voice of CYP has therefore been viewed in three distinct stages:

1. Observation/testing – children being seen, tested and observed, but in a passive way.
2. Listening with higher regard – listening and trying to understand the child’s viewpoint and perspectives, with the adult deciding upon actions.
3. Empowerment – taking the child’s voice seriously and considering acting upon what the child says. Wherever practicable and in the child’s interest, the aim is to interpret, empower and translate the child’s voice into direct action and specific plans.

(Gersch et al, 2017).

The benefits of including CYP in this way are cited as; increasing motivation, levels of independence and a feeling of personal control; the development of metacognition e.g. reflection, planning and monitoring; increased knowledge of individual strengths and difficulties; adopting personal responsibility for progress and a greater responsibility for change (Harding & Atkinson, 2009). The greater attention and weight given to the voices of CYP over the past hundred years, along with cited benefits, has led to the question of whether professional practice and the methods used to elicit pupil voice have altered to meet this demand? As such, methods employed to elicit pupil voice through qualitative methodology will now be explored.

2.6.2 Methods for eliciting pupil voice

Direct work with CYP involves EPs conducting interviews, casework and reporting their views to significant adults. Hobbs et al (2000) provide a list of techniques which include interview approaches, the application of Personal Construct Psychology (Kelly, 1955), solution-focused approaches and video techniques, as methods used to harness the voices of CYP. In the context of research, EPs have conducted research with groups of CYP aiming to ascertain their views and ideas through various methodologies, e.g. EPs working with CYP as researchers, undertaking research with CYP regarded as ‘hard to reach', whilst inviting feedback on their own practice (Gersch et al, 2017).

The literature previously cited in this chapter which presents the views of excluded CYP and those experiencing BESD/SEMH needs in relation to their reintegration experiences, has on the whole, employed qualitative research methods. This may be related to claims that
qualitative methodologies provide meaning to phenomena in a specific context (Moe et al, 2007); provide a richer, deeper description of phenomena, and give a voice to marginalised groups (Ungar, 2003). A strength of qualitative methodologies is argued to be the diversity of underpinning epistemologies and related research methods which are adopted (Hardy & Majors, 2017). When considering studies which have been critically reviewed thus far, the method of data collection for the majority has been semi-structured interviews. Table 3 provides a summary of the methods used to elicit pupil voice from these studies:

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<td>Unstructured/semi-structured interviews with pupils</td>
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<td>Unstructured/semi-structured interviews with staff</td>
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<td>Focus group with school staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Semi-structured interviews with pupils supplemented by additional creative methods e.g. scaling activities, life grids</td>
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<tr>
<td>Qualitative questionnaires completed by school staff</td>
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Table 3: Methods employed by critically reviewed studies to elicit pupil voice

Michael and Frederickson (2013) justified their selection of semi-structured interviews as they permit pre-prepared questions and specific topics of enquiry to be covered, as well as providing the interviewer with the opportunity to probe for further detail, to clarify responses and to change the order and form of questions where appropriate. Interestingly, a number of studies supplemented semi-structured interviews with more creative activities, e.g. Hart (2013) incorporating scaling activities and the use of picture sheets, and Jalali and Morgan (2017) asking participants to complete a visual timeline of their educational journeys. Hart (2013) alluded to the difficulties linked to interviewing child participants, e.g. the need to use developmentally appropriate language and the length of time that CYP can engage in dialogue and maintain concentration for. The author sought to combat such issues through the use of additional approaches to justify the meaning of the data which was collected.
Consequently, scaling activities and pictures sheets were given to participants and served as a visual reference for children and to support further discussion.

Researchers are increasingly recommending and employing creative techniques to enable CYP to be experts in their own lives by providing opportunities to talk about their worlds (Long et al, 2012). Bradbury-Jones and Taylor (2015) advocate for creating a space to listen to children and support the shift from researchers focusing ‘on’ children to concentrating on working ‘with’ or ‘for’ them, given their right to have their voices and opinions heard (Lundy et al, 2011). As such, the use of creative research methods to elicit the views of pupils with BESD will now be explored.

2.6.3 Creative research methods

Within the social sciences, child-centred methodologies have attracted increased attention, which has represented a move from CYP as passive objects to research subjects in their own right (Noble-Carr, 2006). Such a shift has promoted CYP voices and resulted in increasing amounts of literature concerning the approaches taken to research when seeking to actively involve CYP in this process (Gillies & Robinson, 2012). Attempts to foster the greater participation of CYP in research have been addressed through the use of creative methods, including art, photography, video and music. Such methods have taken the focus away from words and talk and instead embraced CYPs experiences and competencies (Hunleth, 2011). Alternative and freer means of expression developed through innovative approaches have more recently been considered, alongside fostering collaborative research processes. Increasingly, research has recognised the potential for creative methods to engage marginalised groups (Gillies & Robinson, 2012); a category which those with BESD/SEMH needs are argued to fall within.

O’Connor et al (2011) offer an overview of a PhD pilot study which sought to develop innovative, exploratory research strategies for capturing the voices of those with BESD. This followed the authors noting that the growing interest in listening to what CYP had to say had not extended to students identified as having BESD. They cited a number of studies which demonstrate that pupils with BESD could successfully engage in research and had very important messages to share (Sellman, 2009). In providing the rationale for their study, the researchers argued that methods employed to gather CYPs perspectives had previously focused on the agenda of adults, with CYP seldom being asked which methods were helpful in gathering their views (Prout, 2000). O’Connor et al (2011) asserted that the aim of their study was not only to listen to, but to ‘hear’ the voices of CYP with BESD, some of whom had been excluded and were re-integrating into mainstream provision. This suggests a distinction between ‘listening’ and ‘hearing’ the voice of pupils.
To foster methods which focused on power and facilitation, O'Connor et al (2011) engaged participants in activity sessions. The researchers led the activity sessions and proposed themes for YP to discuss, whilst being mindful that they allowed YP the space and freedom to express themselves. YP were given opportunities to direct the topic of discussion. The researchers noted that when bringing YP together, it was imperative to consider the dynamics of the group and that there were equal opportunities for all to express themselves. As a result, ‘ice-breaker’ games and agreeing a set of rules to foster a positive environment, were introduced. Activity sessions involving three YP and a semi-structured interview with one YP, who was in the process of reintegrating into mainstream provision, along with ‘life grid’ templates to explore significant life events, were used. O'Connor et al (2011) acknowledged there are difficulties in developing innovative, exploratory strategies to harness pupil voice. One such difficulty related to ethical issues, including the impact of the means by which the researcher attempted to create a suitable environment for YP to express themselves. It was argued that single methods of data collection alone were not sufficient to reflect the diversity of YPs experiences and competencies. As such, the triangulation of different methods was viewed as essential in enhancing this study’s validity.

A limitation of this study was seen in limited details being provided in relation to the content of activity sessions, other than the suggestion of games and role play. Data, which was analysed according to grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), and identified themes, were discussed with participants to confirm that their views had been accurately represented. Findings from the study provided insight into one YP’s attribution of misbehaviour and experience of school exclusion, as well as the establishment of appropriate research methods. The researchers concluded that the difficulties in conducting a study which aimed to develop innovative, exploratory research strategies for harnessing the voice of children with BESD; included gaining access to CYP views as well as how suitable methods of data collection were developed.

Syrnyk (2014) used a combination of methods (drawings and interviews) to explore how children with BESD articulated their experience of a Nurture approach. This approach has been seen as one which contributes to the achievement of social and academic outcomes for excluded children as well as those at risk of exclusion. Similarly to O’Connor et al (2011), the purpose of this research appeared twofold; to explore how children with BESD responded to their involvement in a Nurture approach, and also how their perceptions were captured. Six male, primary aged pupils who had all been excluded from more than one mainstream primary school, drew pictures of their educational experiences and answered a series of questions, on two separate occasions (1.5 weeks after they began attending the Nurture group and again 5 weeks later). Drawings were chosen as part of the data collection
method given evidence which highlights the possibility of capturing young children’s voices being complicated by a number of practical considerations, e.g. being able to provide verbal feedback being limited by developmental ability. Younger children are therefore argued to be disadvantaged by the reliance on verbal skills in interview situations, alongside the formal nature and anxiety interviews can create (Eder & Fingerson, 2002). As a result, drawings have been seen as a more natural and effective method for exploring the views of young children (Di-Leo, 1983; Burns & Kaufman, 1972).

Pupils therefore took part in a drawing activity adapted from the Kinetic Family Drawing tool (Burns & Kaufman, 1972), in which they were given the same instructions on both testing occasions to; “Draw your classroom with the teachers and classmates doing something” (Syrnyk, 2014: 159). A sequential process, adapted from the evaluation work of Kaufman and Wohl (1992), was followed when evaluating participants drawings. This began with the whole drawing being considered and then being examined according to; staff and pupil size, perspective of the drawing, and the presence, or lack of, of individuals. Following this, each participant took part in a semi-structured interview to further explore their experiences. All participants successfully engaged in the drawing and interview tasks and demonstrated that they had adapted positively to their Nurture group. This was in spite of the limited time in which they had attended and in which this study was completed. Syrnyk’s (2014) findings demonstrated that young children, when provided with the opportunity, were able to portray their insight and effectively express their views. Participants focused on what they valued about the Nurture approach and demonstrated the importance of positive relationships with staff. The author acknowledged limitations of the study and highlighted that a study involving a larger sample size, conducted over an extended period of time, would be helpful to gain a broader understanding of pupil’s views of this approach, and to explore more specific features of it.

Drawing is reported to have a relaxing effect and can support children to share more detailed responses (Jolley, 2010). Syrnyk (2014) reported that using a combination of methods helped to provide a greater depth of insight into participant experiences. It was therefore suggested that interview questions, in addition to drawing tasks could be a useful approach to gaining insight into a child’s thoughts and feelings, particularly when adapting to a new environment. Drawings can demonstrate the emotional connection to an experience and communicate internal representations (Syrnyk, 2014). This is an important consideration given evidence that effective education for those with BESD involves their emotional needs being attended to (Cole, 2003). Syrnyk (2014) concluded that further research is required to consider the most effective means of listening to the voices of those who may be considered too young or too challenging to be heard. However, using a combination of methods was
argued to be a promising start (Syrynk, 2014). As a result, the use of a mixed method which incorporated drawing and speaking activities will now be presented, before a chapter summary and the aim and research questions for the present study, are identified.

2.7 Write, Draw, Show and Tell

Creative methods, particularly drawing, have been embraced by researchers due to the perceived simplicity and availability of resources (Angell et al, 2015). Research from the late 19th century concerning children’s drawings were one part of a large quantity of research which explored the therapeutic and educational uses of art with children (Malchiodi, 1998). ‘Draw and write’ is one example of a drawing method which has been used over the last four decades (Gauntlett, 2007). This method emerged in Wetton’s (1972) work within the field of health education research. Wetton (1972) observed that when drawing children were able to demonstrate their feelings and emotions more easily than verbally expressing them. Following this, a variety studies within the health field have used this method across a range of ages and with varying sample sizes. (Angell et al, 2015; Angell & Angell, 2013; Smith & Callery, 2005). The ‘draw and write’ method offers a choice of how information is shared in ways which may be more familiar to children. Using drawing and writing has been argued to result in richer data being gathered, as different ideas and perspectives may be shared depending on different methods which are used (Porcellato et al, 1999). Based on understandings of child development, the use of arts-based methods can support children to recall events and share complex ideas (Hortsman et al, 2008). Overall, the ‘draw and write’ method has been argued to provide an ethically acceptable and enjoyable method of participation. From an ethical perspective, this method is regarded as a non-threatening means of gathering thoughts and opinions on potentially sensitive topics, serves to neutralise the power dynamic between researchers and participants by allowing children to guide the research exercise, and enables them to select their level of participation by having the option to choose not to draw (Hortsman et al, 2008). It has however been acknowledged that few children choose not to participate in drawing activities (McWhirter et al, 2000).

Although the ‘draw and write’ method can generate in-depth and complex data, researchers have encountered difficulty in achieving effective interpretation and analysis. A lack of clarity has been observed related to the procedure followed from data being collected, to conclusions being drawn. Researchers have therefore argued that whilst practical and ethical issues have been considered in detail, this is to the detriment of epistemological and analytical concerns (Backett-Milburn & McKie, 1999). Subsequently, in an attempt to address this concern, the ‘draw, write and tell’ method (Angell et al, 2015), was developed. Angell et al (2015) aimed to strengthen the philosophical basis of this child-centred method
and ensure that a child’s interpretation, as part of the ‘tell’ element, was central to data collection. This element was embedded within the overall method, instead of being an optional extra. The authors sought to overcome issues of data analysis through developing an integrative commentary to combine the three different streams of data produced, so that any uncertainty related to meaning was reduced, and all data was used equally and represented fairly. This supported researchers to gain a holistic view and to have confidence in their findings (Angell et al, 2015).

A further adaptation of this innovative approach can be seen in the ‘Write, Draw, Show and Tell’ (WDST) method (Noonan et al, 2016). This represents an evolution of the ‘write and draw’ method, as well as focus group research methods. Similarly to the ‘draw, write and tell’ method (Angell et al, 2015), participants are supported to articulate the meaning within their drawing, which allows for a narrative commentary for each individual to be developed. The WDST method (Noonan et al, 2016), does not restrict children to verbal communication alone but offers different means of expression, enabling a deeper exploration of their views. Noonan et al (2016) envisioned that this interactive and dual method would support researchers to gather more representative and in-depth perceptions, whilst fostering greater inclusivity. Again, this method was developed and trialled within the field of health research, although it is acknowledged that it could be applied to a variety of disciplines. Additional studies which have employed WDST in the context of focus groups and when working with families (Noonan et al, 2016; Noonan et al, 2017), have demonstrated how WDST has advantages when compared to more traditional singular methods of data collection. A key strength of this approach has been argued to be the potential to triangulate multiple data sources and in doing so, creating a rich data set that represents children’s voices. This is viewed as enhancing data credibility, thereby consolidating the evidence for the phenomenon under investigation (Noonan et al, 2016).

2.8 Chapter Summary

The majority of the exclusion and reintegration literature highlighted here, following an extensive literature search, has been dedicated to the views of secondary aged pupils, their parents/carers and educational professionals. Such research has highlighted factors thought to enable successful reintegration and those acting as barriers to such processes. Findings have shown that factors which support successful reintegration can be grouped according to; relationships, individual pupil characteristics, teaching and learning environment and wider support. Such factors are viewed as taking place at various levels, as part of complex interrelating systems which can only be understood when considered in context.
Limited research exists which has focused solely on the views of primary aged pupils in relation to their reintegration. It is hypothesised that this may be the result of statistics highlighting the majority of permanent exclusions resulting in PRU placements, occur in secondary schools, although LA practice has revealed that younger pupils are more likely to experience reintegration success. A lack of research regarding reintegration into provision other than mainstream, i.e. specialist provision, and which explores reasons why reintegration may fail (Jalali & Morgan, 2017), has been identified.

The research reviewed here has employed qualitative methodologies to explore the reintegration experiences of CYP. Limitations including small sample sizes restricting the generalisability of findings, the potential bias of samples with regard to intellectual ability, familiarity with researchers and the format of interviews, were highlighted. The majority of studies triangulated the views of pupils and stakeholders in their reintegration (parents and educational practitioners) which led to the question of whether the aim of studies to explore pupil views, was truly achieved.

Policy, legislation and research related to hearing and representing CYPs voices was presented. The increasing use of creative techniques to enable CYP to be experts in their own lives by providing opportunities to talk about their worlds (Syrynk, 2014; O’Connor et al, 2011), was also highlighted. This research advocated for the combination of qualitative methods to provide depth to the thinking of individual CYP. In particular, drawings were argued to communicate children’s internal representations and as such the development of the ‘draw and write’ method, which has since evolved to the WDST method (Noonan et al, 2016), was discussed. This particular method has been found to be effective in generating a rich data set which represents children’s voices by triangulating multiple data sources. Presently, this method has been confined to health-related fields and thus far has been used in the context of focus groups with children and families.

2.8.1 Aim and research questions

Following the review of literature in this chapter, this study therefore aims to extend the use of the WDST technique (Noonan et al, 2016) to explore primary aged children’s views and experiences of reintegration into mainstream or specialist provision, as well as offer opinion on the types of support they believe they would benefit from. The review of literature established the rationale for the research questions which are to be addressed in this study. These include:
1. How do primary aged pupils (aged 7-11) articulate their anticipated experience of full-time reintegration into mainstream or specialist provision following fixed term and/or permanent exclusion?
2. What are their specific concerns related to their reintegration into mainstream school or specialist provision?
3. What support do they feel would be beneficial for them to receive to assist in the process of them reintegrating into mainstream school or specialist provision?
Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1 Overview

This chapter will outline the methodological approach used in this study. Firstly, the purpose of the research and research paradigm, including ontological and epistemological considerations, will be presented. The research design, including participant details, data collection and procedure will then be provided before the method for data analysis, ethical considerations, including issues of validity and trustworthiness, are identified.

3.2 Purpose of the research

Previous research has explored permanently excluded children's experiences of exclusion and reintegration through semi-structured interviews and focus groups. The purpose of this research was to explore the experiences of primary aged pupils reintegrating into mainstream school/specialist provision through the use of the ‘Write, Draw, Show and Tell’ (WDST) (Noonan et al, 2016) creative method. As such, the research was exploratory to allow for preliminary investigations into an area in which there was limited existing research. The intention was not to describe phenomena accurately, as with descriptive or explanatory studies, but to generate new insights (Durrheim, 2006). Emphasis was placed on the support participants felt they would like to receive during their reintegration and what this may look like.

Research exploring pupil views related to reintegration failure has been limited (Jalali & Morgan, 2017). It is therefore argued that pupil voice is integral to supporting the long term inclusion of pupils reintegrating into mainstream education (Jalali & Morgan, 2017). As pupils were provided with a voice within this study, there was an emancipatory element to it. Emancipatory practices recognise the power imbalance in research between researcher and participants and seek to empower participants to share their views (Noel, 2016). This study does not however wholly align with emancipatory research which would have involved participants supporting the research design (Robson & McCartan, 2011). It was therefore thought of in an advocacy capacity, whereby pupil voices were presented and consideration then given to the means of eliciting pupil views. Issues related to vulnerable groups are explored within advocacy research (Cresswell, 2009), and therefore related to this study when working with pupils who had been excluded from mainstream education and were identified as having social, emotional and mental health needs.

A strength of qualitative methodologies is the diversity of the underpinning epistemologies and related research methods. This diversity however dictates the need for transparency and coherence about how the chosen methodology was applied (Hardy & Majors, 2017). As
such, epistemological and ontological positions which have a direct impact on the research process (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), will now be considered.

### 3.3 Research paradigm

A research paradigm has been defined as:

> the world view that is accepted by members of a particular scientific discipline which guides the subject of the research, the activity of the research and the nature of the research outputs (Pickard, 2013: xviii).

Researchers should begin enquiry by being clear about the paradigm which informs and guides their approach (Guba & Lincoln, 1998). Research paradigms can be characterised through their epistemology (the nature of knowledge and the way in which we can acquire knowledge), ontology (the nature of reality), and methodology (how we go about finding out) (Guba, 1990). Each of these will now be considered and the position of this research identified.

### 3.4 Epistemological and ontological position

#### 3.4.1 Epistemology

Epistemology has been referred to as “processed knowledge” (Chia Cua & Garrett, 2008: 38). Within research methods literature, three different epistemological positions prevail. These include; positivism, post-positivism (incorporating critical realism) and interpretivism. Positivists view the goal of research as producing objective knowledge that is unbiased (Willig, 2013), and identifies causal relationships (Bryman, 2016). They view researchers and participants as independent with neither influencing the other (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Post-positivists and critical realists acknowledge that a reality exists, which is independent of our subjective experience or our awareness of it (Robson & McCartan, 2011).

In seeking to explore pupil experiences of reintegration, this study adopted an interpretivist epistemology which relies on an individual’s understanding of their social world (Porta & Keating, 2008). This approach dismisses the idea of one objective reality, instead promoting multiple interpreted realities (Cresswell, 2009). Within this paradigm, researchers attempt to understand the lived experiences from the point of view of those who live them. Knowledge is therefore socially constructed by people active in the research process (Schwandt, 2000). This includes the information participants share related to their experiences and what is taken from this by way of researcher interpretation (Bryman, 2016).

As previously highlighted, this study has an emancipatory element to it given the aim to provide pupils with a voice and opportunity to share their views. Interpretivist and critical
realist epistemologies prevail within emancipatory research. An interpretivist epistemology remained appropriate despite not adhering to all features of emancipatory research, as this study sought to explore the reality for each participant based on their individual experiences. This was in favour of focusing solely on power relationships and structures (Robson & McCartan, 2011), as critical realism emphasises.

3.4.2 Ontology

Ontology relates to questions about being (Chia Cua & Garrett, 2008). Ontological positions are divided into objectivism or constructivism (Bryman, 2016). The ontological approach adopted by this study is constructivism which conveys the idea that “social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors” (Bryman, 2016: 29). Social phenomena is argued to be produced by social interaction which is constantly revised. This approach has acknowledged that a researcher’s account of the social world is a construction and so they present a specific version of social reality in contrast to one which is regarded as absolute. This contrasts with objectivism as an ontological position, which regards social phenomena existing independently of social actors (Bryman, 2016). A constructivist ontology was therefore appropriate for this study given the aim to explore participants experiences of reintegration which were individual and personal to them, based on their constructs surrounding their world (Porta & Keating, 2008).

Research paradigms each impact on the method of finding out (Guba, 1990). As a result, details related to this study’s research design will now be presented.

3.5 Research design

3.5.1 Qualitative design

In seeking to achieve interactions which supported participants to communicate genuinely and freely (Hardy & Majors, 2017), a qualitative strategy was appropriate for this study. Qualitative research advocates for understanding the meaning of experience, actions and events as they are interpreted through the eyes of individuals, researchers and cultures. Such research is sensitive to the complexities of behaviour and meaning in the contexts which they naturally occur (Henwood, 1996).

The assumption among researchers that qualitative research is grounded in a constructivist epistemology, fits with the epistemological position adopted by this study. Epistemological positions outside of constructivism have been argued to be illegitimate stances for genuine qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 2000).
3.5.2 Exploratory methodological approach

An exploratory, inductive methodological approach to qualitative enquiry was adopted within this research. The use of the WDST method (WDST) (Noonan et al, 2016), to be discussed later in this chapter, was proposed to provide a richer description of participant’s reintegration experiences.

Exploratory research is a methodological approach primarily concerned with discovery. In the social sciences, this type of research is wedded to the notion of the researcher as explorer (Jupp, 2006), whilst inductive processes involve building meaning from specific, rich descriptions of people and settings (Lapan et al, 2012). In most cases, exploration demands the researcher’s willingness to expose themselves to foreign cultures and languages and the ability to engage in critical and honest self-reflection and critique. Exploratory research is argued to have emancipatory potential (Reiter, 2013). This links to the emancipatory element this study adopts through providing pupils with a voice. In line with the constructivist position adopted, it was acknowledged that the interviewer and interviewee participate in an interactive process, with both parties influencing each other (Willig, 2013).

3.6 Research participants

3.6.1 Sampling

To ensure consistency with the research design adopted, a non-probability purposive sample was employed. Participants were selected according to set criteria in order to address the aims and objectives of this study. Smith et al (2009) suggest samples must be selected purposively in qualitative research, rather than through probability methods, as they offer insight into a particular experience of the phenomena under investigation. In this sense, the sample represents a perspective, rather than a population. The participants required for this study were pupils who had been permanently excluded and/or received multiple fixed term exclusions and spent time attending a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU). Additionally, they were pupils who begun the process of reintegrating into mainstream or specialist provision.

Participants were selected on the basis that they were experiencing the same reintegration process. Due to recruitment being extended to an additional PRU setting, time was taken to ensure that reintegration processes and practice of each of the PRUs mirrored each other. After confirmation that the documented process for pupils was similar, it was felt that participants were in a position to be able to provide a particular perspective on the area under study. As a result, they formed a homogeneous group. Decisions surrounding the sample group are dependent upon the nature of the research topic and research questions.
(Aurinin et al, 2016). Participants from a homogeneous group were required for this study in order to explore their experiences of reintegration into mainstream or specialist settings.

3.6.2 Sample Size

Factors including ethical concerns, practical matters and resources e.g. researcher time, study type and research question (Cocks & Torgerson, 2013), were considered when estimating the required sample size for this study. Qualitative studies, such as this, aim to map patterns in a data-set, rather than quantifying amounts (Fugard & Potts, 2015). It was important to ensure that the sample size was small enough to manage, yet large enough to provide “a new and richly textured understanding of experience” (Sandelowski, 1995: 183). This decision was influenced by researcher experience and assessing the data as it was analysed. Sample size guidelines (Braun & Clarke, 2013), indicate that for small projects such as this, 6-10 participants are sufficient if interviews are used. Critics however note that the authors do not comment on how they reached this estimate (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). ‘Theoretical saturation’ (Glaser, 1965), is another approach to determining sample size. This is reached when no further themes are found within the data. Studies have reported saturation after six interviews (Isman et al, 2013). Others have argued that for research, where the aim is to understand the experiences of a group of homogenous individuals, as was the case in this study, twelve interviews should suffice (Guest et al, 2006).

With such guidelines in mind, this study sought to achieve a sample size of 6-12 participants. Following recruitment, a sample of eight was achieved. Six participants were recruited from the primary aged Local Authority (LA) PRU where the research was originally intended to take place. After six interviews were conducted and the population of the PRU exhausted in terms of the participant recruitment criteria, an additional two participants were recruited from a second primary PRU within a different LA.
### 3.6.3 Inclusion and exclusion criteria

The following inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied when determining the sample for this study:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inclusion</th>
<th>Exclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary aged pupils (any gender)</td>
<td>Early years, secondary or Post-16 pupils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupils who had begun the reintegration process into a mainstream or specialist setting</td>
<td>Pupils who had not begun the reintegration process into a mainstream or specialist setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informed consent obtained from parents and pupils</td>
<td>No consent from parents and/or pupils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupil was not experiencing particular stressful events in their life, e.g. bereavement/family separation</td>
<td>Pupil was experiencing particular stressful events in their life, e.g. bereavement/family separation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 4: Participant inclusion and exclusion criteria*

Primary aged children in Years 3-6 (aged 7-11) were selected for this research. Based upon the researcher’s experience as a Trainee Educational Psychologist, it was regarded that pupils at this age were able to consider and express their views related to reintegration and at an age where a creative method involving drawing may appeal to them (Hortsman et al., 2008). Further details on the participants recruited to this study, including the setting they were reintegrating into and stage of their reintegration can be found in Appendix 3.

National exclusion statistics (2015/2016) indicate that the rate of permanent exclusions remained the same as the previous year in state-funded primary schools at 0.02%. The number of fixed term exclusions for state-funded primary schools increased to 1.2% (DfE, 2017). A similar pattern was observed within the LAs in which this study was conducted. Given the rate of permanent exclusions for primary pupils not reducing, and the increase in the rate of fixed term exclusions, it was appropriate that pupils within this age range became the focus of this study. Additionally, pupils who had begun the reintegration process were the focus of this research. As a result, this study sought to be proactive through identifying potential risk factors which could have impacted on reintegration success, as well as identifying supportive factors as part of this process.

### 3.6.4 Participant recruitment

The sample of participants for this study was identified via a multi-stage process:

1. A discussion with the Principal and Specialist Senior Educational Psychologist was held to discuss the research details and appropriate settings to conduct the research in.
2. An email and telephone call were made to the Head of the LA PRU in which this research was situated. As the Head of Centre was viewed as a gatekeeper, a face-to-face meeting was arranged to gain permission for the research to take place and to secure support with participant recruitment. The Head of Centre committed to the research process.

3. Parental and child information sheets (Appendix 4 and 5) and parental consent forms (Appendix 6) were shared via email with the Head of Centre and Lead Teacher for the cohort of pupils identified as potential participants, based on the pupil inclusion and exclusion criteria. All future liaison was held with the Lead Teacher.

4. The Lead Teacher shared the child information sheets with pupils and answered any questions they had. Any pupil interested in taking part in the research was then provided with parental information sheets and consent forms. These were distributed by via pupil’s ‘Home Communication Books’ and asked to be returned to the Lead Teacher at the earliest opportunity.

5. As parental consent forms were returned, the Lead Teacher made contact with the researcher and arrangements were made for the interviews to be conducted.

6. The nature of the research and participant involvement was discussed with pupils at the beginning of the interview process. Pupils confirmed their consent by signing a child consent form (Appendix 7).
7. Steps 2-5 of this process were repeated when attempts were made to recruit additional participants from an additional LA. The Deputy Head teacher who worked across all PRU sites committed to the research process and was the main point of contact for all future liaison.

3.7 Data collection

3.7.1 Framework for gathering data

To explore participant’s experiences and perceptions of their reintegration into mainstream or specialist settings, the WDST framework (Noonan et al, 2016) was chosen as the method of data collection.

As discussed in chapter two, the concept of ‘draw and write’ was conceived by Wetton in the 1970s (Gauntlett & Horsley, 2004), who observed that children were more successful when illustrating their feelings in comparison to describing them. Drawing combined with writing has been argued to result in richer data (Backett & Alexander, 1991). It has also been argued that this method addresses the power dynamic between participants and researchers by allowing participants to lead the research exercise when asked about potentially sensitive topics (Hortsman et al, 2008). Critics of this method have pointed to the lack of a philosophical underpinning, misinterpretation of children’s creative work by adults (Christensen & James, 2000), and the lack of a consistent system for data analysis (Angell et al, 2015).

In response to the limitations of ‘draw and write’, Angell and Angel (2013) developed the ‘draw, write and tell’ method which has more recently evolved to the WDST framework (Noonan et al, 2017; Noonan et al, 2016). Grounded in a child-centred philosophy, this method enables children to have a voice with minimal adult influence or bias and allows them to express their views through different methods. Congruent with the constructivist epistemology and exploratory methodology adopted here, this participatory method gave respect to participants at each stage of the process. The ‘tell’ dimension encouraged participants to articulate meaning to their drawing, meaning an individual narrative was formed. Drawing was therefore observed as meaning making (Angell & Angell, 2013). Three separate streams of data were produced; text, drawing and spoken word. Research adopting this approach (Noonan et al, 2017; Noonan et al, 2016), illustrates how separate data sources are triangulated in order to identify emergent themes, resulting in a rich data set representing participant voices (Noonan et al, 2016).

This method was selected for this study given the potential to; support participant thought processes, equalise power imbalances between researcher and participant, and offer the
option to determine their level of participation (Angell & Angell, 2013). Additionally, it was felt that blending these different data sources would allow the diverse voices of participants to be elicited. This study was felt to be original in using this method outside of health-related fields in which it has so far dominated (Angell et al, 2015). Previous studies (Noonan et al, 2017; Noonan et al, 2016) have used this method as part of focus group research. However, the potentially sensitive topic of pupil exclusion and reintegration may have resulted in participants refraining from expressing their true views or being influenced by others if focus groups had taken place. As a result, this method was employed in a one-to-one interview situation to allow a greater opportunity for rapport and trust to be developed between participants and the researcher.

3.8 Procedure

Due to the small sample size, it was not possible to carry out a full pilot study as part of this study. Following the first two interviews, participants were asked to reflect on the WDST (Noonan et al, 2016) interview process by answering a small number of questions. The learning points arising from this are discussed in greater detail in chapter four. Data collected from the first two interviews was reviewed whilst considering the research aim. The semi-structured interview topic guide (Appendix 8), was adjusted accordingly. An iterative process followed, where learning was taken from one interview to the next. The interview topic guide was reviewed by a Senior Educational Psychologist and Lecturer in Disability Studies, who provided comments on the researcher’s level of facilitation. Questions were checked to ensure that they were; open ended to allow for flexible responses, age appropriate and linked to the research aim.

The same semi-structured interview topic guide was used for each participant. The wording of questions varied based on the researcher’s interpretation of what was appropriate for each individual, and on what each of their responses were, e.g. if further clarification was needed. Each of the individual interviews lasted between 25 and 50 minutes.

At the start of the interview process, the child information sheet (Appendix 5) was re-read to each participant to ensure they understood the research process and nature of their involvement. Written consent was obtained and participants’ write to withdraw explained. As part of the WDST method (Noonan et al, 2016), the introductory ice-breaker allowed participants the chance to practise speaking aloud and helped to establish an interview scenario whereby sharing views and listening was valued (Noonan et al, 2016). Based on personal construct psychology principles (Kelly, 1955), this involved participants being asked to provide words/short phrases related to their thoughts about school, how they would describe themselves and how their friends and family might describe them. Participants then
took part in the ‘write and draw’ activity based on questions which required them to reflect on their actual and anticipated experiences of reintegration and express their views related to processes surrounding this. Finally, participants were asked open-ended questions to seek clarification and probe for deeper explanation. The researcher ensured terminology used by participants was repeated to ensure their authentic representations were expressed. As described, the WDST method (Noonan et al, 2016), promoted opportunities for participants to negotiate their level of participation (Angell & Angell, 2013) and as such, participants were provided with a variety of drawing materials to choose from.

All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. After gaining participant’s consent, drawings were scanned with a copy being kept by the researcher. Participants then chose whether to keep their original drawing or to discard this.

3.9 Data analysis

3.9.1 Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis (TA) is widely used as a method of qualitative analysis (Boyatzis, 1998; Roulston, 2001). It involves the identification, analysis and reporting of patterns (themes) within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Approaches to qualitative analysis are diverse, complex and nuanced (Holloway & Todres, 2003), and it is argued that TA should be viewed as a foundational method for qualitative analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A benefit of TA is its flexibility. Qualitative analytic methods are frequently grouped according to methods that are linked to a particular theoretical or epistemological position. TA is compatible with both positivist and constructivist paradigms. As a result, it is interpreted as a flexible tool which has the ability to provide a rich and complex account of a data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It therefore fits with the constructivist epistemology adopted within this study, which explores how events, meaning and experiences are the effects of multiple discourses operating at the same time (Braun & Clarke, 2006). For these reasons, combined with the need to analyse three separate streams of data that the WDST method (Noonan et al, 2016) provided, that TA as a flexible approach was selected as the data analysis method for this study.

TA is unlike methods such as grounded theory or Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) which seek to describe patterns across data and are theoretically bound (Braun & Clarke, 2006). IPA is connected to a phenomenological epistemology given the aim to understand an individual's everyday experience of reality in order understand the phenomenon under investigation. Grounded theory seeks to develop a theory of the phenomena under investigation which is grounded in the data (McLeod, 2001). TA does not require the detailed and theoretical knowledge of approaches (which approaches such as
IPA and grounded theory do), and therefore proposes a more accessible means of analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), TA involves a number of choices which require explicit consideration. Each of the choices made in relation to this study will now be discussed:

1. **A rich description of the data set, or a detailed account of one particular aspect?**

Researchers may choose to offer a rich thematic description of the entire data set to give the reader a sense of the principal themes. This was favoured in this study given the investigation into a relatively under-researched area for primary aged pupils. This contrasted with providing a detailed description of one particular aspect of the data which related to one set question.

2. **Inductive versus theoretical thematic analysis?**

Themes within the data can be identified in an inductive ‘bottom up’ or in a theoretical/deductive ‘top down’ way (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Within an inductive approach, themes that are identified link strongly to the data (Patton, 1990). Here, the data is collected solely for the research and coding of the data takes places without the use of a coding frame or with a specific hypothesis in mind. Consequently, an inductive approach is data-driven. A theoretical approach is followed according a researcher’s theoretical or analytical interest and offers a detailed analysis of a specific feature of the data. An inductive approach was selected for this study, linked to the decision to provide a rich description of the data set and given the exploratory nature. This allowed research questions to evolve through the coding process.

3. **Semantic or latent themes?**

This decision related to whether themes were identified at a semantic/explicit or latent/interpretative level (Boyatzis, 1998). A semantic approach identifies themes at a surface level of meaning where the researcher does not look anything above what a participant has reported. This process involves a progression from description, where the data has been organised and summarised, to interpretation where attempts are made to theorise the significance of patterns and their meanings in relation to previous literature. In contrast, themes at a latent/interpretative level begin to explore possible underlying ideas and assumptions which are hypothesised as contributing to the data. This involves interpretative work, meaning analysis is already theorised. For the purpose of this research, a semantic approach was selected as verbatim transcriptions offered a rich picture through
the use of language. The semantic approach offered the opportunity for some initial interpretative work in the latter stages of this research and following write-up.

In summary, an inductive thematic analysis, searching for semantic themes in order to gain a rich description of the data set, was selected for the purpose of this study. TA in this study was conducted according to Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six distinct phases. Each form of data (responses from the ice breaker activity, visual data in the form of participant’s drawings and verbal data in their response to interview questions) were treated separately initially. One participant chose to record key words instead of producing a drawing. Initial codes were generated for each data source and then organised as one list before codes were divided into potential themes. Data analysis in this study was a recursive process which involved movement back and forth between the phases. A summary of the phases of TA (Braun & Clarke, 2006), is provided in Table 5, alongside a description of the researcher’s activity at each stage:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Description of the process</th>
<th>Researcher activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Familiarising yourself with the data</td>
<td>Transcribing the data, reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas</td>
<td>Data from the ice-breaker activity was organised in a summary table (See Appendix 9). Copies of participant’s drawings were scanned and printed. All interviews were transcribed verbatim which provided the opportunity for immersion in the data. Each transcript was read three times, each taking an exploratory approach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. 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>
<td>Data from the ice breaker activity, drawings and interview transcripts was coded as individual lines and as small sections of meaningful text. Extracts from each code were then organised as one group and each initial code arranged as a separate document. A sample interview transcript and extract of initial coding can be found in Appendix 10.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Searching for themes</td>
<td>Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme</td>
<td>A list of 73 initial codes was generated. Similar codes were grouped together to begin identifying overarching themes. Further consideration was given to inductive vs. deductive analysis. An inductive approach was maintained to prevent potentially interesting themes being lost, despite deductive analysis being considered to condense the amount of data collected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Reviewing themes</td>
<td>Checking if themes worked in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2),</td>
<td>Data organised within overarching themes was checked for coherence and to ensure clear distinctions between each of the themes. Transcripts were checked a final time to ensure no data had</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
generating a thematic ‘map’ of the analysis been missed and that overarching themes related to the data set. A written thematic map was produced.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5. Defining and naming themes</th>
<th>Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, generating clear definitions and names for each theme</th>
<th>Details of each of the themes were refined and clear names given to each of the five identified themes and sub-themes related to these.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. Producing the report</td>
<td>The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating analysis back to the research question and literature, producing report of the analysis</td>
<td>Extracts representing themes were selected and consideration was given to representing themes alongside the verbal and visual data generated. Presentation of findings (chapter four) and discussion in relation to existing theory and literature (chapter five) were produced.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Phases of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 87).

The advantages of TA were observed to be; the flexibility and opportunities to return to and revise codes/themes, it being an approach which a researcher with limited qualitative experience could easily be guided by and being useful in identifying key aspects of a large body of data, whilst offering a rich description of the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Being aware of the reported disadvantages of TA e.g. its lack of literature compared to other methods, and not allowing the researcher to explore language use (Braun & Clarke, 2006), allowed caution to be taken to minimise the impact of these limitations. For example, the flexibility of the approach resulting in a lack of consistency when developing themes (Holloway & Todres, 2003), was addressed by ensuring the epistemological position adopted was explicit in underpinning this study’s claims and that each stage of the analysis was carefully followed.

3.10 Ethical considerations

3.10.1 Ethical approval

Ethical considerations related to this study were directed by the British Psychological Society (BPS) Code of Human Research Ethics (2014) and the Health and Care Professional Council (HCPC) Standards of Proficiency for Practitioner Psychologists (2015). Ethical approval for this research was granted by the University of Bristol School of Policy Studies Research Ethics Committee on 11.10.17.
Informed consent was obtained from parents/carers prior to data collection. Parental information sheets (Appendix 4) and consent forms (Appendix 6) were provided to a key person at each of the PRUs in which the research took place. These were distributed to pupils who met the inclusion criteria for this study and expressed an interest in taking part. Permission for the researcher to access individual records was requested as part of the parental consent form. A child information sheet (Appendix 5) was also provided to parents/carers to give children time to consider whether they would like to take part. The language included on the information sheets and consent forms was free from professional jargon and differentiated according to the two separate audiences, e.g. including pictures and less text for pupils. Parents/carers were asked to return signed consent forms to a named member of staff who then contacted the researcher and made arrangements to meet participants. At the beginning of the interview process, participants reviewed the information sheet with the researcher and were asked to sign a consent form (Appendix 7). Further explanation was given if required.

Information sheets outlined the researcher’s role, the purpose of the research and what would happen if participants chose to take part. Parents/carers and participants were informed of how the information they provided would be stored and used, as well as their right to withdraw from the study. Complaint procedures were outlined and participants were reminded that they did not have to answer anything they did not wish to.

Confidentiality and data protection

Participants were informed of their right to confidentiality and anonymity. This was also outlined in the information sheets and discussed prior to them signing consent forms. This information was communicated according to participant’s age and stage of development.

Audio recordings, transcripts and drawings were anonymised and stored securely in password protected data files. Participants were made aware of these procedures. Pseudonyms were also used. Despite assertions that researchers should maintain complete confidentiality regarding information shared by participants (Willig, 2013), in line with BPS guidelines and ethical principles, participants were informed that confidentiality would be breached if any of the information they provided caused the researcher to have concern for their safety or the safety of others. It was explained that in these circumstances, concerns would be shared with an adult working within their setting.

Due to the relatively small sample size, there may have been situations in which staff working within the setting may have been able to identify participants. During initial meetings
with staff to discuss this study, it was agreed that a summary of this study’s findings would be provided which would be free from potentially identifiable quotes or drawings to ensure participant anonymity.

3.10.4 Protection of participants

Researchers should safeguard the interests of participants and safeguard their physical and psychological well-being (Fox et al, 2007). Linked to the growth in research which seeks to understand the social world from children’s perspectives, researchers have given increased attention to the ethical issues associated with this (Morrow & Richards, 1996). Such considerations were reinforced by the Children’s Act (1989) and the UN Convention (1989) regarding children’s rights (Backett-Milburn & McKie, 1999).

The researcher was mindful that the topic of this study may have been sensitive due to questions related to participant’s concerns about their reintegration which could have evoked negative emotions. Participants were informed of the details of the study and what their involvement would consist of, as part of the recruitment process. To further protect participants, only those whose educational placements at the time were considered to be stable, so that interference with the ongoing reintegration process was avoided, were interviewed. This decision was made by staff at the PRUs, who knew pupils best.

Consideration was given to a level of anxiety which participants in a one-to-one interview situation may have experienced. Respect was given to qualitative researchers being guests in private spaces (Stake, 1994). If a situation in which a participant became distressed had arisen, the interview would have been stopped and participants asked how they would like to proceed, e.g. terminating the interview or having a break and then continuing. An identified key person (negotiated with the Head of Centre and Deputy Head Teacher as part of the initial planning meetings) was asked to follow up with any participant who had become distressed during the interview situation.

The WDST method (Noonan et al, 2016), this study adopted promoted sensitive open questioning which enabled a deeper exploration of participant’s views as they were not limited to verbal communication. Participants were invited to share as much information as they wished without being pressured to do so. This method incorporated an interactive ice breaker activity to provide participants with an opportunity to practise speaking aloud in an interview situation and to establish an environment in which sharing was valued (Noonan et al, 2016).

The WDST activity (Noonan et al, 2016) took place at the PRU pupils attended which was familiar to them. The researcher sought to create a safe environment, in a private room with
a familiar adult nearby if required. Active listening techniques were used to encourage trust and feelings of safety. At the end of each interview, participants were provided with the opportunity to ask any questions and to discuss anything relevant to their reintegration which they felt they had not had the chance to discuss. They were reminded of the research objectives and how the information they provided would be used. Not being able to withdraw data after three weeks following their interview, as detailed in the child information sheet (Appendix 5), was reiterated.

3.10.5 Researcher safety

Interviews were conducted in a one-to-one situation with pupils identified as having social, emotional and/or mental health needs. As such, staff within the setting were told where interviews were taking place and their expected duration. A member of staff remained close by (in the next room), should a challenging situation have arisen.

Seating arrangements were considered so that participants were positioned closest to the door with nothing obstructing their way if they decided to leave. During the interviews the door was closed so that participants felt able to discuss their concerns freely without judgement from staff overhearing. Participants were however given the choice of whether they preferred the door to remain open or closed to ensure they felt comfortable within the interview situation.

3.11 Validity and trustworthiness

Researchers are required to demonstrate that the procedures used to reveal findings and draw conclusions are valid and reliable (Silverman, 2005). The following section will highlight four principles which have been suggested as a means to support the evaluation of qualitative research. A chapter summary will then be provided.

3.11.1 Principles to support the evaluation of research validity

Differences in epistemological assumptions and the aims of qualitative research paradigms mean that different approaches to demonstrating the value and validity of research are required. Qualitative psychology aims to explore how processes are shaped by people, the activities they take part in and their understanding of these (Yardley, 2017). Literature has increasingly focused on practice which enhances, evaluates and demonstrates the quality of qualitative research given that scientific criteria is not appropriate for this type of research (Yardley, 2017). Practice has been categorised according to four separate dimensions; sensitivity to context, commitment and rigour, transparency and coherence, and impact and importance (Yardley, 2008; 2000). Each of these will now be discussed, with attempts to demonstrate how each was achieved within this study:
1. **Sensitivity to context**

A qualitative study demonstrates sensitivity to context by demonstrating awareness of the participant’s perspectives and setting, the sociocultural context of the research and how this may impact on what participants report and how this is interpreted by a researcher (Yardley, 2017). This was achieved in this study through the completion of an extensive literature review which employed systematic principles to formulate a research question aimed to address identified gaps within the existing literature. The voluntary and informed nature of involvement in this study alongside creating a safe space by demonstrating empathy and developing rapport, helped to maintain a considerate approach to data collection. Adopting a positive approach, i.e. in seeking to be proactive by asking participants what support they felt they would benefit from, meant that this study was sensitive to individual experiences and aimed to empower pupils by giving them a voice.

2. **Commitment and rigour**

Commitment and rigour are demonstrated by engaging thoroughly with the topic under study which includes rigorous data collection, demonstrating skills in the chosen research methods and conducting in-depth analysis (Yardley, 2017). Commitment was achieved in this study through the recruitment of a purposive and homogenous sample with what has been considered in the literature to be a ‘hard to reach’ population. It was also demonstrated through the researcher’s dedication to acquire the necessary skills to implement the chosen method of data collection and data analysis. The use of TA involved a thorough and recursive process. Thoroughness was demonstrated through the triangulation of multiple data sources to enrich participant’s descriptions of their experiences. Braun and Clarke’s (2006) criteria for good TA was also utilised. Discussing the analysis with a peer and supervisor supported the researcher to confirm that there was consistency across the identified themes and that conclusions were logical.

3. **Transparency and coherence**

Transparency relates to readers being able to see how interpretation was derived from the data (Yardley, 2017), and recognises that the stance of the researcher can never be value free (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Data collection and analysis procedures for this study were clearly described. To ensure descriptive validity (related to the accuracy of information gathered), individual interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Reflexivity is important to the transparency of qualitative research (Yardley, 2008), and although many meanings for this term can be found, it is often linked to a critical reflection on the research process and role of the researcher. Reflexivity has been defined as:
the practice of researchers being self-aware of their own beliefs, values and attitudes, and their personal effects on the setting they have studied, and self-critical about their research methods and how they have been applied, so that the evaluation and understanding of their research findings, both by themselves and their audience, may be facilitated and enhanced (Payne & Payne, 2004: 191).

Willig (2013) identifies two types of reflexivity; personal and epistemological. Personal reflexivity relates to reflecting upon how an individual’s “values, experiences, interests, beliefs, political commitments, wider aims in life and social identities have shaped the research” (Willig, 2013: 10). It also involves thinking about how the research may have affected and possibly changed an individual as a person and as a researcher (Willig, 2013). Linked to this, is the idea that reflexivity is connected to power (Adkins, 2004), with researchers embroiled in a power relationship which they should be aware of and make attempts to neutralise. Epistemological reflexivity relates to considering how assumptions about how the nature and orientation of the world (ontology) and beliefs about how knowledge is understood (epistemology) can influence the research process (Willig, 2013). The researcher maintained reflexivity in this study by being aware of how values and the researcher’s belief system had the potential to influence decisions made at each stage of the research process, as well as the impact the research could have had on the interview and analysis process and interpretation of data (Willig, 2013). A research diary was kept to support reflection upon factors which may have impacted upon the research process. A reflexive account is provided in chapter six.

Coherence refers to the research making sense as a consistent whole (Yardley, 2008). This was addressed in this study by ensuring consistency with the chosen method and epistemological position. Justification and reasons for decisions made were highlighted throughout the write up of this study. The recursive nature of TA was also viewed as supporting the development of a consistent whole.

4. Impact and importance

Importance relates to research generating knowledge that is useful. i.e. in respect of practical utility, by generating hypotheses or changing how the world is considered (Yardley, 2017). Through adopting an exploratory, inductive methodology, it was hoped that the voice of primary pupils reintegrating into mainstream or specialist settings was promoted and contributed to improved understandings of what support they might benefit from. In addition, it was intended that this study would offer comments on the methods for professionals to elicit the voice of CYP. Whilst the small sample size in this study meant that generalisability across populations was not feasible, theoretical generalisability, was achieved, i.e. insights
drawn from the findings of this study could be related to similar contexts, which may in turn contribute to better understandings of reintegration experiences.

Considering each of these criteria in a flexible manner supported the researcher in reflecting and justifying the methods selected for use in this study.

3.12 Chapter Summary

This chapter sought to detail this study’s chosen methodology. The purpose of the research to explore primary aged pupils’ experiences of reintegration was firstly introduced, followed by the research paradigm which was adopted. The research design, recruitment of participants and process for data collection were documented, followed by the research procedure and justification for the use of TA (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Finally, numerous ethical considerations were presented and Yardley’s (2000;2008), principles which were applied to address issues of validity and trustworthiness were discussed. The findings of this research will now be presented.
Chapter Four: Presentation of Findings

4.1 Overview

This chapter considers the findings of the ‘Write, Draw, Show and Tell’ (WDST) (Noonan et al, 2016) interviews conducted with pupils related to their experiences of reintegration, as generated by thematic analysis (TA) (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Firstly, details related to the context in which data collection took place will be provided before reflecting upon the completion of two pilot interviews. Findings from this study will then be presented according to the five themes identified and each of their respective sub-themes. This will follow a narrative format, in seeking “to tell the complicated story of the data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 93).

4.2 Study context

Describing the research setting is essential to an informed appreciation of any study (Oliver, 2014). Consequently, an overview of the research location will be presented to support understanding of the data.

Two Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) situated in different Local Authorities (LAs) were accessed for this study. Within the first large rural LA, eight separate PRU Centres exist; one for Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils (aged 5-11 years), two for Key Stage 2 pupils (aged 7-11 years), five for Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils (aged 11-16 years) and a medical provision for those unable to attend school due to illness. Provision for permanently excluded Key Stage 1-4 pupils is also offered to between five and 12 pupils per week, to meet the requirement set out by the Department for Education (DfE, 2017b), to arrange suitable full-time education (or as close to full-time), to begin no later than six days after an exclusion. Following this, each pupil commences an assessment place for up to 12 weeks. Post-assessment, the next steps in a pupil’s education are identified and could include; a return to a mainstream school, a shared placement between the PRU and a mainstream school, or a place in a specialist provision that can more appropriately their needs. The PRU reported that their aim was to reintegrate pupils into mainstream or specialist provision within a year. The timing of this was dependent upon a pupil’s development and needs.

The PRU centre for Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils (aged 5-11 years) was accessed for this study due to the higher number of pupils attending, who, at the time, had begun a gradual reintegration and due to the focus of this research being primary pupils. Each centre had a manager with staff working flexibly, where required, between centres. A total of 8 teachers and 4 teaching assistants worked within the centre. At the time of data collection, 33 pupils were on roll, all of whom were male.
The second LA in which data collection took place was a less rural and smaller LA, which formed part of a new town. Within this LA, an overall assessment and intervention short stay school is based across two sites: Primary for Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils (aged 5-11 years) and Secondary for Key Stage 3 pupils (aged 11-14 years), who have been permanently excluded, or who are at risk of permanent exclusion. Other than in exceptional circumstances, pupils attend for up to 15 weeks, with each setting acting as an assessment and intervention centre before pupils are reintegrated into a mainstream school. Each setting was able to support up to 24 part-time or 12 full-time placements.

The centre for Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils (aged 5-11 years) was the second setting accessed for this study given the requirement for pupils to be of primary school age, as determined by the participant inclusion and exclusion criteria (3.6.3). An Executive Head Teacher held overall responsibility for the two sites with a Deputy Head Teacher responsible for the daily running of the sites. Two lead teachers worked within the primary site with two teaching assistants in each class. Each class had no more than six pupils. At the time of data collection, 14 pupils were on roll at the primary site, all of whom were male. Staff commented that it was typical for the overwhelming majority of pupils attending to be male.

As discussed in chapter three, eight male pupils aged 7-11 were recruited to this study. Further participant details can be found in Appendix 3.

4.3 Pilot interviews

The first two completed interviews were treated as pilot interviews to allow reflection and review of the WDST process (Noonan et al, 2016), given the researcher’s limited use of this method and initial unfamiliarity with the implementation of it. The pilot interviews offered a number of learning points for this study, including:

1. Participants valuing the inclusion of a drawing activity and reporting this to be the most enjoyable aspect of the interview process.
2. Participants finding it difficult to reflect upon how they viewed and would describe themselves. Additional time was therefore given in subsequent interviews for participants to consider this. Opportunities were provided to return to this question once the interview was complete.
3. Participants reported there were no questions which they were asked that they would have preferred to not answer, nor which they would have liked to have changed.
4. Participants reported that there was nothing in addition to the questions that they were asked that they felt they had not had the opportunity to discuss in relation to their reintegration experiences.
Other reflection points included the value of the researcher ‘being busy’, by arranging materials between tasks whilst participants completed their drawings. This appeared to put participants at further ease in the interview situation, in contrast to having the researcher sat alongside them observing the action of drawing. Minor changes were made to the order of questions following the pilot interviews. Participants who completed the pilot interviews met the participant inclusion criteria for this study, and as minimal changes were made to the method and materials used, it was appropriate for these interviews to be included in the final data set.

4.4 Presentation of findings

Findings in this chapter will now be presented at two levels; themes, which represent a level of patterned response or meaning within the data set, and sub-themes which represent themes within one overall theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006). As described in chapter three, visual and verbal data generated from the use of the WDST method (Noonan et al, 2016), was treated separately before initial codes were combined and overarching themes identified. Identified themes will now be presented alongside images of participant’s drawings and extracts of verbal data to evidence how their views linked with each theme. In order to demonstrate participant’s visual data in its entirety, a grid reference method was also employed. Grid references will be provided alongside participant extracts to again illustrate themes and sub-themes. Representing visual data through this additional means was felt to be important to cross-validate the findings and respect the context of participant’s complete drawings by not manipulating these from their original form. Appendices 11 – 18 include copies of participant’s drawings and the key words which one participant chose to record instead of drawing.

An inductive approach to data analysis was maintained and as a result, research questions were not reviewed as part of the analysis process and will not be referred to in this chapter. This served to avoid influencing the interpretation of experiences. They will instead be addressed in chapter six (Conclusion), after findings have been discussed alongside relevant theoretical frameworks, literature and legislation in chapter five (Discussion). Data will now be presented according to the identified themes and sub-themes as represented in Figure 3.
Figure 3: Thematic map
4.5 Self-awareness

Self-awareness has been defined as the capacity to become the object of our own attention (Duval & Wicklund, 1972). An individual is argued to become self-aware when they review the experience of interpreting and processing stimuli (Morin, 2011). Self-awareness was identified as a theme after participants gave accounts of how they viewed themselves and what was important to them, had an impact on their experience of reintegration. Sub-themes of perceptions of self, sense of fairness and motivation also emerged as shown in Figure 4:

![Figure 4: Self-awareness theme and sub-themes](image)

4.5.1 Perceptions of self

Although they were not asked directly about the events which preceded fixed term and permanent exclusions, a number of participants discussed this experience. One stated:

John: “My first exclusion was Year 4, my second one was still Year 4, and that was when, cos like all of my exclusions, four of my exclusions happened when I was in Year 4”.

Across individual interviews and the initial ice-breaker activity, participants gave unanimous accounts of challenging behaviour being the reason for their exclusion/s and PRU placement. Challenging behaviour was characterised by the existence of anger, frustration and aggression for all participants. They provided several examples of how this manifested:

Andrew: “I get angry more than others though, way more”.

John: “I’ll put short tempered, temper”.
George: “Well because I can’t control it, I got too strong, well my behaviour got too strong”.

Participants frequently identified themselves according to such feelings and reported important others would describe them in this way. Those participants who had a diagnosed impairment or label defined themselves by this diagnosis, in addition to feelings of anger and frustration. During the ice-breaker activity, Roger reported; “Well I do have ADHD”, whilst Harry commented; “I am Autistic”.

Challenging behaviour characterised by anger, aggression and frustration was linked to the difficulties participants reported in emotional regulation. They commented:

Andrew: “I dunno, I get angry when I like, if I try something about six, maybe seven times, if I can’t do it, I’ll break it”.

Roger: “I was, but I was just like, I would not calm down”.

Despite citing this as a difficulty, participants acknowledged a level of choice and control in the challenging behaviour which they demonstrated. Roger discussed occasions in which he had demonstrated challenging behaviour despite feeling that his conscience was encouraging him to respond differently:

Roger: “My conscience sometimes tells me…like if you’re thinking you should do something or not, that is your conscience”.

Similarly, George indicated that there was an element of choice related to the negative behaviours he demonstrated:

George: “I can be a good boy…when she told me there’s a school that wanted me, I was feeling excited, cos I was feeling nervous that I might ruin it, cos I didn’t wanna hurt anybody, and I ended up doing it once but luckily I turned it round and now I’m still able to go”.

Andrew demonstrated a level of emotional maturity when considering and demonstrating an awareness of strategies to support the difficulties he experienced in emotional regulation:

Andrew: “I used to just go inside and make things…I like to make things if I get angry…..maybe if I get angry then I can like go somewhere or something…” (referring to a ‘safe space’ in school).
George discussed occasions when an adult playing a musical instrument (See also, Appendix 16: E6-F7), had supported him to regulate his emotions and feel calm. He commented; “I try to keep it a secret so he keeps playing...keeps me calm”, although he reported he was reluctant for others to know that this provided support and comfort.

The physiological symptoms associated with anger and anxiety were also discussed by George when he stated; “sometimes my stomach starts to relax”. Similar comments related to strategies to support emotional regulation and the feelings associated with this were not reported by other participants and perhaps reflect a level of emotional maturity in line with their age.

4.5.2 Sense of fairness

The importance of fairness related to behaviour and sanctions, treatment from adults, their exclusion and educational opportunities, was emphasised by participants. Andrew discussed inconsistency in behavioural sanctions and commented; “They annoy me and then I do it back and I get told off”. In seeking fairness, he elaborated:

Andrew: “I definitely don’t get on with bullies, cos usually I become one against the bullies, I become the bully of the bully”.

Additionally, John commented:

John: “…and after they told their mates, there would be like six kids all around me, trying to push me around and bully me, that’s when I just turn cos I’d had enough of it, so I just tried to fight back, and it worked”.

Michael commented that it was “difficult staying calm when the teachers are being mean”, in response to an incident he discussed in which he had been reprimanded. The value placed on fairness was also highlighted by Harry when discussing his exclusion:

Harry: “First I was at X, kicked me out, went to erm, a different school, which, erm, the teachers come more, which is the Head of X and of that school and
then they kicked me out for doing one naughty thing, just one, silly…
cos I think it’s not my fault I got kicked out”.

The impact of this perceived unfair exclusion for Harry extended to feelings of unfairness surrounding educational and social opportunities. He reported he was; “just worried about, just of missing the play, the Art”. As a result of being excluded and commencing a PRU placement, Harry articulated that opportunities to take part in specific subjects and shared activities with peers were being unfairly missed.

The range of contexts participants related feelings of unfairness to here, highlighted the value they placed on the importance of fairness and consistency, specifically from staff, across their educational settings.

4.5.3 Motivation

The final sub-theme within the ‘Self-awareness’ theme related to participant’s motivation to complete a full-time reintegration, as well as the value they placed on receiving praise and rewards. John was clear in his understanding and explanation of the expectation communicated to him by a family member and school staff, to improve his behaviour in order to return to his mainstream setting full-time when he stated:

John: “Cos they said if I improve on my behaviour a lot more, I have already improved quite a lot, cos I am almost there to being full-time at X again…my tempers got better…..that’s when my Grandad said if you improve you’ll go to X full-time and that’s what I’ve been doing, trying to improve my everything, and I’ve done a good job at improving, cos now I do my work and, like, I do my work, I concentrate”.

This was not to say that the process of reintegration would be easy as John indicted:

John: “I would say it would be different, it’d be a change for me, because X and X, they’re, they’re complete different schools, which is why I think I’d find it a bit tricky, but I’d say I could manage it”.

A level of resilience was demonstrated in the manner in which he reported this was a significant event in his life which he perceived as manageable. Similar levels of motivation were noted whether it was a mainstream or specialist setting participants were reintegrating into. Ray, who had begun a phased reintegration into a specialist setting, commented; “Oh, I wanted to go to X anyway, I’m looking forward to it”.

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Whilst participants being motivated to achieve a successful full-time reintegration was viewed as a long term goal, a number of participant’s highlighted strategies, e.g. their work being displayed and points/reward systems, which served as motivating factors to complete work and ensure consistent behaviour in the short term. George commented; “…and also I learnt, a little rubber of a book which is what I’m drawing right now and it said X (school name)”, as well as; “…and still after a year, that’s my painting (pointing to painting on display)".

The value of motivation was therefore observed to impact on participant’s experiences of reintegration. Specifically, the value of short and long term motivating factors were evident in their responses.

4.6 Relationships and support

The second theme identified related to the importance of relationships and support for a pupil’s reintegration, with sub-themes of friendships, family and teachers emerging, as represented in Figure 5:

![Diagram of Relationships and support theme and sub-themes]

4.6.1 Friendships

Reference to friendships was made by all participants with regard to something they were particularly looking forward to as part of their reintegration process, as well as a source of support. One participant reported:
John: “...what I'm looking forward to is, so I can see my friends more, to what I am now...whenever I go to X or whatever school I'm going to permanent, I can see my friends more”. (See also, Appendix 13: F9)

Whilst another participant added:

George: “I have so many friends there, so I can trust people”.

In addition, Michael talked positively about the possibility of developing new friendships:

Michael: “I was just thinking about new friends instead of the same old friends which are just boring”. (See also, Appendix 18: C3 – E3)

Participants valued friendships and viewed them as a key source of support. For example, George noted that having friends helped; “by keeping me calm”. He related emotional regulation support from friends to specific gender differences:

George: “…there are some boy friends that I have…I can’t remember how they keep me calm, they (girls) just keep me calm”. (See also, Appendix 16: F5)
Participants discussed valuing friends who they perceived to be most like them and again related this to the difficulties they experienced in emotional regulation. One participant informed the researcher:

Andrew: “I mean there are other kids that get angry like me….99% chance there’s at least one kid whose naughty in each class”.

George also reported:

George: “No, cos everybody here has it…(anger)”.

Despite participants expressing a desire to be reunited with friends and viewing friends who were most like them as a source of support, they also acknowledged difficulties in developing and maintaining friendships. Participants frequently discussed incidents of bullying involving older children (See also, Appendix 18: C8, D8), and concern that this may happen in the future. John stated:

John: “Cos quite a lot of people in school, they try and push, like me around, like they try and boss me around, like you’re gonna go there and that, well not, most of the time I walk away and just ignore it, but if there’s physical contact involved, like if they touch me or push me, I end up turning around and just having a go at them”.

Similarly, Michael reported:

Michael: “I’m just worried about, that I might get bullied or something…cos they might not know me so they just bully me”.

Image 4: George’s drawing to represent that being with girls supported him to feel calm

Image 5: Michael’s drawing to represent his concerns related to incidents of bullying
Linked to difficulties in peer relationships identified by some, was the idea that negative stereotypes from peers had a significant impact on them being able to develop new friendships. One participant highlighted:

Michael: “Well some of them, most of them don’t get on with me, when the new children came, this girl in my class announced to them, when, when she saw me, that I was a school bully, when was I? Never….and then they were all scared of me”.

The importance of friendships therefore emerged as a sub-theme following participant’s comments related to the anticipation of being reunited with friends and the possibility of broadening their friendship groups. They spoke positively of being supported by peers perceived to be most like them, whilst also acknowledging the potential damage and impact negative peer relations could have.

4.6.2 Family

A number of responses that some participants gave indicated that they had at some point in their lives, or at present, had the status of a ‘Looked after Child’. This term refers to any child under the age of 18 who is looked after by the LA. Children in care to the LA may; live with foster parents; live at home whilst being supervised by social services; live in a residential children’s home or other residential setting e.g. school or secure unit. Children’s services may have intervened due to a child being at risk of significant harm or they may have been placed in care by their parents (NSPCC, 2018). One participant reported:

Roger: “I don’t live at home with my Mum or my Dad”.

Whilst another stated:

John: “Cos I’m seeing my brother today, yeah, he’s coming to my house to stop for the weekend”.

A pattern of disrupted home circumstances which had led to disrupted educational experiences was discussed by participants. For example, George reported:

George: “I’ve been to a lot of primary schools, cos I keep moving”.
This again served to highlight the importance of resilience, defined as, “positive adaptation to life after being exposed to adverse events” (Jones et al, 2013: 63), to this particular sample. Possibly linked to the experience of disrupted home circumstances was the value that participants placed on being reunited with siblings, as part of their reintegration. This was similar to the way in which they expressed that they were particularly looking forward to being reunited with friends. One participant commented:

Ray: “I’m looking forward to it because it’s in the high school grounds and my brother goes to high school”.

Similarly, John discussed:

John: “….seeing my sister…I’d either go, like if I can’t go to X, I want to go to a school that my brother’s in, which is X….so that’s when I can see my family more”. (See also, Appendix 13: E8)

George noted the close links between family and school and how his school setting served as a reminder of his family:

George: “…I just remember my sisters are at school, also I’ve had family that went to that school….X has been open for years, yeah, since my Grandad was a kid…my Dad went there as well, so technically it’s a family area”.

George demonstrated that he was motivated to attend a specific school and to complete a successful reintegration due to the links and generation of family members who had attended that setting. Family serving as a motivating factor was also noted by Harry who commented:

Harry: “…they (family) want me to get back to X (mainstream setting)….so I can have a better, longer school probably”.

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Whilst other participants offered limited comments related to their family’s preference for the type of identified setting selected for their reintegration, Harry was clear about his family’s desire for this to be a mainstream setting. In the same way that similar peers were viewed as a source of support to participants, they expressed similar feelings in relation to support provided by their families. This related to being reunited with siblings and served as a motivating factor to achieving a successful reintegration.

4.6.3 Teachers

Teachers were identified as the final sub-theme within the ‘Relationships and Support’ theme. Participants viewed teachers as a source of support during their reintegration and within the wider school context. They commented that teachers assisted them with their work:

John: “…I’d say what helps me is like, like getting more attention from the teacher, cos like, cos if I’m struggling and I put my hand up and the teacher comes over, like she can help me then”.

Michael represented teachers supporting him in his learning both through his drawing and verbal response when indicating:

Michael: “Well different teachers maybe might help me with my learning”. (See also, Appendix 18: C6, D6)

Ray emphasised the benefit of familiarity with staff as part of the reintegration process in supporting his emotional well-being when he reported:

Ray: “I’m just really excited because it’s a small school and my, the teacher from my old school is there….it, it boosted my confidence”.

Image 7: Michael’s drawing to represent new teachers could support him with his learning
A number of participants identified humour as a quality they valued and reported that their teacher’s use of humour supported them with their learning. For example, Andrew commented; “some of the teachers are quite funny” and Roger reported; “because she’s funny”, when asked how his teacher helped him. Whilst participants identified that teacher’s helped them with their work, it was evident that they valued a balance between support and independence, as well as with strategies which had seemingly been implemented by teachers to support their reintegration. When referring to support he received from his teacher, Andrew commented:

Andrew: “Like not all the time, like, I can do work on my own, I would do it with a teacher, I would do both”.

Similarly, Roger expressed a desire for more independence when asked if it was helpful to have the level of support he received. He discussed a strategy whereby he spent time reading in the library with an adult prior to accessing whole class activities as a means to facilitate a smooth transition from mornings spent at his PRU and afternoons when attending mainstream school. Roger informed the researcher:

Roger: “I don’t settle into class, I just read in the library with my, with my Teacher that, that supervises me…”
Researcher: “…and is it helpful to have the Teacher supervise you?”
Roger: “No, I can self, supervise myself…”
Researcher: “Okay, so you don’t like having that?”
Roger: “No”.

Whilst Roger’s responses indicated that his mainstream school had implemented a strategy designed to support his reintegration, it became apparent that his voice was lacking in the process of considering this exact strategy.

Although participants acknowledged teachers as a source of support, accounts of difficult and strained relationships with teachers were provided. Ray reported his experience of mainstream school “was bad because there was bad teaching staff”, whilst George emphasised how, when seeking to promote independence, there were occasions in which protective and supportive factors were withdrawn by a class teacher. George commented:

George: “Well if he (teacher) knows that it keeps me calm, he’d stop it, and, he’d say try and be calm yourself, and that’s why I don’t want it to happen”. 
In a similar manner, Harry also articulated a negative perception of teachers when expressing the view that “they (teachers) might take all my things away in my drawer”. This viewpoint appeared to be linked to feelings of uncertainty and the absence of a sense of belonging due to attending two separate settings. This finding is represented in the next identified theme which will now be presented.

### 4.7 Inclusion across settings

As part of the phased reintegration process whereby participants attended two settings (i.e. their PRU and mainstream or specialist setting), the importance of the need for them to feel included and belonging to both settings was evident in their responses. Sub-themes related to safety and a sense of belonging therefore emerged within this theme, as depicted in Figure 6:

![Figure 6: Inclusion across settings theme and sub-themes](image)

#### 4.7.1 Safety

A theme of safety was evident in participant responses. This related to the importance of staff keeping children safe, and in participant’s understanding of why processes adopted in their PRU to ensure their safety, were in place. The value of safety was most prevalent in Roger’s responses. He highlighted the importance of staff “attending to children” and meeting their needs. A distinction was drawn between mainstream school and his PRU when he elaborated; “because they are keeping them safe better here (PRU) by keeping you away from hazards”.

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The importance of safety was well represented in Roger’s drawing (See Appendix 15) and the comments he provided when discussing his drawing. As part of the ‘Tell’ aspect of the WDST method (Noonan et al, 2016), Roger explained:

Roger: “Well, there’s a security camera here…” (See also, Appendix 15: E6, F6)

Researcher: “…Yeah, is it important to have that?”

Roger: “Well, yeah, CCTV can…”

Researcher: “…Why is that important?”

Roger: “…Well, to watch over the kids in case they don’t escape…” (See also, Appendix 15: D3-E4, G3-H4)

Researcher: “…What else has it got?…”

Roger: “…Scanners, well lots of scanners actually…” (See also, Appendix 15: G6, G9, H8)

Researcher: “…And is that to keep them safe again?…”

Roger: “…Yeah, yeah and…checking the school…Look (pointing to drawing) scanning pupils to see if they’ve got any, like, like, to see if they’ve got any weapons on them”. (See also, Appendix 15: D3-E4, G3-H4)

Image 8: Roger’s drawing of security cameras to keep children safe

Image 9: Roger’s drawing indicating children being watched so that they did not escape
Whilst Roger’s preoccupation and value placed on children being kept safe could reflect personal circumstances, e.g. he later discussed incidents in which he had attempted to run away when faced with a perceived threat, the importance of safety related to policies and practice to ensure pupil safety was articulated and seemingly understood by other participants. John discussed his feelings towards the restraint policy in his PRU and commented:

John: “Cos like here (PRU) you get restrained if like, if you actually get up and try and run, you get restrained, and at X you don't, but you do get told to go there or go in…”

Researcher: “…so do you think it’s better that you get restrained or not?…”

John: “…Erm, I’d say half and half, because the only reason they restrain me is because, for their safety and my safety and other kid’s safety…”

Researcher: “…Okay, and so was that a surprise?…”

John: “…Yeah and I don’t like being, I don’t like being restrained, I’m alrite with it now, only if it’s like, only if, I’m alrite with being like, I’m alrite with being like restrained but if it’s like proper being restrained and being thrown in a chair then I don’t like it”.

Michael discussed safety when highlighting the differences between his mainstream school and PRU which he related to modifications to the PRU building. He stated:

Michael: “Lots of differences, there’s a metal fence here to keep you safe…what about the locks on the doors, I don’t like it cos then I can’t get out the classroom to the next lesson, classroom”.

Image 10: Roger’s drawing representing scanners to also keep children safe
Participant’s responses indicated different levels of practice related to safety, e.g. different levels of restraint and levels of measures taken by settings to ensure safety. Whilst participants reported they had not, and did not approve of the observed additional measures adopted in PRUs to ensure their safety (being restrained), they demonstrated an understanding of a need for such policy and practice and why this was in place.

4.7.2 Sense of belonging
A theme that emerged within participant responses was the need for a sense of belonging to be maintained in spite of shared placement arrangements. One definition of a sense of belonging reads:

> the experience of personal involvement in a system or environment so that persons feel themselves to be an integral part of the system or environment (Hagerty et al, 1992:73).

This theme was evident in the concerns that participants expressed related to their reintegration and the discussion of factors which indicated connectedness to a school community. Harry reported concerns about what might happen to his belongings in his absence during the time he spent at a PRU when he commented:

Harry: “They might take all my things away in my drawer…”

Researcher: “…Ohh okay, so who might?…”

Harry: “…My teacher…is there any bags cos I need one to take all my stuff?”

Similar thoughts linked to feelings of ‘being forgotten’ about during time spent elsewhere were expressed by other participants. They provided several examples of how this manifested:

John: “What would help me enjoy would like, if I got like my own pencil pot, cos I don’t have my pencil pot which is why, whenever I go and work, I have to go to someone else’s table and find a pencil, so I think if I had a pencil pot on my table it would help…”

Researcher: “…Oh, I see what you mean, so yeah, that would be helpful…”

John: “…And the other thing I don’t like about X, is that, it would be helpful if no-one sat at my desk eating their lunch or working on my desk, because they make a mess and then they don’t clean it up, so it’s left out to me then… and that’s my table and I gotta sit in it and you should clean up, but no, they just leave it and expect me to do it…..that’s one reason why I get fed up, and it’s like I come down, hoping my desk is clean, and when I sit there’s just
boxes and like rubber markings and rubbers and pencils, rulers, everywhere, yeah, and whoever’s been sitting there, I feel like walking up to em to clean it up, which I do most of the time but they never listen, so that’s why it’s all left down to me but if they don’t clean it up, what I do, is I put, is I take all their stuff and put it in someone else’s, and put it on their desk”.

Michael: “…when she (teacher) put labels on the pens when she didn’t do it on mine, she said she did mine, but she didn’t, mine didn’t have a name on it”.

Participant’s comments here illustrated that they did not feel considered by adults and pupils in the settings in which they were completing a full-time reintegration into during their time spent at their PRU. It also highlighted how the reintegration process led some participants to feel excluded from a school community. Harry’s exclusion from his mainstream school extended to his pre-occupation with how the time that he spent attending a PRU was being spent by peers in his mainstream setting. He reported:

Harry: “…oh, I really wish I could do everything they did for Art, all, for a whole day, and not do any writing cos it’s very difficult, I really want to do the Art they’ve done cos they do Art every single week”. (See also, Appendix 1: C8, I7).

Including factors which indicated connectedness to a school community within their drawings demonstrated the value participants placed on belonging within their future full-time school communities. Roger provided the following description when discussing his drawing:

Roger: (Pointing to drawing) “Well, flags, two chimneys…”

Researcher: “…is it important to have flags?…”

Roger: “…Er, well, to show that they’re English…”

Researcher: “…Do you have a flag up at your school?…”
Roger: “...No, I wish we did”. (See also, Appendix 15: C5, D7, F8, H7, I5)

When also describing his drawing, George highlighted connectedness to a school community when he represented and discussed wearing school uniform. He commented:

George: “…which I’ll do in dark green, cos, cos their colour used to be green”. (uniform)

George: “…here’s their jumper, and instead I’m gonna do a, I’m just gonna do blue, or bit of yellow, blue and yellow, that’s our badge, and now light blue, I’m gonna do, this is just our, this is just our t-shirt, there’s our jumper, the dark one’s our jumper, there’s our t-shirt inside, they’ve both got that on them (school badge)... oh yes, I need to draw them skirts, .....black, this is the closest I can get to grey...” (See also, Appendix 16: F5)

Researcher: “…And do you like wearing your uniform?...”

George: “…Sometimes”.

Participant’s discussions related to flags, school badges and uniform were an indication of factors that they felt fostered a sense of belonging and connectedness to their school community. In addition to acknowledging these factors, some participants identified what would be helpful to them to foster this desired sense of belonging. One stated:

Andrew: “I was gonna say if I got like a tutor in what we’re already doing, if I got told what we’re doing already...”

Researcher: “...Yeah, so do you mean a bit like a catch up?...”

Andrew: “...Yeah, on like what they’re already learning on”.

Whilst another informed the researcher:
John: “I think what will settle in is like, sorta like a place round this school, where I know where everything is again… so when I do go to X full-time, what I would like, is to actually like, cos like I forget the names of the teachers, so if like, if, if every teacher like told me their name, because I’m so used, cos I’m coming to this school, and the teachers have different names at this school and their school, which is why I find it a bit confusing, so I don’t know who’s who”.

Pupil’s experiences of inclusion across educational settings were characterised by a need for them to feel safe and secure and as belonging to settings despite the difficulties brought about by a shared placement.

4.8 New beginning
Perhaps linked to the difficulties participants experienced in relation to maintaining inclusion and a sense of belonging across two settings, they expressed positive feelings towards completing a full-time reintegration, with many describing this as a ‘fresh start’. Reasons for this view were discussed. Sub-themes within the ‘New beginning’ theme, related to a fresh start and increased opportunities emerged, as depicted in Figure 7:

![Figure 7: New beginning theme and sub-themes]

4.8.1 Fresh start
All participants highlighted positive aspects and how they had benefitted from time spent at their PRUs. Andrew discussed positive aspects of his PRU as relating to his behaviour when commenting:

Andrew: “I just behave better here (PRU)”. 
Whilst John discussed his PRU positively and related this to academic achievements:

John: “I didn’t know any of my times tables but as soon as I came here, just like that (clicked fingers), I learned em, cos I practised everyday”.

Participants also described their overall experience of their PRU in positive terms. One participant reported:

John: “I’d say my progress has been fine, cos the first time I moved here, I didn’t really know what was going on, so I didn’t like it at first, but now I enjoy it”.

Whilst another participant appeared to express surprise that his PRU placement had in the least not been a negative experience. Roger responded; “Well, well pretty fine actually”, when asked how he would describe his time at his PRU. Despite such positive feelings, participants reported that they were excited to commence a full-time placement. The same feelings were expressed whether it was a mainstream or specialist setting that participants were due to attend. Ray reported that he was looking forward to reintegrating into a specialist setting on a full-time basis and commented:

Ray: “I was excited, because errr, I was really excited because I didn’t like X (mainstream)”.

Whilst George spoke positively about spending time at his mainstream setting:

George: “I’m looking forward to going there this afternoon”.

The idea of a fresh start was perhaps best captured by Michael who reported that he was looking forward to the process of reintegrating into a new setting because that meant; “new school, new life, new uniform, new everything”.

When asked directly if they had any worries/concerns related to their reintegration settings, participants were unanimous in their responses that they had no worries/concerns in spite of these being identified through previous discussions, e.g. when discussing friendships and relationships with teachers:

Researcher: “…is there anything you might be worried about?…”
Andrew: “…No…”

Researcher: “…you think everything will be fine?…”

Andrew: “…Totally”.

John identified processes which had prevented him from having concerns related to his full-time reintegration into a mainstream setting when he stated:

John: “There’s nothing I’m worried about err, going to X for like, full days, cos, cos before you go there full-time, you’ll start having days there and days here”.

Further processes and practice observed to support reintegration are represented in the final theme to be discussed.

4.8.2 Increased opportunities

Participants reintegrating into mainstream settings reported that they were looking forward to the increased opportunities in relation to accessing a broader range of school subjects. They provided a number of examples of school subjects that they enjoyed but had not had the opportunity to take part in at their PRU. One participant commented:

John: “…doing the lessons that I enjoy…I can do my favourite lessons more, and I’d say like, I can educate more in a way, like we do way more lessons”.

Similarly, another stated:

Michael: “…they (PRU) don’t do as many lessons as at school, they do Maths, they do RE, they do everything else, but this school (PRU) only does English and Maths”.

Harry expressed similar feelings through his drawing and explanation of this:

Harry: “I like this school but I just wanna go back to my original school I can get, so I do loads of Art”. (See also, Appendix 17: C8, I7)

Participant’s responses demonstrated the value of access to a broader range of subjects linked to attending a mainstream settings, in contrast to the narrower curriculum they had
experienced during time spent at their PRU. Factors related to the school environment which participants reported were important to them are captured in the final identified theme, which will now be presented.

4.9 Supporting reintegration

The final theme which emerged from the data relates to the processes and factors which participants identified were helpful and would support their reintegration. Sub-themes of ‘process’ and ‘value about school environment’ therefore emerged, as represented in Figure 8:

![Figure 8: Supporting reintegration theme and sub-themes](image)

4.9.1 Process

All participants referred to processes and practice in place designed to support a successful reintegration. This included talk related to transition days, the importance of familiar others and participant’s involvement in how decisions were made and communicated. In relation to transition days, one participant reported:

Ray: “I already know what it would look like…yeah, I’ve had a few days there, I was there yesterday…and it will be easier because I’m used to it, I’m not nervous”.

Additionally, John commented:

John: “There’s nothing I worry about…cos before you go there full-time, you’ll start having days there and days here”.

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Participants valued the introduction of transition days and their reintegration being a gradual process. They viewed this as a supportive factor by reducing the levels of anxiety that they may otherwise have faced. In addition, participants discussed their reintegration had been supported by the presence of familiar others, namely teachers and other children. Ray, who had begun the process of reintegrating into a specialist setting, commented:

Ray: “I was there yesterday and my, erm, the teacher from my other school, my other school is, is, when, is there”.

He also spoke positively about a number of children he knew who attended the setting he was reintegrating into, which had supported him to feel at greater ease. He stated:

Ray: “I already know one of them because he went here, and then there’s someone else”.

The importance of familiarity was again highlighted by Michael who identified differences between his mainstream school and PRU which he perceived could make the process of reintegration more difficult. He reported:

Michael: “Anything else that’s different…yeah, different teachers…”
Researcher: “…Different teachers? So how are the teachers different?…”
Michael: “…Erm, well they’re different teachers…”
Researcher: “…Yeah, they’re different people?…”
Michael: “…Yeah”.

Michael’s responses indicated some reservation in relation to developing relationships with perhaps new and ‘different’ teachers and were therefore viewed in line with the value other participants placed on familiar others.

The final process which participants identified they valued in relation to their reintegration concerned their involvement in decision-making and how decisions were communicated to
them. Participants were unanimous in their responses that they were informed by their parents/carers that they would be attending a PRU, and that their reintegration was due to commence. When discussing how he had been informed about his reintegration to a specialist setting, Ray commented:

Ray: “Mum went to a meeting, about X, and then some sort of place said that, that I could go to the new X, then my Mum told me when I got back…Mum told me first…I asked them (teachers) and, and then they said that they knew”.

Whilst George reported that his reintegration process had begun when his father told him that they were going to visit different schools:

George: “…my Dad just said we’re gonna visit some other schools”.

Other participants reported that they were informed by their parents or grandparents, that their reintegration was due to commence. George reported that in addition to a parent informing him of decisions surrounding his educational placement, a teacher at his PRU discussed this with him. He commented:

George: “Miss X, she took me to the staff room which is over there, and she said, there’s a school that wants you, she didn’t mention the name yet…but once my Dad brought me there, so I just read it’s name, X School…”

Researcher: “…and did Miss X ask you what you thought?…”

George: “…No, she just told me”.

A sense of frustration was articulated by a number of participants at their lack of involvement in decision making and at not being informed of the full implications of what a PRU placement included. John referred to not being informed of the restraint policy at his PRU when he stated:

John: “He (teacher) didn’t tell me that you’d be restrained…yeah, and I don’t like being, I don’t like being restrained cos I didn’t know what was going on”.

Whilst Harry highlighted that he had not been informed of his mainstream school’s decision to exclude him:
Harry: “…they didn’t tell me they were gonna kick me out”.

John made it clear that he would have liked his opinion to have been considered when decisions about his future educational placement were being made:

Researcher: “…and would you have liked to have been asked about what you thought?...”

John: “…Yeah, I think, cos I thought it would help, and then I thought it would help if someone else knew about it”.

Participant’s responses indicated that at the point of identifying an educational setting and decisions being made regarding their reintegration, their voice was lacking.

Factors related to the process of reintegration here have highlighted that participants valued transition days, with their reintegration being a gradual process, and valued the presence of familiar others as part of the settings they were reintegrating into. Their responses highlighted a lack of involvement on their part in decisions made about them. They were instead informed by parents/carers of these decisions, once they had been made.

4.9.2 Factors that are valued in school environment

Participants identified elements of their school environments which they valued and looked forward to as part of their reintegration. This was dominated by talk of specific subjects, opportunities for unstructured time and the physical environment. Each of these were also strongly represented in participant’s drawings. When asked for their initial thoughts about school as part of the ice-breaker activity, participants were unanimous in linking school with thoughts related to school work and their lessons. One participant stated:

Ray: “Lessons…..they can be fun or boring, depends on the subject, they can, they can sometimes, kind of the same as the work”.

Whilst another reported:

David: “School is a working school”.

Participants were similarly unanimous in the type of work, lessons and the activities within these that they showed a preference for, namely practical and creative activities/subjects. Andrew commented:
Andrew: “I like to draw, I like to make things, mostly when I make things, it just makes me happy…swimming, football…I really like PE”. (See also, Appendix 11: C5, D5, E5)

Whilst John stated:

John: “I like PE and Science, erm, I’d say like, it’s very like, it’s fun, yeah, cos you’ve got something to do….I enjoy PE, Science and DT”.

See Appendix 12: H4; Appendix 17: D7-8, I9 and Appendix 18: F3, for further examples of how participants represented their preference for practical and creative activities/subjects in their drawings.

Whilst it could be surmised that the preference for more practical/creative subjects may have been linked to gender differences, the all-male sample of this study (which reflected the sample of pupils attending the two PRUs in which data collection took place), meant that it was not possible to comment or draw comparisons between the types of subject preferred and any gender differences. Participants also made reference to the importance of sporting opportunities. They provided several examples of the sporting opportunities they enjoyed:

Andrew: “I mean, I like to play football with most of my friends and basketball”. (See also, Appendix 11: H7)

Whilst it could be surmised that the preference for more practical/creative subjects may have been linked to gender differences, the all-male sample of this study (which reflected the sample of pupils attending the two PRUs in which data collection took place), meant that it was not possible to comment or draw comparisons between the types of subject preferred and any gender differences. Participants also made reference to the importance of sporting opportunities. They provided several examples of the sporting opportunities they enjoyed:
Ray also commented:

Ray: “I like the games, I like the sports…..normally play football and basketball”.

Andrew discussed the frequency of practical activities and reported that he looked forward to more regular opportunities to take part in practical/creative activities compared to what was available at his PRU when he reported; “…like, I only, you can do it two times a week (PE at PRU)”. Whilst participants articulated the subjects and activities they had a preference for, they also discussed those that they did not favour. This appeared to be based on the school subjects which were perceived as difficult. One participant reported:

John: “…what I do struggle at mainstream, one of the things I struggle with, oh, fractions, I don’t get em”. (See also, Appendix 13: D7, G7, H8)

Through his drawing and explanation, Harry commented; “I hate writing” and requested the researcher record this on his picture. (See also, Appendix 17: D7-8, I9).

When asked about school subjects, several participants reported subjects and lessons were irrelevant and of little importance to them, as demonstrated in Michael’s comment that he did not like “boring things I have to do, the weird topics”, as well as work being pitched at an inappropriate level. This appeared to have led to a sense of disengagement in what was
perceived as an inflexible curriculum. In relation to the work given to him, Andrew commented:

Andrew: “Yeah I mean it was quite boring, because I never liked it, mostly the work, it was too easy”.

Several examples of irrelevant school subjects were provided by participants. Roger reported:

Roger: “Maths is hard….err, some of the topic…or I think it’s what we’re learning, what we’re learning, World War II….I’m like this is hell…well because, because World War II, I don’t know anything about it…yeah stop torturing me by teaching me World War II”.

Whilst Michael stated:

Michael: “Well the boring, erm, there has been X, don’t know what that is, erm, what else is there…Romans, and there’s been lots of other weird things, like computing and e-safety, I like computing but I don’t like e-safety and all that, that’s just weird”.

Responses here suggested a specific disconnection due to subjects being perceived as irrelevant and of little importance, which impacted on participant’s desire to engage in education. This was further emphasised by Michael when he recalled what he enjoyed doing in his spare time, but found it difficult to answer the same question related to school. He reported that at home he enjoyed:

Michael: “…driving my golf buggy or the tractor, erm, harvesting potatoes, going with the chickens, going in the pens with them…useful, to my Dad yeah, doing jobs”.

Although there appeared to have been some effort by Michael’s previous mainstream school to tailor time spent at school towards his individual interests and needs when he discussed responsibilities he had been given; “gardening, well no, no, doing most of the jobs for them”, this had not been sufficient enough to motivate or engage him in what for him, was an inflexible curriculum.

Perhaps related to the age of this particular sample, participants also reported that they favoured unstructured times and linked to the idea of an inflexible curriculum, valued opportunities for choice to be built into their day. Ray, David and George all reported that
one of their favourite things about school was playing outside at break time (see also, Appendix 17: F9), whilst Michael reported:

Michael: “Favourite thing to do at school would be golden time\(^3\)”.

The final area of focus related to factors that participant responses highlighted they valued about their school environment related to the physical environment (See also, Appendix 11: C6 – H9, Appendix 12: D7, E5 – F6, Appendix 14: C4 – H10, Appendix 15: C2 – I9, Appendix 16: C2-F4, Appendix 17: D2 – H6), and in particular, the size of educational settings.

As can be seen from the above images, the majority of drawings that participants produced focused on the physical building of the school they were reintegrating into. This enabled

\(^3\)‘Golden time’ is a behaviour management strategy used by primary schools in which reward time they have gained throughout the week is spent taking part in activities of a pupil’s choosing.
further discussion on the size and type of school they reported having a preference for. Participants were quick to identify the difference in size between their mainstream schools and PRUs. One participant commented:

Andrew: “Well it’s not as big, I mean there was like three, four hundred people there, and here there’s like fifty or sixty”.

A number of participants who had begun the process of reintegration into mainstream settings reported that they preferred to attend larger schools. One participant reported:

Researcher: “Okay, so do you think that, erm, do you like it being bigger?”
Andrew: “…Kinda, yeah…”
Researcher: “…You prefer to be at a school that’s bigger?”
Andrew: “Yeah”.

John related his preference to the belief that attending a larger school would lead to greater learning. He commented:

John: “Yeah, and I want to go to the X because I think it’s a, I think it’s better for me because it’s a big school which means I’d learn, like, twice as much as I do here, at X, cos X is like five of X put together”.

Whilst another participant reported he would prefer to attend a setting with greater space:

Roger: “Er, er, I like the playground…well all the, all the space…”
Researcher: “…Ahh, so you like having lots of space?”
Roger: “…Yeah…”
Researcher: “…Is there not a lot of space here (PRU)?”
Roger: “…Yeah”.

Other participants reported that their preference for a larger school environment was related to the perception that this would lead to knowing more people. For example, George commented:

Researcher: “…and do you like this being a big school?”
George: “…Yes, cos it means I can get to know more people”.

In contrast, one participant who had begun his reintegration into a specialist setting reported that he was looking forward to attending a setting which was smaller than his previous mainstream school. He informed the researcher:

Ray: “…I’m just really excited because it’s a small school….there’s not much there cos it’s only a small school, what has 12, what can have 12 kids in it”.

Related to the physical environment of school settings, was reference to travel times. As a result of living in a large rural county (within the first setting in which data collection took place), a number of participants were required to travel large distances to attend their PRU. Shorter journey times were therefore discussed favourably by a number of participants. One participant stated:

Ray: “…well I have a big journey, about 50 something minutes, I’m looking forward to shorter, for the, for the journeys to be shorter”.

Whilst another commented:

John: “Which is the closest school and I reckon it’s like, it’s like the closest so it’d help me”.

Within this sub-theme, participant responses demonstrated a variation in the size of school environment preferred, which appeared to relate to whether they were reintegrating into a mainstream or specialist setting. Participants associated school with work, subjects and their lessons, with their clear preference for creative/practical activities forming a substantial part of their curriculum, being expressed.

As highlighted in this final theme, participants identified processes and aspects of a school environment which they particularly valued and which the presence of, was thought to contribute to supporting their reintegration to be a positive experience.

4.10 Chapter summary

This chapter sought to present the findings of this study following the completion of eight individual interviews using the WDST method (Noonan et al, 2016). TA (Braun & Clarke, 2006), supported the analysis of three separate sources of data which were the product of each individual interview. This allowed themes which emerged from the data to be cross-
referenced across the data sources. Five themes were identified from the data and presented in this chapter. These included:

- Self-awareness
- Relationships and support
- Inclusion across settings
- New beginning
- Supporting reintegration

Each theme was discussed in relation to how this was perceived by participants to either support or hinder their experience of reintegration. Additional themes that emerged within the five overarching themes were also discussed and presented in a thematic map (Figure 3). The following chapter will explore the significance of this study’s findings alongside relevant theoretical frameworks, literature and legislation.
Chapter Five: Discussion

5.1 Overview

After considering the findings of this study, a number of areas for discussion have been identified. These include; participant’s interpretation of reintegration, factors supporting reintegration and pupil voice. This chapter will critically review each of these areas in relation to literature, policy and legislation concerning school exclusion and reintegration. Prior to this, the findings of this study will be considered through the lens of relevant theoretical models, namely; Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) eco-systemic perspective and the social model of disability, so that they are explored in relation to psychological theory. Comments on possible directions for future research will be interwoven throughout this chapter and relate to specific discussion points as they arise.

This chapter will conclude by identifying the contribution to knowledge the findings of this study make. This will lead to implications for educational settings and Educational Psychology practice being highlighted. A proposed checklist to support reintegration planning based on the findings will also be introduced. A chapter summary will then be provided before the final chapter of this thesis is presented.

5.2 Theoretical frameworks

Following the critical review of literature concerning exclusion and reintegration in chapter two, a summary of the theoretical frameworks which each study was guided by, was provided. Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) eco-systemic perspective was observed to direct much of the research in this area. After considering the findings of this study, this remains an appropriate framework to illustrate the factors contributing to primary aged pupils experiences of reintegration. As previously anticipated, the social model of disability also became a relevant model through which to consider the findings of this study. Each of these will now be discussed.

5.2.1 Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) eco-systemic perspective

Bronfenbrenner (1979) recognised that behaviour and actions are based on the interaction between humans and their environment. As part of this perspective, four distinct components (or levels) are identified. These are each thought to have an impact on an individual’s actions and behaviour. Considering the relationships between each component is encouraged. The four components include:
5.2.1.1 The Micro-system

The micro-system concerns the child’s immediate setting and is said to have the most direct impact on their development. Peers, parents, family, school and the local community are included within this system. The findings of this study underlined a number of factors impacting on reintegration at this level. These included; the impact of difficult home circumstances, peers and familiar adults providing support, schools providing a sense of belonging and promoting feelings of safety, security and inclusion and links to the wider community. These factors were viewed as interacting with child-based factors including; difficulties in emotional regulation, levels of motivation, self-efficacy, academic ability, resilience and a positive vision for the future. Many of these factors resonate with Maslow’s (1943) hierarchy of needs. As summarised by Lawrence (2011), a multi-agency approach involving the interaction of factors within the micro-system, to develop an individualised programme, is crucial for effective reintegration.

5.2.1.2 The Meso-system

The meso-system describes relationships within the micro-system, e.g. connections between families and schools or families and the local community. A lack of productive relationships between families and school settings is highlighted within the literature as having a detrimental effect to reintegration (Thomas, 2015; Hart, 2013; Lawrence, 2011; Lown, 2005). Literature also highlights how productive relationships can be fostered through clear channels of communication. Findings from this study indicated the potential for participants to become isolated from their local communities as a result of their exclusion and PRU placement. Connections between these factors and child experiences also form part of this system. Despite negative experiences of school that participants in this study reported, they remained positive that their reintegration was a new beginning. Reintegration processes which participants valued, such as transition days and their involvement in decision-making, were also viewed as interacting factors within this system.

5.2.1.3 The Exo-system

The exo-system relates to wider social systems which could have an indirect influence on a child e.g. government policy which impacts on educational practice. Although pupil views on relevant policy and legislation were not directly explored within this study, factors which were viewed as supporting reintegration linked to those recommended in previous policy guidance. This was most apparent in the views that participants expressed related to inclusion and a sense of belonging between settings as their reintegration commenced. Previous DfES (2004b) guidance identified a barrier to reintegration as a school which was not truly inclusive in terms of ethos, attitudes and expectations.
Additionally, participants expressed the importance of their involvement in decision-making. This is emphasised in the Children and Families Act (2014) and Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice (CoP) (DfE, 2014). The rationale for this study was also driven by a desire to explore methods used to elicit children and young people’s (CYPs) views, as a result of the increased requirement to do so in current policy and legislation.

5.2.1.4 The Macro-system

The macro-system concerns the cultural context in which a child lives and includes factors such as socio-economic status and ethnicity. Given the lack of ethnic diversity within this sample, which reflected the wider population of learners attending the PRUs involved, ethnicity was not communicated in participant’s views as a possible factor influencing reintegration. However, as previously illustrated, reunification with siblings was a key factor in influencing how participants viewed their reintegration. Although outside of the remit of this study, it would be helpful for future research to explore living situations and socio-economic status to further explore how such factors impact upon reintegration.

5.2.1.5 Summary of Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) eco-systemic perspective

The eco-systemic perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) is consistent with the notion of resilience. Resilience has also been defined as the product of an individual’s interaction with the environment (Cefai, 2008). The importance of resilience was evident in a number of themes identified within this study. As such, considering factors identified as supporting or being counter-productive to reintegration through an eco-systemic perspective enabled a holistic view of reintegration experiences from this sample, to be represented. In summary, the success of reintegration for participants was dependent upon a range of factors located at different levels of Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) model. These included the; individual, family, school settings, local community and LA context, which each had their own responsibility in supporting reintegration and impacted on each other. A summary model of these factors is illustrated in Figure 9.

After considering the findings of this study through Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) model, it was concluded that the absence of these factors could have a negative impact on an individual’s reintegration. Such thinking has also been applied to participant’s experiences of permanent and fixed term exclusions. Participant’s responses indicated that in the absence of the supportive factors identified, there was the potential to experience a ‘lack of fit’ within mainstream education. This ‘lack of fit’ appeared to be interpreted as ‘challenging behaviour’ which led to occasions of exclusion. As a result, the social model of disability, which promotes the consideration of environmental factors, also supports the understanding of participant’s experiences in this study.
Figure 9: Summary of factors impacting on reintegration according to Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) eco-systemic perspective and findings from this study.
5.2.2 Social model of disability

Theories of disability have developed from medical perspectives with a negative focus on individual limitations, to the social model of disability which illustrates how barriers in society can have a disabling effect on individual’s lives (Dowling & Dolan, 2001; Campbell & Oliver, 1997). Disability has therefore been viewed as a socially constructed experience of discrimination, inequality and segregation (Kelly, 2005). Particularly relevant here are Thomas’ (1999) concepts of ‘barriers to doing’ (related to physical, economic and material barriers) and ‘barriers to being’ (related to inappropriate behaviour which can have a negative impact on an individual’s sense of self) (Connors & Stalker, 2007). Evidence for each of these barriers related to reintegration emerged from this study. ‘Barriers to being’ related to an inflexible curriculum and lack of clear channels of communication between school settings and parents. ‘Barriers to doing’ were observed in the negative labelling and subsequent stereotyping from peers that participants reported.

5.2.2.1 Educational psychologists and the social model of disability

Educational Psychologists (EPs) are involved in enhancing children’s achievement and well-being. It is argued that being involved in identifying SEN implies that a CYP has a deficit and ensures that difficulties remain ‘within-child’ (Beaver, 2011). In line with social model thinking, Beaver (2011) advocates for difficulties instead being interpreted as an education system which has a problem to solve. Within this, the system of influential adults (i.e. parents, teaching staff), have the resources to promote positive change for any individual (Beaver, 2011). Educational psychology practice is therefore observed to reflect the social model of disability in working to identify what is wrong with the system surrounding individuals, rather than with individuals themselves. Psychological skills may be useful in supporting the ability to create change in the attitudes and behaviour of adults, in contrast to devising interventions for a CYP. The goal should be to change the functioning of the system surrounding a child in order to enable the child to change (Beaver, 2011).

EPs are in a privileged position to engage with the system surrounding a CYP. This consideration will be given further attention when implications of the findings of this study, specifically for EPs, are discussed. By not being a full member of this system, EPs are able to adopt a “meta perspective” (Beaver, 2011: 16), meaning that they are in a removed position to consider the wider system around an individual, including the school, family and any other key individuals and influences. This systemic perspective has a social constructionist approach and emphasises circular, rather than linear causality (Beaver, 2011). Circular causality promotes thinking guided by an ‘opportunities framework’ of practice, whilst linear causality is linked to a child deficit model. Circular causality does not
seek to define the cause of an individual’s difficulty, but acknowledges this as one part of the whole system (Beaver, 2011).

The relevance of the social model of disability is also evident in the SEND CoP (DfE, 2014). This stresses the need to remove “barriers to learning and participation in mainstream education” (DfE, 2014: 25). The social model is therefore viewed as an appropriate model through which to consider the findings of this study, so that ‘barriers to being’, and the role of the environment in constructing situations in which pupils find themselves in, can be further explored.

Following the identification of relevant theoretical models through which to consider the findings of this study, this chapter will now turn to a number of themes for discussion. Each theme will be considered in relation to the findings of this study, existing literature, policy and legislation. Themes include:

- Interpretation of reintegration
- Factors supporting reintegration
- Pupil voice

5.3 Interpretation of reintegration

5.3.1 New beginning

Participants in this study framed their anticipated experience of full-time reintegration into mainstream or specialist provision positively and saw this as an opportunity for a new beginning. When working with 13 learners attending a PRU who were regarded as experiencing behaviour, emotional and social difficulties (BESD), Pillay et al (2013), commented that learners experienced optimism through a similar positive vision, which contributed to feelings of assurance and security. Whilst Pillay et al’s (2013) sample consisted of secondary aged pupils, Jalali and Morgan (2017), reported that primary pupils wished to return to mainstream education, whilst the majority of their secondary aged sample appeared to “opt-out” (Jalali & Morgan, 2017: 8). The researchers attributed this difference to time spent in education, with primary pupils focusing negative feelings towards their individual schools and recognised that their PRU placement was not permanent. Primary aged pupils here attributed their previous experiences “as being specifically within school” (Jalali & Morgan, 2017: 8), illustrating feelings of hope regarding their future education. Reintegration has also been argued to restore clarity and signify a return to perceived normality for those who were unclear about the reason for their PRU placement (Jalali & Morgan, 2017). These reasons may have accounted for the desire to complete a
successful reintegration to either a mainstream or specialist setting, which participants in this study demonstrated.

Self-efficacy may also have contributed to participant’s positive feelings towards their reintegration. Bandura (1977) defined self-efficacy as; “an individual’s belief in their capability to perform a given behaviour through performance accomplishments and vicarious experience” (Regan & Howe, 2017: 94). All participants were able to highlight advantages of their PRU placement. The experience of positive emotions, perhaps supported by increased opportunities to experience success at a PRU, has been argued to build resilience and expand perceptions in an inclusive way (Fredrickson, 2003). Drawing on resilience perspectives to support pupils attending alternative provision has been advocated within literature (Hart, 2013). The concept of self-efficacy here, was therefore interpreted as a factor supporting the development of resilience. Developing resilience during reintegration however, depends on a balance between risk and promotive factors (Pillay et al, 2013). This illustrates the need to raise awareness of resilience, as an integral part of reintegration processes.

Participants in this study discussed environmental factors which contributed to the positive outlook on their reintegration including; the size of the school environment and the increased opportunities they saw in being able to access a broader range of subjects. Within Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) micro-system and consistent with social model thinking, the environment has been regarded as a potential protective factor of a PRU which contributed to reintegration success (Hart, 2013). In particular, the importance of a PRU emulating the features of a mainstream environment was reported to assist pupil reintegration (Hart, 2013). Conversely, pupils have indicated that smaller class sizes within PRU settings promotes positive learning and behavioural outcomes (Michael & Frederickson, 2013). This view was shared by the participants in this study who were reintegrating into a specialist setting and demonstrated a preference for a smaller environment. In contrast, those reintegrating into a mainstream setting preferred a larger school due to the belief that this led to knowing more people. The importance of relationships with peers will be revisited later in this chapter.

Pupils reintegrating into a mainstream setting in this study reported that they were looking forward to accessing a broader range of subjects. This highlighted the narrower curriculum they felt they had experienced when attending a PRU. This finding was also reported by Michael and Frederickson (2013), when working with participants aged 12-16, who commented on the need for a more diverse curriculum which was tailored to their needs. Pupils expressed disappointment at particular GCSE subjects not being available at the PRU they attended (Michael & Frederickson, 2013). An unexpected finding here therefore related
to participants, who at a younger age to Michael and Frederickson’s (2013) sample, had considered the implications of a narrower curriculum to their own development. They related this to their enjoyment of specific lessons, as well as the perception that access to a greater range of subjects led to a greater level of education. This level of insight had not been anticipated from a younger sample of participants.

Highlighting factors that participant’s value about their school environment and those observed to support their reintegration was considered essential given that limited research has investigated why reintegration may fail from pupil perspectives. It is hypothesised that promoting factors which pupils therefore value would go some way to countering reasons for why reintegration may fail. This could be an integral feature of supporting pupils to complete a successful full-time reintegration (Jalali & Morgan, 2017).

5.3.2 Self-awareness

The manner in which participants viewed themselves formed an essential part of their reintegration experiences. This was consistent with previous research which refers to individual factors, observed within the micro-system (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), as both enabling and creating barriers towards a successful reintegration (Lown, 2005; Michael & Frederickson, 2013; Pillay et al, 2013; Jalali & Morgan, 2017).

5.3.2.1 Anger and aggression

Participants in this study frequently discussed experiencing difficulties in emotional regulation and characterised the challenging behaviour they exhibited, which had contributed to their PRU placement, by the existence of anger, aggression and frustration. This led to them acknowledging labels of ‘angry’ and ‘aggressive’ as being relevant to them. Anger emerged as a theme in Jalali and Morgan’s (2017) research, with participants reporting a rigid belief in the need for equality, which in the absence of, triggered instances of anger. Pillay et al (2013) emphasised that the experience of anger was a common denominator for learners from their study who described their reintegration experiences. Emotions, based on feelings of anger, anxiety and loneliness were therefore interpreted as a risk factor to completing a successful reintegration. Researchers have argued that there is an emotional tone to all behaviour and that emotional difficulties contribute to a range of behaviour and disorders (Schaffer, 1996; Donald et al, 2006). Conversely, emotional difficulties are a secondary effect to all disabilities and disorders (Donald et al, 2006). Pillay et al (2013) concluded that it was not surprising to find emotions as a factor influencing reintegration experiences for learners with BESD, as was also the case in this study. The importance of being aware that emotional experiences are so prevalent for this population of learners is therefore clear.
Secondary aged pupils have previously been critical of mainstream schools on the grounds that they fail to understand the reasons for outbursts of anger. These pupils reported that schools engaged with behaviours, not the cause of them and did not operate within an environment that made an effort to help pupils to manage their emotions (Levinson & Thompson, 2016). In contrast to being stigmatised or punished for outbursts in mainstream schools, pupils identified that at PRUs they were encouraged to leave their class and calm down (Levinson & Thompson, 2016). Pupil responses here indicated the need for resolutions based on thinking in line with the social model of disability, rather than a within-child deficit model. Similarly, unfair treatment has been identified as a barrier to achieving positive outcomes and has been related to concerns about labelling in the wider community (Michael & Frederickson, 2013). Participants indicated that being negatively labelled could result in biased approaches to discipline and stereotyping. Such concerns are substantiated by previous research asserting that pupils attending alternative provision were at a greater risk of negative labelling by others (McNulty & Roseboro, 2009; de Jong & Griffiths, 2006). Examples of participants identifying themselves as ‘angry’ and ‘aggressive’ and concerns about labelling led to the consideration of the concept of stigma.

5.3.2.2 Stigma and stereotyping

Where stigma is clearly defined within literature, authors often cite Goffman's (1963) definition as an; “attribute that is deeply discrediting” and that reduces the bearer “from a whole and usual person to a tainted, discounted one” (Goffman, 1963: 3). A similar definition, relevant for the purpose of the arguments to be made here, is that offered by Crocker et al (1998);

*stigmatized individuals possess, or are believed to possess, some attribute or characteristic, that conveys a social identity that is devalued in a particular social context* (Crocker et al, 1998: 505).

Anger and aggression were interpreted by participants in this study as characteristics which resulted in them being devalued in an educational context. Due to the variation in definitions of stigma, Link and Phelan (2001) sought to conceptualise this concept which may help to explain the manner in which participants identified themselves as ‘angry’ in this study. Stigma is argued to exist when a number of interrelated components emerge (Link & Phelan, 2001). In the first component, human differences which are particularly noticeable, are distinguished and labelled. Being ‘angry’, as identified by participants, could have initially manifested through others (e.g. pupils/teaching staff) identifying this as an undesirable characteristic within a classroom context. Further exploration here could have included
investigating why specific differences are singled out, whilst others are ignored (Link & Phelan, 2001). 

In the second component, labelled differences become linked to stereotypes. As Crocker et al’s (1998) definition highlights, a label links an individual to undesirable characteristics which then form a stereotype. Labels have been argued to contribute to pupil difficulties and lead to disengagement with education (Thomas, 2015). It may have been the case that participants in this study were labelled with an undesirable characteristic such as ‘angry’, which became linked to an ‘aggressive’ stereotype.

In the third component, a labelled individual is placed in a specific category with labels representing a separation of ‘us’ from ‘them’. Such thinking was demonstrated in participant responses when referring to children attending the PRU as being “angry like me” and when reporting “everybody here (PRU) has it (anger)”. Disability research has emphasised the effect of dominant discourses on how an individual’s self-identity is formed (Kelly, 2005). As such, discourses of anger may have proved a factor in the interpretation of anger as part of their self-identity, which participants in this study demonstrated.

The fourth component involves labelled individuals becoming devalued and rejected as they are set apart and linked to undesirable characteristics. This can lead to status loss and discrimination (Link & Phelan, 2001). This was vividly described by one participant in this study who reported that a peer had announced to a class newcomer that he was a bully which resulted in others being fearful of him. Connors and Stalker (2007) identified that children could be made to feel different and of lesser value following the actions of others, as observed here. Linked to status loss and discrimination is stigmatised individuals being disadvantaged in respect of life chances including education and psychological well-being (Link & Phelan, 2001). Participants in this study expressed this concern when considering the possible implications of a narrower PRU curriculum. Furthermore, a consequence of negative labelling and stereotyping is said to be the reduction of an individual’s status in the eyes of the stigmatiser (Link & Phelan, 2001). This could have implications for pupils whose reintegration involves them returning to a previously attended setting, in cases where they were not permanently excluded, and the likelihood of this being successful if negative labelling and stereotyping already exist.

An additional approach to understanding the impact of stereotypes is through the ‘stereotype threat’ concept (Steele & Aronson, 1995). Here, a stereotype is said to become a challenge when an individual is evaluated in accordance with a stereotype or if an individual confirms a stereotype through their behaviour. Participants in this study gave accounts of peers evaluating them with an aggressive stereotype. It could also have been the case that they
confirmed the stereotype through their behaviour, as explained by a self-fulfilling prophecy. Merton (1948) suggested that self-fulfilling prophecies can occur when an individual behaves in a way that the expectations placed on them by another individual, are confirmed (Hebl & King, 2004). This raises questions as to whether self-fulfilling prophecies may have been a factor in the behaviours which contributed to a PRU placement.

The final component emphasises that stigmatisation is dependent on access to social, economic and political power (Link & Phelan, 2001). This power allows for difference to be identified, stereotypes to be constructed, labelled individuals being placed into specific categories, and the presence of rejection, exclusion and discrimination. An exploration of power differentials which allowed the identification of differentness and the separation into distinct categories was outside the remit of this research. Further exploration into the extent to which power was present would have allowed conclusions to be drawn on whether subsequent stigma may result.

In summary, Link and Phelan (2001) apply the term stigma when elements of labelling, stereotyping, status loss and discrimination are present in a power situation which enables the components of stigma to develop. Clearly communicating stigma as a concept is an important implication for professionals who seek to raise awareness and challenge stigma as it occurs. As children within disability research have continued to emphasise, the experience of impairment or disability is just one aspect of their lives, which may be more important to some than others and as a fluid concept, can be deconstructed and reconstructed beyond assigned stereotypes (Kelly, 2005). Perhaps this same message should be given to those identifying themselves as ‘angry’ and ‘aggressive’ due to the apparent existence of stereotypes as observed within this study.

5.3.2.3 Motivation

A further characteristic within the micro-system (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) which appeared to impact upon how participant’s interpreted their reintegration related to levels of motivation. This included how motivated they were to complete a successful full-time reintegration, as well as the motivating effect that praise and rewards had for them. Findings indicated that participants were equally motivated whether it was mainstream or specialist provision they were reintegrating into. Goal motivation has been recognised as supporting reintegration success (Lown, 2005), and as impacting on self-efficacy and educational performance (Hufton et al, 2002). It has been suggested that those with motivation related to task goals (related to intrinsic value, rather than external rewards), are more likely to succeed (Khan, 2003). Consistent with Hart’s (2013) findings, participants in this study emphasised the importance of external rewards in the form of points/reward systems and the school
environment they were reintegrating into, as the reasons for their motivation to complete a successful reintegration. Based on Khan’s (2003) assertions, the longevity of participant’s levels of motivation and whether this would amount to motivation based on intrinsic value, could therefore be questioned.

5.3.2.4 Academic ability

Attention has also been given in reintegration literature to academic ability. Educational professionals have suggested that good intellectual ability contributes to facilitating a “successful and sustained transfer to a new school” (Lown, 2005: 54). Intellectual ability is said to offer a level of resilience which can support participants to adjust and engage in every aspect of school life. Using resilience as a concept to understand the processes that affect at-risk individuals has previously been debated (Lown, 2005). Luthar et al (2000), following a critical evaluation of the construct of resilience, concluded that continuing to investigate risk and protective processes had the potential to expand developmental theory and provide useful avenues for intervention. The importance of resilience was prevalent in a number of identified themes within this study and will continue to be explored when discussing factors which participants identified as supporting their reintegration.

5.4 Factors supporting reintegration

5.4.1 Inclusion

CYP have a right to be educated in a safe environment (Jennifer & Shaughnessy, 2005). Linked to the social model of disability, when exploring environmental factors which contributed to reintegration experiences, safety emerged as a factor which promoted a sense of inclusion across settings. This was observed to operate within the *meso-system* (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), as it concerned the relationships between school settings. In this study, safety related to participant’s need to feel safe and in their understanding of why PRU processes e.g. physical restraint, were in place to ensure their safety. Participants demonstrated that they had come to accept physical restraint after finding this challenging initially. This was a finding replicated by a previous study whereby primary aged pupils identified physical restraint as a feature of their reintegration experience (Jalali & Morgan, 2017). Furthermore, research has shown that pupils have expressed a desire for safer areas within mainstream settings (Michael & Frederickson, 2013), comparing those to the environment of a PRU which offer a safe place when they feel anxious or angry (Pillay et al, 2013).

Participants in this study indicated a need to feel included and belonging to each of the settings they attended, as per the reintegration process. Research concerning belonging
have found that it can affect a variety of outcomes for CYP (Cartmell & Bond, 2015). Belonging, motivation, engagement, academic achievement and attendance are all said to be at risk if a pupil lacks a sense of belonging (Goodenow, 1993). It seems fair to consider that reintegration could also fall within this category. Specific to the work of refugee children, belonging has been recognised as a protective factor in their resettlement and is linked to lower depression and improved self-esteem, regardless of the level of past exposure to adversity (Kia-Keating & Ellis, 2007). Although a very different population of learners to participants in this study, reintegration involves a form of resettlement, indicating that sense of belonging may also serve as an influential protective factor for those experiencing reintegration. After exploring belonging and its effect on pupil motivation and achievement across diverse groups, Faircloth and Hamm (2005) conceptualised belonging as having a mediating role between achievement and motivation. Interestingly, themes of motivation and achievement arose from participant’s responses in this study. Perhaps it was the case that a sense of belonging fostered during their time spent at a PRU had contributed to the levels of motivation and desire to achieve a successful reintegration which they demonstrated, which in turn contributed to improved self-efficacy, within their positive visions for the future.

Research which has explored the concept of belonging, emphasises its complexity. Belonging is not a fixed concept, but fluid and dynamic and is influenced by internal and external factors (Cartmell & Bond, 2015). Factors are observed across all levels of Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) eco-systemic perspective. Schools have a important part to play in promoting a sense of belonging for pupils (Waters et al, 2010), and should be aware that specific practice can promote, or hinder a sense of belonging. Munn and Lloyd (2005) are clear that schools have a role in supporting pupils to develop a strong sense of self-efficacy, self-worth and sense of belonging. Whilst research demonstrates the importance of a sense of belonging, particularly to a school community, less research has explored factors which result in pupils feeling that they belong (Cartmell & Bond, 2015). Of the limited research in this area, Osterman (2000) highlighted that relationships with teachers and peers and organisational strategies, which encourage positive interactions with those in the school community, were found to enhance a sense of belonging. In support of this, Sancho and Cline (2012) concluded that peer interactions were of particular importance. The value placed on the support from peers was also evident in this study and will be discussed in the following section.

Linked specifically to reintegration, belonging has been identified as a key psychological factor influencing views on whether pupils wished to return to mainstream education (Jalali & Morgan, 2017). Pupils have previously reported feeling connected to their PRUs, and linked this to the increased support they received which resulted in them feeling part of a family
(Levinson & Thompson, 2016). Primary pupils also conveyed a sense of belonging to their mainstream schools, whilst the limited connectedness that secondary aged pupils demonstrated towards their schools, reflected feeling inadequate and not being able to fit in (Jalali & Morgan, 2017). This serves as a reminder of the implications for those who experience a limited sense of belonging within their school settings.

Adopting a nurturing and inclusive ethos can promote a sense of belonging and feeling connected to a school environment (Thomas, 2015; Lawrence, 2011). Lawrence (2011) reported that reintegration to mainstream school was most successful in situations where a receiving school adopted inclusive approaches. This included staff with appropriate training, being committed to an inclusive ideology, and in which the provision available, met the needs of reintegrating pupils (Thomas, 2015). Again, adopting social model thinking, schools are urged to reduce barriers to participation for reintegrating pupils by embedding inclusion within policy and practice. This should be accepted by pupils, parents, staff, governors, the local community and more systematically at the exo-system level (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), by a Local Authority (LA) culture (Thomas, 2015). Conversely, a barrier to reintegration was said to be a school that is not truly inclusive in terms of ethos, attitudes and expectations, findings which supported previous DfES (2004b) guidance.

The importance of support and links to the local community, as emphasised here, was felt to be disrupted for participants in this study who lived within a large rural county. Participants discussed the lengthy journey time involved due to their attendance at a PRU and reported that they were looking forward to their reintegration due to the shorter journey times. The impact of participants spending additional time away from their own communities was considered in relation to their sense of belonging to their wider community. This has been highlighted as a factor in supporting reintegration processes. Munn and Lloyd (2005) emphasised that pupils were aware that their exclusion had compromised their reputation within the local community. This was viewed as one example of the possible ripple effects of school exclusion, which also include; exclusion from friendship groups and being “deprived of normal family life and relationships” (Munn & Lloyd, 2005: 216). Relationships as a supportive factor to reintegration experiences will now be discussed.
5.4.2 Relationships

In line with much of the research in this area, relationships within the micro-system (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), emerged as a key source of support for participants as part of their reintegration. Relationships were divided into sub-themes of friends, family and teachers.

5.4.2.1 Friends

Those who had begun their phased reintegration reported that they were looking forward to being reunited with their friends. This was consistent with Levinson and Thompson’s (2016) assertion that attending a PRU resulted in disrupted relationships and fractured friendships. Participants in this study viewed friends as a source of support. In earlier work, Lown (2005) identified that relationship networks between young people were hugely important to reintegration success. Pupils gave insights into a supportive “force field” (Lown, 2005: 53), created by social networks, or alternatively, how this could affect their reintegration e.g. through bullying. Participants in this study discussed bullying as a concern related to their reintegration. The impact of negative peer interactions, as highlighted previously through the conceptualisation of labelling and stigma, was clear in this study.

Hart (2013) found that staff and pupils considered friendships to be a protective factor when attending a PRU which countered feelings of stress and the effects of adversity (Daniel & Wassell, 2002). However, promoting peer relationships was acknowledged as an ongoing challenge for staff, with many pupils arriving at a PRU with limited social skills (Hart, 2013). When exploring factors to achieving positive outcomes within a PRU, relationships with peers were discussed by participants in Michael and Frederickson’s (2013) study. Participants viewed peer relationships as promoting feelings of safety and reassurance when they first arrived at a PRU. This led to the assumption that positive relationships with peers within settings that pupils reintegrate into, could result in the presence of similar feelings.

Pillay et al (2013) identified relationships with peers as both a promotive and risk factor in the experience of reintegration. Reintegrated learners expressed a need to ‘catch up’ with academic work, which was provided by informal peer support during lessons. This need was also expressed by participants in this study. Peer support has been reported to contribute to a sense of attachment within a school, with organised peer support groups, such as ‘buddy’ systems, promoting reintegration experiences. Peer relationships in this example were prearranged and it would be important to carefully consider the pairing of peers to prevent relationships from becoming strained and impacting on the reintegration process (Pillay et al, 2013). Research has also highlighted that reintegration is less successful when a pupil has few peer relationships in their receiving school, or if new peers do not accept them into social groups upon entering or returning to a setting. It is therefore recommended that
reintegration packages should be individualised and embrace strategies which support peer relationships to develop (DfES, 2004b).

5.4.2.2 Family

Literature also highlights the importance of family support in contributing to a successful reintegration. Researchers have frequently cited how important it is to engage and involve parents/carers in a child’s PRU placement and their reintegration (Thomas, 2015; Hart, 2013; Lawrence, 2011; Lown, 2005), through providing subtle messages about valuing their placement, encouragement to attend (Michael & Frederickson, 2013), and facilitating visits to receiving settings. The most successful reintegration is said to occur when a pupil has parents who are supportive of, and positive towards, their child and their education (Pillay et al, 2013). Specific to participants in this study, the success of reintegration for primary aged pupils has largely been attributed to an integrated, multi-agency approach involving schools, PRUs and families (Levinson & Thompson, 2016; Lawrence, 2011), facilitated by clear structures, trusting relationships and regular communication (Gutherson et al, 2011). Regular communication is particularly important given that educational practitioners may encounter disaffected parents who have negative feelings towards reintegration after previous breakdowns in provision. This in turn could influence pupil perceptions and compromise reintegration success (Thomas, 2015).

Attachment has been studied in relation to school exclusion given that the majority of pupils who have been excluded from school experience relational traumas and losses in their own homes (Bomber & Hughes, 2013). Relational trauma and losses are defined as:

> what a child might experience either through intentional or unintentional harm when he or she has to survive extraordinary levels of stress, often in a toxic familial context (Bomber & Hughes, 2013: 5).

The consequences of exclusions for pupils can be severe if interpreted as another rejection and/or failure and become apparent within the criminal justice and/or mental health systems. Consequently, the importance of relationships including sensitive, attuned care and resilience is emphasised (Bomber & Hughes, 2013). Again, resilience was relevant to a further theme within this study.

YP are considered resilient having withstood hardship, but continued to thrive (Bomber & Hughes, 2013). When working with ‘resilient youth’, Sroufe et al (2005) found that they could identify at least one significant relationship with an adult. This led to resilience being secondary to having a meaningful relationship with an adult (Bomber & Hughes, 2013). Developing quality relationships supports pupils to achieve and is said to be central to
emotional growth, given that those with disrupted attachment histories require “repetitive, positive and healthy relational experiences” (Bomber & Hughes, 2013: 10). It is therefore important for those working with pupils as part of the reintegration process to consider how significant relationships can be formed. In addition, the management of feelings could form part of intervention work (Bomber & Hughes, 2013). Research has shown that despite experiencing difficulties in emotional regulation, those who have experienced relational trauma and loss may be better than peers at recognising anger and fear due to their increased familiarity with these emotions (Luke & Banerjee, 2013). The experience of anger was prevalent for participants in this study and may be related to the reason suggested here. This serves as a reminder of why this population of learners are at an increased risk of being misinterpreted, misunderstood and excluded from education (Bomber & Hughes, 2013).

Linked to attachment difficulties, participants in this study placed particular value on unification with siblings, as a factor in how they viewed their reintegration. In this way, family was viewed as a motivating factor for pupils to complete a successful reintegration. In line with other studies, pupils in this study referred to unsettled family lives and volatility in the home, including their families moving around (Levinson & Thompson, 2016). Considered within the macro-system (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), Thomas (2015) noted that historically, pupils who have attended PRU settings have been from poorer socio-economic backgrounds and broken homes, who experience increased levels of disadvantage. Similarly, Munn and Lloyd (2005) commented that exclusion can result from difficulties experienced at home and the experience of very stressful lives. YP expressed the view that schools should be more understanding of their lives outside of school (Munn & Lloyd, 2005). Whilst participants living arrangements were outside of the remit of this research, this could be a potential focus for future research alongside consideration of the cultural context in which participants live, as part of the macro-system (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

5.4.2.3 Teaching staff

The final source of relationship support which participants identified, related to teaching staff. Teacher support has been found to be a protective factor for children experiencing emotional and behavioural difficulties (Poplinger et al, 2009), whilst the influence of teachers' expectations and attitudes towards pupils is documented in much psychological research on disaffection (Munn & Lloyd, 2005). The issue of quality relationships between pupils and adults is also recognised in relation to positive school experiences. Literature highlights that relationships with staff are fostered through characteristics such as being fun, humorous and calm (Levinson & Thompson, 2016; Hart, 2013). Teacher’s use of humour was identified as a positive characteristic by participants in this study. Linked also to the importance of a
sense of belonging, Lown (2005) highlighted that positive relationships with staff were viewed by pupils as impacting on feelings of belonging and comfort within the school environment. Staff also recognised the benefits of forming pupil-adult relationships quickly and that it was their responsibility to make this happen (Lown, 2005).

Participants in this study described teachers offering support with their learning, although they acknowledged there was a balance between this and opportunities for independence, to be achieved. This was a finding consistent with YP in Michael and Frederickson’s (2013) study, who discussed teacher relationships most frequently in relation to achieving academic success. Positive relationships with school staff are argued to have a stabilising effect during the reintegration process as a source of emotional support and increasing a sense of attachment (Pillay et al, 2013). Pupils indicated that free access to a significant adult was a source of resilience during their reintegration (Pillay et al, 2013). However, as participants in this study intimated, without a structured set of agreements, pupils could become over-reliant on this support.

Participants in this study also discussed difficult and strained relationships with teachers from settings in which they had experienced exclusion. Likewise, Pillay’s (2013) sample of pupils at the end of primary/beginning of secondary age range (11-14 years) discussed reintegration experiences which included an unconstructive relationship with at least one adult in the setting they were reintegrating into. A lack of reciprocal respect was reported to often result in verbal altercations between pupils and teachers, resulting in some pupils feeling rejected by adults in a classroom (Pillay et al, 2013). Additionally, teachers expressed expectations that all learners should adhere to behavioural codes, which seemed to be lacking in the behaviour of reintegrating pupils. The pressure for raised academic standards in mainstream education was observed to produce a dichotomy between expected and actual behaviour. Strained relationships between teachers and pupils resulting from a lack of flexibility in supporting a pupil who was reintegrating, was found to be the most significant factor in reintegrating pupils demonstrating “poor-to-fit behaviour” (Pillay et al, 2013: 320). Such findings have implications and call for flexibility in the reintegration process. This also relates more widely to a school context and will be discussed in the following section.

5.4.3 Processes

The findings of this study indicated that participants valued certain procedural factors, within the *meso*-system (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), which supported their reintegration. Factors included; transition days, their involvement in decision-making and a flexible curriculum.

Research highlights that in instances where reintegration meetings were held at the start of this process, where pupils were gradually reintegrated, and where communication between
their receiving school and home was good, the process was a positive one (Pillay et al, 2013). Participants in this study were provided with opportunities to attend their receiving settings for afternoons or a number of days a week before their full-time reintegration. They reported that they valued transition days and their reintegration being a gradual process. This contributed to reducing the level of anxiety and uncertainty that they may otherwise have experienced.

5.4.3.1 Decision-making

All participants reported that decisions related to their reintegration were made for them and that they were informed by parents/carers that their reintegration was due to commence. This also extended to them being informed that they were to attend a PRU in the first instance. This was in spite of research suggesting that the likelihood of successful reintegration can be increased when pupils are active agents and are informed of the timeline for the process (Levinson & Thompson, 2016). Kelly (2005) reported that professionals admitted that children identified as having learning disabilities were not appropriately involved in decision-making processes, nor were they contributors to service development. Instead, parents were viewed as decision-makers. Parents were found to support the decisions of professionals to exclude children from reviews and reported that their absence was appropriate due to fears that their behaviour would disrupt the process and they would not understand the information discussed. This parental collusion with professionals essentially silenced children's voices (Kelly, 2005). An extension of this study could have been to explore whether parents/carers shared similar beliefs.

Jelly et al (2000) described a 'continuum of participation', ranging from a low end where pupils' views were gathered to inform decision-making processes, to a high end in which their views are used and directly affect decision-making processes. It has been noted that those with BESD are unlikely to have their views represented further along the continuum as they are viewed as rejecting the school system and have been excluded (Lown, 2005). The idea of a continuum of participation links to Hart’s (1992) ladder of participation. This has since been adapted by Sutcliff and Birney (2015) as a model through which to consider citizenship and participation. More specifically, it considers a pupil’s involvement in meetings and planning. This model is observed to link to the social model of disability in seeking to remove barriers to enable full participation in meetings and planning. Sutcliff and Birney’s (2015) model, as represented in Figure 10, highlights separate rungs on a ladder. They note that participation can be at different levels in different contexts, and that there can be significant overlap between each rung.
A description of each rung of the ladder is as follows:

- **Absent** – Professionals talk about a child but consider them as a case rather than as a person.
- **Informed** – A child knows that adults are meeting to think about them and are informed about decisions that are made.
- **Considered** – Adults use their judgement to express what they believe a child would think, when a child is unable or unwilling to speak or make choices for themselves.
- **Represented** – A child’s views are shared through direct quotes or choices they have made.
- **Consulted** – A child answers direct questions at a meeting, or responds to decisions made for them.
- **Participant** – A child is active in a meeting and asks their own questions. They begin to contribute to decision-making and have an influence over planned outcomes.
- **Partner** – A child is involved in deciding what will be discussed e.g. leading a section of a meeting or suggesting targets for themselves and actions for others.
- **Planner** – A child gives adults feedback related to what works/ does not work for them. They may support adults to evaluate practice or influence future service provision.

(Sutcliff and Birney, 2015)

Participants in this study expressed views indicating that their participation in reintegration decisions fell at the lower rungs of Sutcliff and Birney’s (2015) model. Such a model is one
example of a “person centred process” (Sutcliff & Birney, 2015: 9), which when drawing upon aspects of social psychology, positive psychology and personal construct theory, aims to promote personalised learning, resilience, self-awareness, and feelings of self-efficacy and belonging. Each of these factors were relevant to participant’s experiences of reintegration identified in this study. Sutcliff and Birney’s (2015) model is therefore proposed as a useful model for professionals to consider how participants are included and the extent to which they are involved in the planning and decisions made regarding their reintegration.

5.4.3.2 Flexible curriculum

An additional procedural factor identified by participants related to flexibility within the curriculum. Findings of this study indicated that participants viewed school subjects as irrelevant to them which led to a sense of disengagement and lack of motivation within an inflexible curriculum. Consistent with previous DfES (2004b) guidance, which identified inflexibility within the national curriculum as a barrier to a successful reintegration, participants reported that they favoured unstructured times and valued opportunities for choice within their day. Here, factors between the meso- and exo-system (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), are seen to relate given the impact of policy and legislation on relationships pupils developed within and between settings. In support of this, personalised learning experiences have been reported to contribute to the progress that pupils made whilst attending a PRU, in comparison to their attendance at a mainstream school (Hart, 2013). This was the result of PRU experiences allowing for a pupil’s basic needs to be met and their engagement in learning to be fostered (Hart, 2013).

Curriculum engagement and personalisation were identified as factors which support pupils with BESD to achieve positive outcomes in Michael and Frederickson’s (2013) study. Pupils here indicated that they developed academic competency through work being differentiated to suit their learning needs. They identified occasions in which work had been too challenging or not engaging, which had a negative impact on their behaviour. Pupils communicated their desire for increased flexibility within the curriculum to take into account emotional difficulties. A more varied curriculum, personalised to suit individual needs, was therefore advocated (Michael & Frederickson, 2013). A flexible curriculum, described as being more fun and interactive has been identified as a positive feature of PRUs (Levinson & Thompson, 2016). By their definition, PRUs are required to create environments which differ from mainstream school to support pupil well-being. Without this, it is likely that the same pattern of behaviour which resulted in a pupil’s exclusion could occur. PRUs therefore have to be flexible in how they operate. However, when a PRU achieves this, pupils are likely to become more settled, more engaged in their learning and then be considered ready to begin
their reintegration (Levinson & Thompson, 2016). This led Levinson and Thompson (2016) to question the nature of mainstream secondary provision, as per their sample of learners, due to their size and impersonal nature. They observed that child-centred learning and individualised approaches had become unfashionable in mainstream education. Linked to social model thinking, the researchers highlighted the need for change in mainstream schools towards more personalised approaches. It is hypothesised that this would contribute to increased feelings of inclusion and a sense of belonging, which participants in this study clearly desired.

5.5 Pupil Voice

5.5.1 Policy and legislation

Given the additional focus in this study on the method by which pupil’s views were elicited, this is an area which will now be revisited. As discussed in chapter two, current policy and legislation promotes the importance of CYPs views being established and represented. This extends to guaranteeing their involvement in decision-making processes (Harding & Atkinson, 2009). Following the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), which recognised a child’s right to be involved in decisions which affect them, UK legislation (the Every Child Matters agenda [DfES, 2003], the Disability Discrimination Act [2005], the Munro Review of Child Protection [2014] and SEND CoP [DfE, 2014]), has emphasised the importance of listening to children. Developments in policy mean that professionals should ask how we should include CYP, rather than whether we should (Abbott, 2012).

Research has emphasised the importance of acknowledging a child’s right to decide where, when and how they are consulted about services. Given that they share key information on how to most effectively support their needs (Kelly, 2005), this study sought to explore factors which a sample of primary aged participants felt would support their reintegration into mainstream or specialist provision. As illustrated, the findings of this study indicated that pupil voice was lacking in the planning and decision-making stage of their reintegration. Practice which lacks the inclusion of pupil voice can be viewed as disregarding human rights and the principles of independence and empowerment (Kelly, 2005). Such thinking reflects the Equality Act (2010) which legally protects individuals from discrimination in the workplace and wider society.
5.5.2 Creative methods

Lown (2005) previously identified that few studies explored the views of children with BESD regarding their educational experiences. The review of literature in chapter two identified that this balance has since been re-addressed and that more recently, attention has been given to the range of creative and child-centred research being conducted by EPs to elicit CYPs views (Gersch et al, 2017). Linked to this has been a consideration of the complex ethical issues resulting from the use of creative methods. Researchers have argued that children need to learn how to put forward their views in a dignified and acceptable way, meaning that a safe environment must be created if they are encouraged to speak freely. The practicalities of interviews in particular, and the way they are organised may impact upon the data which a researcher takes away (Abbott, 2012). This became part of the rationale for interviews with participants in this study being conducted in their familiar PRU settings. Additional ethical considerations relate to the power relations between adults and children and when considering the methods of communication which best suit individuals (Kelly, 2005).

Previous studies which have adopted creative research strategies have highlighted that ‘challenging pupils’ and those with BESD have very important messages and are capable of portraying their insights so that professionals can support their emotional, social, behavioural and educational development (Syrnyk, 2014; Gillies & Robinson, 2012; O’Connor et al, 2011). Using subtle and non-intrusive strategies, such as drawing and drama activities, which build rapport and gain collaboration from YP and as a means of data collection, have been documented. This has supported researchers to connect with marginalised groups whilst acknowledging their agency and generating high quality research material (Gillies & Robinson, 2012). In particular, drawing allows children to express themselves freely without language being a limitation (Levick, 1997). The non-verbal nature of drawing activities has been shown to elicit responses which may not necessarily have been accessed (Gillies & Robinson, 2012). Combining methods of data collection has been found to provide a greater level of insight into the external (behaviour) and internal (affective) states of children (Syrnyk, 2014). It also allows for data triangulation and a measure of validity (Stiles, 1993).

After considering; the ethical factors related to the use of creative methods, drawing activities having the potential to elicit responses which may not otherwise be accessed (Gillies & Robinson, 2012), and that a combination of creative methods can provide a greater insight (Syrnyk, 2014), the WDST framework (Noonan et al, 2016), was selected for use in this study.
5.5.3 Use of WDST

Participants in this study took part in an initial ‘ice-breaker’ activity in which they described themselves, how important others perceived them and their thoughts of education. This followed a drawing activity where they were asked to represent their thoughts related to their reintegration and future full-time setting. Finally, they were asked questions as part of a brief interview. During the drawing stage, after being given instructions, participants were free to draw. Semi-structured interview questions were used to encourage participant dialogue (Jolley, 2010), and to attach further meaning to their drawings. All participants in this study, successfully engaged in the drawing and interview tasks, with only one participant choosing to record key words instead of drawing. Although a large part of one participant’s drawing was not related to their experience of reintegration, the means of drawing was observed as a positive distractor (Syrnyk, 2014), which encouraged this participant to talk more freely. The interviews always followed the drawing task. This had the effect of supporting participants to feel at ease following literature which argues that drawing can have a relaxing effect and reduce anxiety in an interview situation (Jolley, 2010). The process of drawing was interpreted as being as important as the end verbal account to understanding pupil’s accounts of their experiences (Thompson & Tawell, 2017). This approach ensured that pupils were active participants in the research, who built their answers in stages (Heal, 2015). As with other research (Syrnyk, 2014), participants in this study referenced their teachers and peers in their drawings. They also gave attention to the physical differences between school buildings.

Reflections on the use of the WDST method (Noonan et al, 2016), led to agreement with the principle authors critical comments related to this approach. It was felt that the method was advantageous in comparison to singular methods of data collection. This related to having greater confidence in the quotes selected for discussion were an accurate representation of participant’s experiences (Tisdall, 2012), after there were several opportunities for participants to clarify their views through drawing and then talking. By respecting the expert knowledge of participants in this study, a detailed data set representing their views was obtained. The combination of methods served to enhance the credibility of the data and revealed findings which related to each individual experience and perceptions of reintegration. The narrative elicited from drawings was explored and helped to verify the content of each drawing. In agreement with Noonan et al (2016), the triangulation of the ‘ice-breaker’ activity, drawings and responses to interview questions resulted in analysis not being completely dependent upon the researcher’s interpretation of the data. This served to reduce the possibility of misinterpreted views, improved data credibility and enhanced researcher confidence in the findings (Noonan et al, 2016).
The findings of this study highlight a number of implications for those supporting reintegration processes for pupils who have spent time attending a PRU following fixed term or permanent exclusion. Consequently, this study’s contribution to existing knowledge will be presented before implications for educational settings and EP practice are considered.

5.6 Contribution to knowledge

This study has allowed knowledge related to primary aged pupil’s experiences of reintegratio into mainstream or specialist settings following permanent exclusion or multiple fixed term exclusions, to be considered. This contributes to existing literature in this area. Whilst limited research has focused solely on primary aged pupil’s experiences of reintegration, this study has identified the implications of a sense of belonging between educational settings for pupils who had commenced the reintegration process, which there was limited reference to in the critically reviewed studies. The use of the WDST creative method (Noonan et al, 2016), as a more flexible approach to singular methods of data collection, supported participants to articulate their actual and anticipated experience of reintegration, as well as factors which they felt supported reintegration success. Additionally, the findings of this study indicated that despite the emphasis in current policy and legislation to do so, pupil voice and pupil involvement in decision-making regarding reintegration, was limited. Each of these areas have implications for both policy and practice, across settings and between professionals. This is an area which will now be considered.

5.7 Implications of the findings

5.7.1 Implications for educational settings

- Awareness that reintegration is not an individual experience

After considering the findings of this study through Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) eco-systemic perspective, it was observed that the success of reintegration is dependent upon a range of factors which each impact on one another. These are located at different levels including; the individual, family, school, wider community and LA context. Whilst individual factors (emotional regulation, motivation, self-efficacy, academic ability, resilience), were acknowledged, equally, the importance of relationships between and within schools, the family and wider community, was emphasised. There is therefore a need for reintegration to be considered within this context of interrelating systems (Rendall & Stuart, 2005), and to acknowledge the responsibility of each of these factors in supporting reintegration, alongside the individual factors identified.
• **Pupil involvement in decision-making**

This study sought to encourage pupil’s active participation in the research process and to ensure that their views were accurately represented. In line with the emphasis in policy and legislation, participants articulated a lack of involvement in the decisions made surrounding their reintegration and expressed a wish for their opinions to be represented when decisions were being made. As previously discussed, those supporting the process of reintegration may find it beneficial to employ tools such as ladders of participation (Sutcliff & Birney, 2015; Hart, 1992), or a continuum of participation (Jelley et al, 2000), in order to consider and promote pupil involvement and the development of reintegration practice. Not only should pupil involvement be evident, researchers are clear that listening should always be linked to action. This could take the form of individualised support to meet individual needs (Gillies & Robinson, 2012). As such, there is a need when supporting reintegration processes to be aware that no single approach to reintegration suits all.

• **Promoting resilience**

The importance of resilience was emphasised within the findings of this study. As well as this, researchers have highlighted factors which have a detrimental effect to resilience during reintegration, thereby emphasising the importance of it for individuals throughout this process. Highlighted factors include; intellectual ability (Lown, 2005), self-efficacy (Hart, 2013) and parent/carer involvement (Thomas, 2015; Bomber & Hughes, 2013). Resilience is stressed as a factor relevant to the sample of participants represented in this study given that the majority of pupils who have experienced school exclusion, will have experienced trauma (Bomber & Hughes, 2013). Professionals working with pupils who are due to commence the reintegration process should therefore work to introduce strategies aimed at promoting their resilience. Professionals may value the use of tools such as a ‘Resiliency Wheel’ to foster resilience in pupils, staff and to support settings to become effective resiliency-building organisations (Henderson & Milstein, 2003).

• **Fostering a sense of belonging and promoting inclusion**

Participants in this study were clear in their desire to feel included and for a sense of belonging to be maintained when attending two different settings, as with the phased reintegration process. Participants reported being preoccupied with what they were missing at one setting when attending another, and missing opportunities for the activities which they valued. Again, involving pupils in decisions surrounding their reintegration e.g. at the timetabling stage of their phased reintegration, so that a balance is achieved and
opportunities for activities they value are evident, is an important consideration for educational settings in supporting reintegration processes.

In situations in which participants had been commissioned a place at a PRU in order to prevent permanent exclusion and had begun a phased reintegration to their original school setting, opportunities for participants to re-familiarise themselves with the environment, teaching staff and routine were viewed as supporting their inclusion and sense of belonging within settings. Staff should consider scenarios in which a pupil’s return to their original setting may result in negative discourse from peers, as participants in this study identified. This has implications for professionals in supporting the development of positive relationships with peers early in the reintegration process.

5.7.2 Implications for EPs

An EPs role is complex. This is in part, due to the multiple levels that they work at, namely, the individual, group and wider organisation/system (Birch et al, 2015). As a result, implications for EPs resulting from the findings of this study will be considered at these different levels. The majority of those identified fall within the group/wider system level which is seen as further evidence that EP practice reflects social, rather than individual models.

- **Implications at an individual level**

Findings of this study indicate that pupil’s involvement in decisions made regarding their reintegration is essential and can contribute to reintegration success. As such, models such as Sutcliff and Briney’s (2015) ladder of participation were advocated for professional use in considering a pupil’s level of involvement in the planning of their reintegration. All pupils who participated in this study were identified as having social, emotional and mental health needs and a large proportion of the recruited sample had a Statement of SEN or Education, Health and Care Plan. EP advice would have been provided as part of these procedures to support schools in identifying and providing appropriate provision to meet their needs. The implication here therefore, is that individual needs, as identified by professionals such as EPs, should largely shape any future assessment or intervention practice.

- **Implications at a group level**

EPs are well placed with their consultation skills (Wagner, 2000), and solution-focused practice to support reintegration planning meetings and to ensure that staff are solution-focused in their approach to developing such plans. As part of meetings, EPs are in the privileged, neutral position to support occasions in which parents may feel disaffected after previous breakdowns in provision (Thomas, 2015). Promoting joined up working between school and home through collaborative working and regular channels of communication
should be a crucial element of an EP’s role within this context. This follows research highlighting that a joined up approach is likely to enhance positive outcomes and support reintegration success.

In addition, EPs knowledge of psychological models and theories e.g. attachment, resilience, belonging and the social model of disability, should be used to support staff in their understanding of pupil needs and behaviour. This could support a shift in thinking from within-child deficits to how the environment around a child can be constructed to meet their needs and foster a sense of belonging, which participants in this study clearly desired. It will be important for EPs to promote schools understanding of home circumstances based on their knowledge, as well as promoting the importance of positive staff and pupil relationships, as a protective factor identified by participants.

EPs should share their knowledge and strategies for supporting reintegration, e.g. emphasising the importance of pupil voice and their involvement in decision-making. This in turn could be achieved through delivering training to support staff to elicit pupil voice and to ensure that their views are represented e.g. through the use of person centred planning tools to support pupils to feel empowered throughout their reintegration. As EPs work in different schools, they are ideally placed to share knowledge and good practice related to eliciting pupil voice and successful reintegration strategies, within and between settings.

EP’s knowledge of interventions such as Circle of Friends (Newton & Wilson, 2003), Solution Circles (Forest & Pearpoint, 1996) and Circle of Adults (Wilson & Newton, 2006), appeared particularly appropriate interventions based on the findings of this study and would therefore be useful to implement alongside school staff to support reintegration. (See Appendix 19 for a summary of these interventions). Most relevant to the findings here, could be staff training in a Circle of Friends approach (Newton & Wilson, 2003), due to the negative narrative participants experienced from peers, alongside the social and emotional support that peer relationships appeared to offer. Such an intervention would support environments where pupils feel valued and respected, which promote empathy and understanding, and support an inclusive ethos to be fostered (Munn & Lloyd, 2005).

- **Implications at the wider organisation/system level**

As professionals who work in schools and have regular contact with staff at different levels, EPs are well placed to promote factors observed within policy and legislation to support reintegration processes. Given themes related to maintaining inclusion and a sense of belonging were prevalent within this study, EPs are seen as having the capability to support
schools in developing an inclusive ethos and to stimulate thinking related to the systems and structures which have the potential to promote a pupil’s sense of belonging.

There also appears to be a role for EPs in contributing towards policy development e.g. at a LA level, whilst being mindful of individual differences following assessment and formulation, meaning that one approach to reintegration for all pupils is insufficient.

The final implication relates to EPs continuing to broaden and develop methods which support a safe atmosphere to be created in which CYP can express their views in ways which do not solely rely upon verbal skills, as well as those that enhance confidence in the messages that CYP give are accurately captured and represented.

5.7.3 Implications summary

Implications for educational professionals, settings and EPs identified in line with the findings of this study have also been summarised as a proposed ‘checklist of considerations’, presented below. It would be helpful for educational settings and school staff to work alongside EPs in considering a document such as this and to action and agree next steps in supporting a pupil’s reintegration. It is intended that this working document would be amended and refined as appropriate. It is also acknowledged that not all considerations would be relevant to the experience of all pupils, but should instead serve as a guide to support professionals in planning for individual reintegration processes.
Checklist of consideration for pupils due to embark on the process of reintegration into mainstream/specialist provision following permanent exclusion/multiple fixed term exclusions

- Have individual pupil characteristics been considered and provided for?
  - (i.e. skills in emotional regulation, motivation, self-esteem, levels of resilience, academic ability)

- Have the systems surrounding a pupil and the resources within these systems which could support the reintegration process been considered?
  - (i.e. school, family, wider community, local authority context)

- Have pupils been consulted and involved in the decisions made surrounding their reintegration?
  - Have tools such as the ladder of participation (Sutcliff & Birney, 2015) or continuum of participation (Jelley et al, 2000) been used to support pupil involvement in the planning stages of their reintegration?
  - Have the use of varied and creative methods, as well as person-centred planning tools been considered in supporting pupils to share their views related to proposed reintegration plans?

- Have pupils been introduced and engaged with strategies to promote their resilience?
  - Have tools such as a resiliency wheel (Henderson & Milstein, 2003) been used to support this process?

- Have attempts been made to minimise the effects of factors which may have a detrimental effect to a pupil's resilience?
  - (i.e. intellectual ability, self-esteem, parent/carer involvement)

- What processes/practice is in place to ensure that pupils experience a sense of belonging to educational settings as part of a phased reintegration?
  - (i.e. continuing to feel included within their PRU setting and setting they are reintegrating into, e.g. through opportunities to re-familiarise themselves with the environment, teaching staff and routine)

- Has any advice from outside agencies e.g. EPs been considered in relation to reintegration processes and in shaping any future assessment or intervention?
• Do staff feel equipped to support reintegration processes?
  o Can external agencies, e.g. Educational Psychologists (EPs) offer support through training in interventions to support the reintegration process (i.e. Circle of Friends [Newton & Wilson, 2003], Solution Circles [Forest & Pearpoint, 1996], Circle of Adults [Wilson & Newton, 2006])?

• Have the skills of outside agencies, e.g. EPs been considered in relation to supporting the reintegration process?
  o (i.e. promoting joined-up working between home and school, sharing knowledge of psychological theory in supporting planning processes, promoting systematic and solution-focused thinking)

• Are there essential elements of the reintegration process which would be helpful to emphasise and capture in both school/PRU policy and policy/legislation at the wider Local Authority level?

**Figure 11: Proposed checklist to support reintegration planning**

### 5.8 Chapter summary

This chapter has presented the findings of this study in relation to two relevant theoretical models and the literature identified and critically analysed within the literature review in chapter two. Following this, implications for educational settings and EPs were identified in relation to how they approach and support reintegration processes. This culminated in a proposed checklist to support reintegration planning. This final chapter of this thesis will now be presented.
Chapter Six: Conclusion

6.1 Overview

This final chapter will begin with a succinct summary of the findings of this study and relate these to the original research questions identified in chapter two. Strengths and limitations of this study will then be highlighted before a reflexive account, based on extracts from a research diary kept throughout this process, is offered. Final reflections and concluding remarks will then be presented.

6.2 Summary of findings

This study aimed to extend the use of the ‘Write, Draw, Show and Tell’ (WDST) method (Noonan et al, 2016), in order to explore primary aged pupil’s experiences of reintegration into mainstream or specialist provision following time spent attending a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) after permanent or multiple fixed term exclusions. The review of literature in chapter two established the rationale for three research questions, which focused on:

- How participants articulated their experience of full time reintegration into mainstream or specialist provision
- What their specific concerns (if any) related to their reintegration were
- The type of support they felt they would benefit from

The visual and verbal data generated through the extension of the WDST method (Noonan et al, 2016), beyond the public health field, revealed insights into the experience of reintegration for a small sample of primary aged pupils. Participants articulated their actual and anticipated experiences of full-time reintegration into mainstream or specialist provision as being related to their levels of self-awareness and as a new beginning. Their specific concerns related to their reintegration into mainstream school or specialist provision were dominated by thoughts concerning a sense of belonging to both settings throughout their reintegration and to feeling fully included within their receiving settings. Key factors perceived as supporting reintegration included:

- Relationships and support provided through friendships, family members and teaching staff
- The school environment
- Procedural factors as part of the reintegration process

The findings of this study add to the understanding of primary aged pupil’s initial experiences of reintegration for two Local Authority (LA) Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) and provide an
insight into potential future strategies and mechanisms that could further support and enhance the reintegration process. Providing such insight, captured through a proposed checklist for educational professionals, was considered a strength of this study. Further strengths and limitations will now be reflected on.

6.3 Research strengths and limitations

6.3.1 Strengths

A strength of this study was viewed in the inclusion of the views of reintegration from a primary aged sample; an area which the literature review in chapter two highlighted there was less attention given to, compared to secondary aged samples. The emancipatory focus of this research, facilitated by the creative method adopted, aimed to give a voice to those demonstrating social, emotional and mental health difficulties, whose voice in research is often lacking (Michael & Frederickson, 2013). The outcome of this was a sample of participants who successfully engaged in the research process and conveyed important messages related to their experiences.

This study differed to those which have previously explored the experiences of exclusion and reintegration where traditional methods of qualitative research (i.e. interviews) were employed (Lown, 2005; Hart, 2013; Michael & Frederickson, 2013; Levinson & Thompson, 2016). This study explored reintegration experiences by collecting data through multiple sources, forming a rich data set and enhancing data credibility. The triangulation of data sources meant that the risk of misinterpreted views was reduced.

Findings of this study enabled implications and recommendations in the form of a checklist, to be made to educational settings and staff. This was also related to EPs who work at a variety of levels. Ending with a product of this study was considered an advantage given researcher’s assertions that listening should always be linked to action (Gillies & Robinson, 2012).

6.3.2 Limitations

Limitations to this study have been linked to the sample of participants who were recruited to take part. The difficulty in recruiting participants is evidenced by the fact that recruitment was extended beyond the original LA in order to achieve a sample. Recruiting a larger sample was however hindered by this study’s timescale. Recruiting a larger sample may have resulted in further themes being identified and represented. It may also have led to additional implications for professionals to consider in supporting reintegration processes for primary aged pupils.
Difficulties in recruitment were attributed to the limited control over this process when adhering to ethical guidelines and in accessing families regarded as ‘hard to reach’. PRU staff who supported participant recruitment indicated that the parents/carers of pupils who participated in this study were those who had expressed positive feelings regarding their child’s placement and who staff were in frequent contact with. As suggested by Wyman (2017), research which focused on more ‘hard to reach’ families resulting in recruitment difficulties, was found to be the case in this study. This was disappointing given the apparent relevance of participant’s living situations and socio-economic status to their responses. This was an area which was suggested as a possible direction for future research with further suggestions being highlighted throughout chapter five, as they became relevant. A further limitation linked to the relevance of living situations and socio-economic status was the limited background information collected for each participant. Participant details including gender, year group, type of exclusion, time spent at PRU, type of setting reintegrating into and stage of reintegration were collected as part of this study, however it would have been helpful to collect further background information e.g. related to family circumstances, their ‘looked after’ status and number of schools previously attended. As previously discussed, considering contextual information is essential to an informed appreciation of any study (Oliver, 2014), and the inclusion of such information could have supported further understanding of the collected data.

The final limitation was the lack of diversity related to the sample of participants recruited. Although the sample reflected the wider population of pupils attending each of the PRUs involved, all participants were white British males. As previously discussed, it would have been interesting to explore any specific gender differences in participant responses and their views of reintegration, as well as those representing different ethnic backgrounds. This might be an obvious choice for an extension of this study and an option for further research. Consideration of such factors was felt to be particularly pertinent following the use of Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) eco-systemic perspective to consider the findings of this study due to a child’s cultural context being a key feature of the macro-system within this model. It may also have been interesting to explore what, if any, difference the gender of the participant and researcher made (Abbott, 2012), within an educational context in which the population of learners was overwhelmingly dominated by males who worked with a female researcher.

6.4 Reflexive account

Reflexivity was previously discussed when considering principles which support the evaluation of qualitative research in chapter three. If researchers include details related to context, observations and self-reflection related to the research process, then there is the
potential to more fully understand children and young people’s lives (Abbott, 2012). Yardley (2008; 2000) proposed four dimensions for enhancing the quality of qualitative research (sensitivity to context, commitment and rigour, transparency and coherence and impact and importance). Reflexivity is considered within the transparency and coherence dimension and consists of:

- Personal reflexivity - reflecting upon how a researcher’s values, experiences, interests and beliefs have affected the research. This also includes how the research may have affected them as a person and a researcher.
- Epistemological reflexivity - reflecting upon how assumptions about how the nature and orientation of the world and beliefs about how knowledge is understood, impact on the research process (Willig, 2013).

A number of reflections related to these two types of reflexivity for this study will now be discussed. In seeking to explore perceptions and interpretations of support beneficial to the reintegration process, a constructivist epistemology was selected. As a researcher, I was therefore aware of my own subjectivity and the impact that this may have had on each stage of the research process. Constructivism emphasises that researchers cannot be independent of their values and as such, research is a product of these (Mertens, 2015). Specifically linked to the method of data collection, I was aware that interviews are collaboratively produced, with the researcher playing an active part in the production of talk and meaning (Silverman, 2006). Talk in the moment of an interview is therefore arguably just one portrayal of what a pupil wished to represent in the room at that moment (Abbott, 2012). Consequently, transparency is needed with regards to how inferences were derived from the data (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). The use of the WDST method (Noonan et al, 2016), resulted in data being collected from different sources. This allowed for a level of transparency which might not have been achieved through singular methods of data collection. Less researcher inference was required because of several opportunities to check and clarify participant’s accounts through drawing and verbal responses. In this way, a strength of adopting a constructivist epistemology meant that there was close collaboration between the researcher and participants, whilst allowing participants to share their views (Crabtree & Miller, 1999).

I embarked upon this process as a rather inexperienced qualitative researcher, particularly in relation to the depth of study required for a Doctoral thesis. Perhaps related to this level of inexperience, was my surprise at the difficulty in recruiting participants and grappling with a lack of control over this process. This was in spite of research which had been selected for critical review, highlighting a barrier to completing research had been gaining parental/carer consent when working with “hard to reach participants in deprived areas” (O’Connor et al,
2011: 292). This was a difficulty which I overcame after extending recruitment to an additional PRU in a different LA. On reflection, adopting a different methodological approach e.g. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), may have been an alternative approach to qualitative enquiry that could have been adopted by this study. Further participant recruitment in a different LA would not have been required if this approach had been adopted (although difficulties linked to recruitment could not have been fully anticipated at the planning stage), given that IPA lends itself to small and carefully situated samples (Smith et al, 2009). The decision not to pursue this approach in the first instance related to a desire to identify themes across a broader range of participant’s views to contribute to the identification of suggested practical support, which may have been lost with a focus on in-depth individual narratives. IPA adopts a philosophical approach to studying experience and acknowledges that lived experience is complex but that researchers can attempt to understand an individual’s relationship with the world through interpretation (Smith et al, 2009). Adopting this approach, meaning that a smaller sample size was required would have offered the potential of a greater depth of insight on the lived experience of a smaller number of participants. Working with fewer participants would also have allowed additional time for the researcher to acquire and develop a higher level of interpretative/analytical skills that this approach requires.

Such an approach may have, in addition, involved more time spent on making meaning from the participant’s drawings. Researchers have increasingly noted that children’s drawings are frequently labelled according to the finished product which underestimates the symbolic content of drawings and the meaning attributed to drawings by the drawer (Einarsdottir et al, 2009). This has perhaps been the result of ascribing meaning to children’s artwork not being a straightforward process with practitioners requiring a high level of interpretative skills to guide children’s learning related to their drawings (Eglinton, 2003). Consequently, recent research has considered children’s drawings as expressions of meaning and understanding (Ring, 2006). Focusing on drawing as meaning-making moves away from the discourse of drawing as representation and instead, focuses on children’s intentions, considers the process of drawing and recognises children’s drawings as purposeful (Einarsdottir et al, 2009). The latter discourse recognises the importance of context in children’s drawings. Drawings reflect the cultural and social context of a drawing, whether this is within communities of practice (Anning, 2002), in the company of peers, or in interactions with significant adults. Each of these are argued to impact on the drawing process and the meanings constructed and conveyed (Einarsdottir et al, 2009). In addition, the complexity of children’s drawings as verbal and non-verbal signs are used by children to convey meaning has been emphasised (Wright, 2007). The complexity of children’s drawings within this study...
was perhaps underestimated. Further exploration may have led to additional findings if the meaning that participants conveyed through their drawings had been considered in greater depth.

Einarsdottir et al (2009) argue that drawings and accompanying narratives are not separate entities and are both crucial to meaning-making processes. Consideration of this supports researchers to recognise the social construction of meaning and directs them to the meaning children seek to convey in their drawings, rather than what they contain. This approach recognises the fluidity and flexibility of children’s meaning-making (Cox, 2005). Support for this argument comes from Soundy (2012) who explored the variety of ways that children construct meaning and use imaginative and metaphoric thinking in their drawings. This followed the argument that educators should move beyond reading images literally or responding to the surface spectacle and instead engage in joint attention episodes which are critical to the process of discovering the deeper meaning of children’s drawings. It was noted that few frameworks exist for examining children’s artwork or the processes that reveal communicative intentions and differing purposes for drawing (Soundy, 2012). As such, Soundy (2012) created a classification system, using grounded theory, to attempt to make sense of the rich diversity of meaning-making and support teachers to understand children’s visual responses through a more critical and informed lens. This system involved five components of childhood experience (thinking, feeling, acting, creating and narrating) and served to initiate thinking about children’s intentions and to examine literal and metaphorical levels of meaning. Although limited by time constraints, the use of a tool such as this may have supported further understanding of the complex relationships between participants visual and verbal accounts and ascribed further meaning to the drawings they produced.

Linked also to my level of inexperience, was a lack of confidence I felt in whether the data I had collected was sufficient to identify meaningful themes and patterns. At this point, it was helpful to return to the findings of my literature review and critical appraisal of each of the empirical studies discussed. This supported me to feel reassured, when embarking on the initial stages of data analysis, that there were themes emerging from my data which supported the findings of previous reintegration literature, but also highlighted additional considerations.

I found the overall experience of developing tools to be used as part of the WDST method (Noonan et al, 2016) (e.g. developing a book template for participants drawings and a script related to this), and in carrying out each interview, a particularly positive one. The skills I had
developed throughout my Doctoral training enabled me to effectively build rapport with participants and to support them to feel at ease within an interview situation. It was also refreshing to work in a different capacity to that of individual assessment, as I had become accustomed to in my role as Trainee Educational Psychologist, and to take the time to explore pupil’s views in greater depth.

The process of data analysis and generating initial codes from each data source felt overwhelming initially. I found the instructions and detail as part of Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six stages very useful in guiding this process. Analysing my data in this way involved movement backwards and forwards between the entire data set and was therefore a recursive process. It was a process where patterns and themes were refined and revised. This gave me a sense of assurance that my analysis was rigorous and represented the data set in the most accurate way. Again, I had limited prior experience in thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), but felt that I became more skilled with this approach as I progressed through each stage. Discussing a sample transcript and ideas for initial codes with an EP colleague also gave me confidence in my ability to carry out data analysis when strong similarities were drawn between what she and I identified as initial codes.

The final point of reflection relates to ethical principles and concerns related to confidentiality and anonymity. Researchers have argued that the “use of visual methods may threaten principles of anonymity if they are used to evidence research claims” (Gillies & Robinson, 2012: 171). As such, principles of anonymity were adhered to when participants were given pseudonyms. Thought was also given to how to present the findings of this study and how a summary might be shared with staff at each of the participating PRUs. PRU staff were the individuals most likely to have been able to attribute drawings to individual pupils, although it helped that they knew that participants were recruited from two different settings. Consequently, the decision was made not to include copies of participant’s drawings in a summary report for each PRU to prevent participant anonymity being compromised. Consideration would again be given to how participant drawings were represented for the purpose of any future reports or publication of findings.
6.5 Concluding remarks

This study sought to address gaps identified in the literature by providing insight into the experiences of primary aged pupils reintegrating into mainstream or specialist provision following permanent or fixed term exclusions. This was achieved through the use of the WDST method (Noonan et al, 2016), as a creative method which contrasted with traditional singular methods of data collection. Therefore in addition, and in line with current policy, literature and legislation, there was an emphasis in this study on pupil voice and the means by which individual views are elicited and represented. In agreement with Noonan et al (2016), it was felt that the WDST method, within an educational context, was an “inclusive, interactive and ethically compliant child-centred research method” (Noonan et al, 2016: 15), which allowed for the triangulation of data sources and limited researcher bias. It would be beneficial for further research within an educational context to “validate its appropriateness in its evolution as a child-centred method” (Noonan et al, 2016: 15). I was extremely grateful for the opportunity to conduct research which had the principles of inclusion and being child-centred at its core. These are values which align with my own personal and professional values.

This study revealed a range of individual, group and systemic factors which contributed to positive reintegration experiences, many of which concurred with previous reintegration literature, whilst highlighting additional factors for consideration. Perhaps most noticeably, and in contrast to other studies, was the emphasis participants placed on the need to feel included in situations where they were ‘between settings’, and the need for a sense of belonging within these. The consideration of findings also revealed that the greater breadth of methods being employed by EPs to promote pupil involvement in assessment and intervention processes had implications for school staff with whom EPs work. Whilst policy and legislation advocates pupil involvement in decision-making (DfE, 2014; Harding & Atkinson, 2009), this study found that there is still some way to go in respect of pupils being included in reintegration decisions that are made and plans which are proposed for them.
References


Hardy, J., & Majors, K. (2017). Qualitative methodologies that give young people a voice: Grounded Theory (GT) and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). In J. Hardy & C. Hobbs. *Using qualitative research to hear the voice of children and young people: The work of British educational psychologists* (pp. 13 – 33). Leicester: BPS.


APPENDIX 1 – Database search terms

The following databases were each searched according to the search terms listed below:

- EBSOC Host Database:
  - British Educational Index
  - Educational Resources Information Centre (ERIC)
  - Child Development and Adolescent Studies
  - Education Abstracts
- PSYCINFO
- Web of Science

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Search Terms</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. exclusion* or exclude* or fixed term or permanent AND reintegrate* AND school* or education or mainstream</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. reintegrate* AND pupil-referral-unit* or PRU* or alternative-prov* AND mainstream or mainstream-school* or mainstream-education</td>
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<td>3. transition* AND pupil-referral-unit* or PRU* or alternative-prov* AND mainstream or mainstream-school or mainstream-education</td>
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<td>4. young-people AND reintegrate* AND mainstream or mainstream-school* or mainstream-education</td>
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<td>5. children*-views or child*-views or pupil-views or young-person* views AND reintegrate*</td>
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<td>6. pupil-voice AND exclusion* or exclude* or fixed term or permanent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. pupil-voice* or perspective* or perception* or experience* AND reintegrate* AND mainstream or mainstream-school* or mainstream-education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. pupil-voice* AND pupil-referral-unit* or PRU* or alternative-prov*</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. pupil-voice* AND BESD* or behavioural-difficulties or SEMH* or social-emotional-mental-health</td>
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<td>10. pupil-voice or child*-views or pupil-views or young-person-views or perspective* or perception* or experience* AND exclusion* or exclude* or fixed term or permanent AND draw* or sketch*</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. pupil-voice or child*-views or pupil-views or young-person-views or perspective* or perception* or experience* AND exclusion* or exclude* or fixed term or permanent AND creative-method* or creative-tool* or creative-technique*</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. pupil-voice or child*-views or pupil-views or young-person-views or perspective* or perception* or experience* AND reintegrate* AND draw* or sketch*</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. pupil-voice or child*-views or pupil-views or young-person-views or perspective* or perception* or experience* AND reintegrate* AND creative-method* or creative-tool* or creative-technique*</td>
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Further sources of references included:

- Policy documents, legislative papers, government guidance (e.g. Department for Education and Department for Children Schools and Families).
- Further references related to exclusion and reintegration were explored through references identified within key tests selected from literature reviews and reference lists of relevant theses.
- Searches of relevant journals including; ‘Educational Psychology in Practice’, ‘Educational and Child Psychology’ and ‘Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties’.
- Manual searches of relevant books and articles using the University of Bristol library catalogue.
### APPENDIX 2 - Critical review of selected empirical studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Findings</th>
<th>Theoretical Framework</th>
<th>Appraisal</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hart, N. (2013). What helps children in a pupil referral unit (PRU)? An exploration into the potential protective factors of a PRU as identified by children and staff. Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties, 18, (2), pp. 196 – 212.</td>
<td>Explored the views of children and staff within one PRU to uncover what they perceived to be factors that help children to achieve positive social and academic outcomes.</td>
<td>6 children aged 9-13 5 males, 1 female. All White British ethnicity. All entering their 3rd term at the PRU. All known to Social Services and had involvement with outside agencies (e.g. CAMHS, Educational Psychology). All identified as having Special Educational Needs.</td>
<td>Semi-structured interviews constructed around the main themes identified in educational resilience research. Interviews included the use of scaling activities and picture sheets.</td>
<td>Factors considered to be the potential protective factors of a PRU as identified by pupils and staff: 1. Relationships (fostering relationships between staff-pupil, pupil-pupil, and staff-parent). 2. Teaching and learning (lessons, personalised learning, life skills, progress and ethos). 3. Expectations (high expectations and consistency of approach). 4. Environment (reference to size and emulating the features of a mainstream environment).</td>
<td>Risk and resilience Ecological theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).</td>
<td>Relevant literature/previous research reviewed. Clear statement of research aim to explore the potential protective factors of a PRU as identified by children and staff. Qualitative methodology appropriate as the views of children and staff were being explored. Research design and semi-structured interviews were appropriate to gather views. Limited details on participant recruitment. Reference only to purposive sample. Setting for data collection (PRU) justified. Clear reference to how data was collected and additional approaches to validate the meaning of data. Clear discussion of questions and activities included in interview topic guide. Form of data (tape recordings) made clear. Data saturation not discussed. Participant’s age, gender, difficulties and duration of semi-structured interviews reported. Relationship between researcher and participants not referred to, nor consideration given to researcher’s role, potential bias and influence throughout research process. Ethical issues reported; interviewing vulnerable individuals, degree of persuasion, flexible communication, informed consent, right to withdraw, confidentiality and anonymity. Discussion of data analysis process (thematic analysis using QSR NVivo Version 8 software). Themes and sub-themes identified and supported with quotes. Summarised in table.</td>
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</table>
between factors identified by children and staff.

Attention given to implications for professional practice for children in PRUs, specifically related to reintegration.

Support Assistant, Class Teacher and SENCo. Sample represented one third of the total staff sample.

Factors considered to be key within-child factors required for a PRU placement to be successful; being extroverted and a willingness to have a go.

Staff and pupils identified many of the same themes and sub-themes relating to the importance of relationships, progress made at the PRU and lessons and learning.

Form. Themes linked to existing theory and research.

Clear findings discussed in relation to study aims. Views of all participants triangulated.

Contribution study makes to existing knowledge and builds on current literature discussed. Links to relevant policy made. Directions for future research and implications for practice considered. Methodological limitations discussed.

Lack of information regarding researcher’s beliefs/assumptions about the area under study, professional background/training, reference to a reflective journal, clarification of the researcher’s relationship with participants. Relevant theoretical perspectives not cited.

Jalali, R., & Morgan, G. (2017). ‘They won’t let me back.’ Comparing student perceptions across primary and secondary Pupil Referral Units

Sought to explore the experiences of students in primary alternative provision in order to ascertain whether their views differed to those in 13 students aged 7 – 16 from three different LA PRUs (one secondary and two primary) in the south east of England.

5 secondary pupils and 8 primary pupils

Semi-structured interviews including questions to explore participant’s attribution of difficulties, supportive factors which helped them make

Overarching themes consistent across all participants; attribution, anger, equality, change, mainstream, relationships, self, challenge. Primary participants; understanding, physical, restraint.

Cognitive-behavioural

Ecological

Humanistic

(focus on participant perceptions)

Clear statement of research aim to determine whether student perceptions of PRUs change across primary and secondary education. Overarching research question informed by three further questions identified.

Qualitative methodology appropriate given the aim to explore student perceptions.

Exploratory research design was appropriate to study relatively under-researched area (primary school pupil perceptions). Methodology enabled participants to talk flexibly.

Purposive sample identified and details on how participants were recruited. Number of
Aimed to find out whether student perceptions changed across education with a focus on how students attributed their difficulties, what supportive factors helped students to make progress and what were student views toward mainstream education and reintegration.

Secondary education.

– 85% male, 15% female.

77% White British – Sample was representative of national PRU statistics.

Participant’s time at the PRU ranged from 3 months to 1 year with reasons for referral including persistent disruptive behaviour, violence and/or aggression towards others.

Secondary participants; helplessness, reception, routine, teachers, home influence, abnormality.

Findings suggested little variation in perceptions over the course of primary to secondary education. Some age specific themes were highlighted, e.g. the secondary population reflecting a greater awareness of environmental factors such as the impact of home and teacher relationships. Alternative provision may exacerbate mental health difficulties.

Findings highlight the negative impact of this population’s participants approached and final numbers of those who took part highlighted.

• Setting for data collection justified as research focused on those attending PRUs. Procedure clearly explained. Method (life grids to identify critical moments) made explicit. Flexibility in the delivery of questions (to maintain relevance to individual experiences) is described. Interview questions linked to research aim.

• Relationship between researcher and participants considered; rapport established prior to seeking consent. Limitation (trustworthiness of responses) noted but researcher acknowledged this outweighed potential limitations. Researcher ensured participants were co-constructors in the research process.

• Ethical considerations reported; visual element to engage participants, sensitive issues, differentiation of activities, informed consent.

• Reflexivity referred to; reflective journal kept to avoid interpretation bias. Interviews video recorded and transcribed verbatim.

• Description of the analysis process included (phenomenological analysis provided the framework for data categorisation and identification of themes).

• Findings presented according to 8 core themes, supported with participant quotes. Theory and research linked to findings. Inter-code reliability described. Findings checked with four participants to judge interpretation - no changes made.

• Contribution study makes to existing knowledge discussed (expands knowledge to primary population). Directions for future research and
| Lown, J. (2005). Including the excluded: Participant perceptions. *Educational & Child Psychology, 22,(3),* pp. 45 – 57. | Sought to explore the perceptions of pupils, families, school staff and LA support staff concerning the experiences of return to a new mainstream school. Explored each participant’s views about the process of reintegration and the factors perceived as contributing to success. | Research was structured according to five pupil case ‘sets’. Sample size not made explicitly clear, had to be inferred from diagram which included five pupils and four sets of parents and LA support staff. Researcher makes reference to a focus group 'sets'. | Semi-structured interviews were carried out with pupils and other professionals/support staff involved in their reintegration. Focus group interview held with 8 members of the behaviour support team to invited general discussion regarding perceptions of factors important in sustained | 3 core dimension played a critical role in facilitating reintegration success: 1. *Relationships* (referred to positive relationships with adults and pupils – pupils feeling liked and supported by adults, positive relationships between parents and mainstream staff – information sharing and close communication, and positive relationships between pupils and peers – good peer networks and social support). 2. *Support* (academic support for pupils in school) | Solution-focused Humanistic (focus on participant perceptions) | • Research aim stated in Abstract. Not referred to in literature review or methodology or research questions. • Qualitative methodology appropriate as participant perceptions regarding returning to a new mainstream school are explored. • Research design justified when addressing political, social and philosophical concerns and situating the study with the researcher’s chosen research paradigm (interpretivist). Relevant literature and previous research reviewed. • Recruitment details and procedures after initial low response rate explained. • Setting for data collection justified. Data collected through interviews. Description of why a focus group with staff was carried out included. Limited details on use of a topic guide or research questions. Researcher refers to reaching theoretical saturation. • Participant’s age, difficulties or information on recruitment setting not reported. • Little examination of researcher’s role or potential bias or influence during research process. Study appears to be an extension of previous research but not clear if this involved the same or different settings. • Lack of detail on ethical standards. Can be inferred that issues of consent were considered through recruitment explanation. Key terms and limitations (e.g. small scale, generalisability, longitudinal research) noted. Implications for policy, collaboration between mainstream and alternative provision and role of the EP presented. |
| Levison, M., & Thompson, M. (2016). ‘I don’t need pink hair here’ Shoe we be seeking to ‘reintegrate’ youngsters without challenging mainstream | Explored the views of students and staff about reasons for being in alternative education settings, the difference in culture between such settings | 5 staff members (mixture of Teachers and Teaching Assistants) from one PRU located in Devon (UK). Staff had taught in mainstream and alternative settings | Staff took part in semi-structured interviews lasting between 45 minutes and 1 hour. Young people took part in semi-structured interviews for | Factors required for successful reintegration; importance of the relationships between staff and students, support from the wider family and community and timing of transitions. | Humanistic (focusing on low self-esteem and problems in coping with and exploring feelings in accounting for behaviour). Eco-systemic (focusing on collaboration and systems thinking). | how working definitions for the research were arrived at defined. | Data analysis (constructed from grounded theory) explained and justified. 29 initial themes arising from the data and process of reducing these to 10 Level 2 codes described. Further analysis resulting in three category codes explained. | Three category codes presented diagrammatically and in written form, supported by participant quotes. Participant data triangulated. Findings discussed in relation to research aim and previous research. | Contribution study makes to existing knowledge and implications for practice identified. Implications considered at several levels. How the research may be used is considered. Limited details on directions for future research. | Little reflection on researcher’s impact, reference to reflexivity or clarification of relationship with participants. |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| contexts and those provided by mainstream schools, and feelings about reintegration. | settings for between 3 and 40 years. 10 young people aged 11 to 16 took part in the study. |
| 40-45 minutes which were set up within an ethnographic framework. | Centres for excluded children can construct environments that operate in the manner of an extended family but this creates a conundrum; elements in place to create a supportive environment for youngsters could prevent targets for reintegration back into mainstream schools being achieved. Should be focusing on changing the cultural climate of mainstream schools to better support reintegration processes through; staged reintegration, emotional support from key staff, flexibility and tolerance and an |
| positive and negative interactions between teachers and students within the school and those that externally affect the school; these interactions are seen as accounting for behaviour). Ecological (focusing on the influence of systems and the environment in accounting for behaviour). | • Setting for data collection (PRU where participants attended) justified. Method of data collection (semi-structured interviews within an ethnographic framework) described. Details on topics (introduced as prompts) covered during interviews are provided, e.g. experiences at primary school, transition, feelings about alternative provision. Saturation of data nor the form of data are discussed. • Limited details on data being supplemented by additional research conducted by the second author are provided. Researcher’s role not critically examined. • Ethical issues discussed; power relationships, participants interviewed in pairs to create informal atmosphere, anonymity and confidentiality. • Analysis process or reference to how categories/themes were derived from the data not described. Findings organised according to factors that positively contributed towards reintegration or acted as barriers to success. Reference not made to potential bias and influence during analysis and the selection of data presented. • Findings are presented according to staff views, student’s views and views about the PRU. Findings discussed in relation to research aim. Not clear if data was triangulated or whether more than one analyst was involved to enhance data credibility. • Researcher discusses how study supports previous literature. Implications for policy, PRUs and the nature of secondary schools are considered. Limitations discussed e.g. |
| Michael, S., & Frederickson, N. (2013). Improving pupil referral unit outcomes: pupil perspective. Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties, 18, (4), pp. 407 – 422. | Sought to investigate what young people who are attending PRUs due to exclusion from mainstream school perceive as enablers of and barriers to achieving positive outcomes. | 16 young people aged 12 to 16 from two different PRUs (1 KS3 and 1 KS4). The higher ratio of male participants reflected the gender breakdown of pupils attending PRUs in the UK. 75% stated their ethnicity as ‘White’; reflects the ethnic profile nationally. | Semi-structured interviews to elicit pupil views of enablers and barriers to achieving positive outcomes in PRUs. Interview transcripts were analyses using thematic analysis. 5 themes representing enabling factors; relationships (with teachers, peers and family members), curriculum (extra-curricular activities, engagement and personalisation), discipline (effective sanctions), learning environment (size), self (personal qualities, e.g. motivation). 3 themes which represented barriers; disruptive behaviour (own behaviour and ineffective strategies), unfair treatment (application of Solution-focused Ecological Humanistic | integrate approach involving the school, PRU and student’s family. | generalisation. Directions for future research signposted. | Relevant literature/previous research reviewed. Provides justification for the present study. | Clear statement of research aim. Need for future research in this area highlighted. | Qualitative methodology appropriate and linked to aim to elicit pupil views of an under-researched topic. | Research design, including semi-structured interviews justified (allowed pre-determined questions to be covered and the possibility of following up interesting responses as appropriate). | Participant recruitment explained including invited and final numbers. Unclear why two chose not to take part. | Setting for data collection justified (in participant’s educational settings). Use of an interview script for consistency described. Data saturation considered. | Limited details regarding the relationship between the researcher and participants and the researcher critically examining their own role provided. | Ethical issues discussed; ethical approval from a University ethics committee, informed consent, entitlement to withdraw, confidentiality, anonymity. |
Disciplinary sanctions) failure to individualise the learning environment (tasks not appropriately differentiated). Young people cited ideas for improvement as; changes to the learning environment, flexibility of approach and feeling understood and listened to. Implications for practice development in PRUs identified.

| O'Connor, M., Hodkinson, A., Burton, D., & Torstensson, G. (2011). Pupil voice: listening to and hearing the... | Provides an overview of a PhD pilot study which aimed to develop innovative, exploratory research strategies to harness the... | Overall sample size not clear. Report focuses on pilot study where data was collected from one pupil and two teachers as part of semi-... Activity sessions that involved role play and games in order to facilitate an exploration of pupils’ responses to their different... Critical moments for excluded pupils included transition from primary to secondary school, being excluded from school, and returning to mainstream education. | Ecological Eco-systemic |

- In depth discussion of data analysis presented and the 6 stages of Braun and Clarke’s (2006) thematic analysis discussed. Researcher is clear how themes were derived from the data. Explanation of data analysis and use of software to organise data is clear. Reliability referred to with second researcher checking for inter-rater reliability.
- Findings organised by themes; enabling factors, barriers and ideas for change. Findings discussed in relation to research aim and supported by participant quotes. Findings well-grounded in data. Findings discussed in relation to previous research.
- Findings reported as consistent with previous research. Contribution study makes is described. Limitations and directions for future research considered. Researcher notes tentative implications can be drawn which add to the understanding of how to engage studied population and which provide a focus for future development work in PRUs. Implications for professionals such as EPs are provided.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>educational experiences of young people with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD).</th>
<th>pupil voice of those with behaviour, emotional and social difficulties (BESD).</th>
<th>structured interviews. Three young people who had been excluded from school and were attending an alternative training providers were identified to take part in activity sessions.</th>
<th>experiences of BESD provision. Following on from this, interviews were conducted to gain a more detailed insight into pupil’s educational experiences.</th>
<th>Causes of behavioural difficulties, educational provision, teacher’s perceptions and training all have an impact on the educational journeys of those with BESD. Studies that locate pupils at the heart of data collection enable researchers to examine how specific turning points can impact upon the education experiences of young people with BESD. Issues involved in conducting a study that aims to develop innovative, exploratory research strategies for harnessing the voice of those with BESD; difficulties in gaining access and developing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Participant recruitment described (purposive sampling method used). Participants selected if aged between 14 and 16 and had been excluded from school because of poor behaviour. Details on final sample size or numbers invited not provided. Limited participant details.</td>
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<td>• Each method of data collection described. Using multiple methods is justified. Details on how the semi-structured interviews were organised (through the use of life grids) are provided. Form of data is clear. Data triangulation to support validity of study referred to.</td>
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<td>• Researcher acknowledges own interpretation should not silence or misinterpret participant voice. Epistemological position adopted (constructivist grounded theory approach) is clear, including researchers impact on developing theory.</td>
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<td>• Ethical issues considered; chosen method, environment, gatekeepers, consent.</td>
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<td>• Data analysis through grounded theory described. Unclear how themes were derived from the data and how the data presented were selected from the original sample. Data presented according to findings from the life grid activity and as themes from interviews. Quotes illustrate themes.</td>
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<td>• Themes were discussed with young people to ensure accurate interpretation. Findings linked to previous research and research aim.</td>
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<td>• Directions for future research are offered with the researcher arguing they are in a better position to conduct a detailed study of BESD. Implications for locating pupil at the heart of data collection considered.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>Suitable methods of data collection. Tentative suggestions drawn relating to how BESD is defined and identified.</th>
<th>Relevant literature/previous research critically reviewed. Gap in literature identified. Builds rationale for present study.</th>
<th>Setting information provided. Details on participant recruitment not provided or discussion of why potential participants chose not to take part. Participant’s age, gender and presenting difficulties (BESD) are reported.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Syrnyk, C. (2014). Capturing the Nurture approach: experiences of young pupils with BESD. <em>Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties</em>, 19, (2), pp. 154 – 175.</td>
<td>Used a combination of drawings and interviews to explore how children with BESD perceived their involvement in a nurture group (NG). 6 male participants who had all been excluded from more than one mainstream primary school. Participants ranged in age from 6-9 years (average age = 7:08).</td>
<td>1.5 weeks after their arrival to the NG and 5 weeks later, participants met with the researcher and were asked to draw pictures of their educational experience ('Draw your classroom with the teachers and classmates doing something') based on an adapted version of the Kinetic Family.</td>
<td>Eco-systemic Ecological</td>
<td>Data analysis using NVivo 9.0 software and transcripts coded for full saturation described.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explored the reintegration of learners with BESD and proposed a resilience-based reintegration</td>
<td>13 learners (3 girls, 10 boys) aged 11 – 14 (4 of these participants took part in follow-up interviews).</td>
<td>Young people completed a series of incomplete life sentences and wrote a life essay. 4 Emerging themes; emotions (feelings of pride and optimism, academic and social competence, positive vision for the future, positive reinforcement from Theory of bioecological resilience (developed solely for this research – combination of bioecological theory and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Relevant literature/previous research reviewed. Theoretical framework adopted is discussed. Rationale for present study justified.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Research aim and questions clearly stated. Qualitative methodology appropriate and justified as study sought to investigate reintegration experiences of those with BESD. Epistemological position adopted acknowledged and justified (interpretivist-constructivist paradigm to develop understanding of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Ethical issues reported; informed consent, power dynamic, British Education Research Association ethical standards followed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Evaluation of drawings described (according to staff to pupil size, drawing perspective and the presence/omission of individuals). Child comments used to support establishing context for drawings. All drawings supported presentation of findings as well as participant quotes. Data which contradicted previous research findings also presented.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Findings considered in relation to previous research, study aim and research question.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Contribution study makes in acknowledging the perceptions of children with BESD as they became acquainted with a NG approach is discussed with possible directions for future research e.g. a study including more children, investigating more distinct features of the NG approach over a longer period. Limitations of the study are noted, e.g. small sample, and implications for professionals working with children with BESD are considered.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Limited evidence of any reflective practice, e.g. researcher keeping a reflective journal.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
 programme to aid policy makers and practitioners with the reintegration into mainstream educations of learners with BESD.

Parents of participants (final number not clear).

7 mainstream teachers

3 teaching staff from PRU

of the 13 were selected to take part in an unstructured interview (they were selected based on the depth of responses in the life essay).

Parents were asked to complete a qualitative questionnaire.

Mainstream teachers were asked to respond to questions via email.

Interviews with 3 further professionals took place (Lead teachers), relationships (positive relationships with family, peers and school staff), and reintegration practices (procedural factors relating to reintegration, e.g., a gradual process, communication between home and school, positive reintegration meetings, parental support and encouragement). Themes diverged into two categories; promotive experiences and risk experiences. Risk factors had the most significant impact for pupils. Findings supported guidelines for developing resilience-based reintegration programmes which

resilience theory).

Risk & resilience

Eco systemic

reintegration experiences). Research design (involving a variety of methods) justified.

• Details on participant recruitment not included, only mention of a purposive sample. Details on participant's age, gender and final numbers of participants who took part are provided.

• Setting for data collection justified. Researcher is clear about activities (sentences and life essay) and different methods of data collection (interviews and qualitative questionnaires). Form of data is clear (transcribed tape recordings) and details of other forms of collected data (e.g., behaviour logs). Data saturation acknowledged.

• Relationship between researcher and participants acknowledged.

• Limited details on ethical considerations are provided. Researcher reports young people were provided with assistance when reading questions if they requested help.

• Process of data analysis according to Giorgi's phenomenological model described. Trustworthiness established through multiple data-gathering techniques. All participant data triangulated. Participants provided with initial findings to validate accuracy and credibility.

• Findings discussed in terms of risk and protective factors and in relation to aim of research questions.

• Study contribution is clear; a resilience-based reintegration programme proposed and described. Contributes to new education policy and practice. Study limitations acknowledged (small sample). Directions for future research acknowledged, e.g., research benefitting from a comparative multiple case-study enquiry.
| Teacher of a PRU, Senior Learning Mentor and Learning Support Unit Manager) | include developing emotional competence, developing promotive relationships and implementing promotive reintegration practices. | • Disclosures regarding researcher’s beliefs/assumptions, professional background/training, reference to reflective journal or impact of their involvement in the research process not made. |
## APPENDIX 3 – Participant details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Year group</th>
<th>Type of exclusion</th>
<th>Time spent at Pupil Referral Unit</th>
<th>Setting reintegrating into</th>
<th>Stage of reintegration (at the time of interviewing)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andrew</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Permanently excluded</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>Specialist</td>
<td>Attempted reintegration into mainstream setting failed. Due to commence phased reintegration into specialist setting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ray</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Agreed shared placement following fixed term exclusions</td>
<td>11 months</td>
<td>Specialist</td>
<td>Completed transition days at specialist setting. Due to begin attending specialist provision in 2 weeks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Agreed shared placement following fixed term exclusions</td>
<td>7 months</td>
<td>Mainstream</td>
<td>Attending two afternoons per week at mainstream school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Agreed shared placement following fixed term exclusions</td>
<td>8 months</td>
<td>Mainstream</td>
<td>Attending mainstream school for 2 days per week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roger</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Agreed shared placement following fixed term exclusions</td>
<td>3 months</td>
<td>Mainstream</td>
<td>Attending mainstream school for 2.5 days per week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Permanently excluded</td>
<td>12 months</td>
<td>Specialist</td>
<td>Attending mainstream school for 3 days per week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Agreed shared placement following fixed term exclusions</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>Mainstream</td>
<td>Attending mainstream school for 2 afternoons per week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harry</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Permanently excluded</td>
<td>1 month</td>
<td>Mainstream</td>
<td>Professionals in the process of identifying alternative mainstream provision to reintegrate into.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dear Parent/Guardian,

My name is Rebecca Glazzard (Trainee Educational Psychologist) and I work as part of Shropshire Council’s Educational Psychology Service. Educational Psychologists work with children and young people, parents and schools to try to improve situations for young people. One of the ways we do this is by bringing people together to talk about issues that affect them.

Tuition, Medical and Behaviour Support Services (TMBSS) have agreed to take part in a study to look at how children/young people feel about restarting mainstream school. The study aims to answer these questions:

- How do children/young people talk about their experience of restarting mainstream school?
- What are their concerns about this?
- What support would they like to have to help them when they restart mainstream school?

This will involve children/young people talking with me and taking part in a drawing activity for up to 40 minutes.

Any information a child/young person provides will be kept confidentially, anonymously and securely in a password protected University data storage system. A key person will be identified before your child takes part in the activity and confidentiality will only be broken if something they say worries me. I will also share this information with yourself.
Findings from the research will be presented in a Doctoral thesis and may later be used for journal articles or a presentation. All data will be presented in a way that your child will not be recognised from the information they provide. In line with University guidelines, the data will be securely stored for 20 years and may be accessed by other researchers at the University in future. Again, this data will be kept confidentially and all personal information will be anonymised.

Ethical approval for this project has been given by the School of Policy Studies Research Ethics Committee at the University of Bristol. The project will be supervised by [REDACTED] who will be the contact person for any complaints. She can be contacted at: [REDACTED]

If you are happy for your child/young person to be involved, please sign the attached parental consent form. Please then return your consent form to [REDACTED]. If your child/young person later changes their mind and no longer wants to be involved in the study they will be able to withdraw their data up to one month after they have taken part.

If you have any further questions, please contact me at: [REDACTED] [REDACTED] will also be able to answer any questions that you may have.

Many thanks for your time,

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Rebecca Glazzard
Trainee Educational Psychologist, University of Bristol
Dear

My name is Rebecca Glazzard (Trainee Educational Psychologist) and I work as part of Shropshire Council’s Educational Psychology Service.

**What do I do?**

I work with children, parents and schools to try to make things better for them. One of the ways I do this is by talking to people about their lives.

Your school are taking part in a project about what you think about your schools. I would like to know if there is anything you think might help you when you go back to school.

**What will happen if you take part in my project?**

I would like to talk to you and use a drawing activity to get your views about school and things that might help you. This would take place at [location]. It will take about 40 minutes.

I will record what we talk about so that I can remember what you have said! I will not use your name so no-one will know what you have said.
I will use what you say to help me write a report to help other children to give their views. I will keep what you tell me very safe.

If you do tell me anything that makes me worried about you or worried about someone you know then I will have to tell your teacher about this.

**What to do next?**

- Decide with your parents or carers if you would like to take part in the project. It is up to you, no one will mind if you say no!
- Your school will let me know if you would like to take part and I will visit you at Harlescott.

When you have taken part in the activity, I will ask you if I can use the information I have collected. Once you have said yes to this, after three weeks, you won’t be able to change your mind.

If you have any questions or want to know a little bit more then you can ask Mrs Lyth. Or you ask your teacher to help you to send me an email. My email address is: rg15513@bristol.ac.uk

Thank you and maybe see you soon!

Rebecca Glazzard

Trainee Educational Psychologist, University of Bristol
APPENDIX 6 – Parent/carer consent form

I give my consent for my child, ……………………………………………………………………….., to take part in the study looking at how to gather children’s views.

I have read the information sheet and understand that:
Yes  No

I have read and understand the information sheet for this study and have had the opportunity to ask any questions I had.

I understand my child’s participation is voluntary and they can change their mind about participating without giving any reasons.

I agree for my child to take part in an interview which will be recorded.

I understand that the information gathered during this study will be included in a report which will be submitted as part of a Doctoral thesis and may be used in future research or journal articles. I understand that my child’s personal information will not be identifiable within these.

Data Protection Act

I understand that the information given by my child in this study will be stored on the University data storage facility for 20 years and that any personal information will be made anonymous so that my child cannot be identified from the data. I agree to the University of Bristol recording and processing the information for this study and possible future research within the University. My consent is conditional upon the University complying with its duties and obligations under the Data Protection Act.

Signed: …………………………………………………………………………………………………………….. (Parent/Guardian)

Relationship to child: ……………………………………………………………………………………………

Date: …………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

Contact details (phone or email): …………………………………………………………………………………
APPENDIX 7 – Child consent form

My name is……………………………………………………………………………………………………

I have read the information sheet about the study and understand that:

Please tick (√)

I have read and understand the information sheet about the study and have had the chance to ask any questions I have. □ YES □ NO

My views will be kept confidential unless I say anything that suggests I, or anyone else is at risk of harm. □ YES □ NO

I understand that my participation is voluntary and I can change my mind about being part of the study without giving any reasons for this. □ YES □ NO

I agree that my interview will be recorded. □ YES □ NO

I understand that the information gathered during this research will be submitted as part of a Doctoral thesis and may be used in future research or journal articles. I understand that my personal information will not be identifiable within these. □ YES □ NO

Data Protection Act
I understand that the information given by me in this study will be stored on the University data storage facility for 20 years and that any personal information will be made anonymous so that I cannot be identified from the data. I agree to the University of Bristol recording and processing the information for this study and possible future research within the University. My consent is conditional upon the University complying with its duties and obligations under the Data Protection Act.

Signed:............................................................................................................................

Date:...............................................................................................................................
APPENDIX 8 – Interview topic guide

Introduction (5 minutes)

- Review child information sheet and consent form. Seek written consent.
- Explanation of interview process; “I would like to talk today about how you feel about starting at a new school. I would like to talk about this today through some different drawing and writing and talking activities”.
- Leads into “Show” activity

“Show” (5 -10 minutes)

- Ice breaker activity – “Can you give me 3-5 words to describe how you feel about school/your education?”
- Child writes on post-it notes and attaches to flip chart paper. (Record answers for them if they prefer).
- “Can you give me 3-5 words to describe you/what other people (friends/family) might say about you?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Flip-chart paper:</th>
<th>WHAT I THINK ABOUT SCHOOL:</th>
<th>WHAT I AM LIKE:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Me</td>
<td>Friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. 2. 3. 4. 5.</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Write and Draw”

- “The next activity I would like to do with you is to design the front cover of a book about you starting at your new school. You know the most about your time at school and how you feel about going to your new school. I would like you to think about if there is anything you are looking forward to about your new school, if there is anything you are worried about and if there is anything you think might help you when you start at your new school”.

- Child provided with paper with book template on and marker pens/pencils.

- If child is reluctant to draw; give them the option to “write words if that is easier and decorate them instead of drawing”.

- Alternative way of framing/if further clarification needed: “This is [child’s name]’s book about starting at your new school. I would like to work with you in designing the front cover of your book on this paper. You know the most about your time at school and how you feel about going to your new school. If there is anything you
are looking forward to, or if there is anything you are unsure about or anything you think might help you at your new school, you could include this in your front cover”.

- Provide prompt cards of 3 things to consider to serve as a reminder (see below).
- Allow time for child to complete their drawing. (If finding drawing difficult, consider writing words and decorating).
- Refrain from giving feedback as the child is drawing. Instead ask; “What is going on in your picture?” “Tell me about this…”
- May make notes/observations
- Leads into “Tell” activity

“Tell”
- Opportunity for more open ended discussion around the following questions:
  - How long have you been at (PRU)?
  - How would you describe your time at (PRU)?
  - How did you find out that you would be going to (setting name) [new school]?
  - How did you feel about that?
  - How do you feel about this now?
  - Is there anything you are looking forward to about starting at (setting name)?
  - Is there anything that you feel worried or concerned about with going to (setting name)? Remember there are no right or wrong answers, this is your chance to tell me your thoughts.
  - What do you think might help you to settle in at (setting name) for your first day?
  - Those are great ideas, is there anything different that you think would help you to settle in for your first few weeks at (setting name)?
  - What help do you think you might need so that you are able to enjoy going to (setting name)?
  - Do you feel like you were part of the decision about when you go to (setting name)? How? If not, would you have liked to have been?
  - Do you think (setting name) could do anything to help you when you start going there?

- Thank child for time and participation, ensure there is nothing else they wish to add. Make arrangements for drawing – researcher to keep original copy, would child like copy? Make copy for them before leaving.
Prompt cards

What am I looking forward to?

What am I worried about?

What will help me when I start at my new school?
### APPENDIX 9 – Ice breaker activity data and initial coding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>‘What I am like’</th>
<th>‘What friends would say’</th>
<th>‘What family would say’</th>
<th>‘What I think about school’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Andrew</td>
<td>Good at making things</td>
<td>Good drawer</td>
<td>Annoying (sisters)</td>
<td>Like: The work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Friendly</td>
<td>Energetic</td>
<td></td>
<td>A place to go when I’m angry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Positive)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Story writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Ray</td>
<td>Love animals</td>
<td>Good on Xbox</td>
<td>Funny</td>
<td>Like: Fun lessons/subjects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cheeky</td>
<td>(Positive)</td>
<td>(Positive)</td>
<td>Subjects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stubborn</td>
<td>Humour</td>
<td>Humour</td>
<td>PE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Positive)</td>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>Maths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Manner</td>
<td>Jumpy</td>
<td>Break time- sports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Behaviour</td>
<td></td>
<td>Practical activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Free time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 John</td>
<td>Short tempered</td>
<td>Funny</td>
<td>Polite</td>
<td>Can be fun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work and temper improved</td>
<td>(Positive)</td>
<td>Nice</td>
<td>Can be enjoyable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Behaviour</td>
<td>Do things I’m told</td>
<td>Like school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Like: PE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Don’t like: Boring lessons/subjects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 David</td>
<td>Funny</td>
<td>Humour</td>
<td>Do my Homework</td>
<td>Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Like my dog</td>
<td>(Positive)</td>
<td>Brilliant</td>
<td>Eat dinner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Humour</td>
<td>behaviour</td>
<td>Teachers help you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Friendships</td>
<td></td>
<td>Like: Play outside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Don’t like: punching people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Don’t like: When people push me around</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Roger</td>
<td>Kind</td>
<td>E (named friend)</td>
<td>Unable to answer</td>
<td>Children attended to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gentle</td>
<td>(Positive)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Calm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kind-hearted</td>
<td>Manner</td>
<td></td>
<td>Don’t like: Noisy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Busy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 George</td>
<td>Behaviour (Bad)</td>
<td>M, M and R (named friends)</td>
<td>Can be a nice boy</td>
<td>Singing songs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Funny</td>
<td>Happy</td>
<td>Can be a good boy</td>
<td>Subjects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Positive)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Humour</td>
<td>Choice in behaviour</td>
<td>Sometimes fun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Have friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Harry</td>
<td>Clever</td>
<td>(named friends)</td>
<td>Love me</td>
<td>I am clever</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good at Maths</td>
<td>Unable to answer</td>
<td>Want me to go to mainstream</td>
<td>Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Autistic</td>
<td>(Positive)</td>
<td>Support from others</td>
<td>JR (named setting)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sometimes get angry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Michael</td>
<td>Useful</td>
<td>Angry</td>
<td>Useful</td>
<td>Boring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Creative</td>
<td>Cool</td>
<td>(Positive)</td>
<td>Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Annoying (siblings)</td>
<td>I’m not at home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Positive and negative)</td>
<td>Like: Break time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Free time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lunch time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Don’t like: Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Don’t like: Boring lessons</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

170
### APPENDIX 10 – Sample transcript and initial coding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Extract</th>
<th>Initial Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Researcher: So six months, and how would you describe your time, here?</td>
<td>Positive about PRU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew: Erm, probably pretty, pretty good</td>
<td>Behaviour better at PRU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control/choice over behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher: Pretty good?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew: Yeah</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher: Why’s it been pretty good?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Andrew: Because erm, I dunno I think it’s probably been way better here than my other school</td>
<td>Bullying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher: Oh ok, why’s that?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Andrew: Because I dunno, I dunno, I just behave better</td>
<td>Behaviour better at PRU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control/choice over behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher: So you behave better here?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Andrew: Yeah</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Researcher: Why, what was your behaviour like at your other school?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Andrew: Erm,… I used to, wait, I did get bullied, I used to get bullied in year two</td>
<td>Bullying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peer relationships</td>
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<tr>
<td>Researcher: Ok</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Andrew: But then I didn’t, when in year three</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Researcher: Yeah, so, and you’ve not been bullied here and that’s better is it?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Andrew: I don’t get bullied cos I was the oldest kid</td>
<td>Age – importance of being oldest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Age is relevant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Worries about secondary school when not the oldest?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Researcher: Ahhh, right okay when’s your birthday then?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Andrew: XXXX</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Researcher: So your quite, your one of the oldest in your year then aren’t you?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Andrew: Yeah</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher: Yeah, okay then, so you’ve like, so you like coming here do you better than your older school?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Andrew: Probably, yeah</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher: Yeah, what sort of things do you like about being here?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew: I mean there are other kids that get angry like me</td>
<td>Anger</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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| Researcher: Okay, so other children that get angry like you, and have you been able to ermmm have some help with that? | Behaviour |
| Andrew: Ermm yeah, yeah | Peers who are alike |
| Researcher: Ok, and do you think that when you go to a new school there will be children like that as well? | Community |
| Andrew: Probably | Sense of belonging |
| Researcher: Probably yeah? | |
| Andrew: 99 percent chance there’s at least one kid there’s whose naughty in each class yeah | Defined as naughty |
|  | Similar to peers |
|  | Behaviour |
|  | Not unusual for children to be naughty |
APPENDIX 11 – Andrew’s drawing
APPENDIX 12 – Ray’s drawing
See my friends are

Sees my sister seeing the people

That i enjoy

That i talk to doing the lessons

nothing that i'm worried about

Fraction and subtraction
APPENDIX 14 – David’s drawing
APPENDIX 15 – Roger's drawing
APPENDIX 16 – George’s drawing
APPENDIX 17 – Harry’s drawing
APPENDIX 18 – Michael’s drawing
APPENDIX 19 – Summary of suggested interventions

Circle of Friends (Newton & Wilson, 2003)

Circle of Friends is used as a tool to promote inclusion. It works by developing a support network around individuals in a school community who are experiencing social difficulties, often related to a specific disability, difference or behaviour. Volunteers from a peers group meet regularly with an individual to ensure that relationships are built around this individual. The group problem solves ideas with the individual to address any social difficulties they are experiencing in school. This approach can also be used to develop a sense of community in a class and more widely, within a school.

Solution Circles (Forest & Pearpoint, 1996)

A Solution Circle is a short but powerful tool which is effective in getting ‘unstuck’ from a problem. Working with a small group (approximately 5-9 people), within a 30 minute time frame, a set process is followed. This involves:

- **Step 1** – The ‘problem presenter’ outlines the ‘problem’ (approximately 6 uninterrupted minutes).
- **Step 2** – Group members offer ideas. The ‘problem presenter’ listens without interrupting.
- **Step 3** – Group dialogue led by the ‘problem presenter’. The ‘problem’ is explored and clarified. It is important at this point to focus on positive points, rather than what cannot be achieved.
- **Step 4** – Group identify the first steps to be achieved in the next 3 days. At least one step should be initiated in the first 24 hours to ensure commitment to the process.

Circle of Adults (Wilson & Newton, 2006)

Circle of Adults is a team approach to problem solving issues around challenging behaviour and emotional needs. It aims to deepen the understanding of a young person and generate new strategies for support. As with Solution Circles (Forest & Pearpoint, 1996), a set process is followed, however this approach is not governed by a strict timescale. Circle of Adults focuses in greater depth on issues including; relationships, systems and voice of the child.