The destruction of the good student: using poetic transcription to represent students' perspectives of labelling and exclusion from mainstream school.

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"*Two roads diverged in a wood, and I*

I took the one less travelled by

And that has made all the difference"

Robert Frost (1874-1963) 'The Road Not Taken'

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Abstract

School exclusion is a relatively rare occurrence, but there is a disproportionate over-representation of pupils with special educational needs being excluded from mainstream classrooms, both formally and through hidden practices. To gain an understanding of the roots of this problematic there is a need to listen to the voices, views and experiences of those whose lives have been impacted upon by labelling and exclusion.

In this doctoral research project I adopted a case study approach working with two students, aged 15 and 16, with special educational needs who attended a special school following their exclusion from different mainstream school. Data were derived from semi-structured interviews with the students about their educational experiences as well as a school leaving speech made by one of the case study students. Following initial coding of the data, poetic transcription was used as a basis for analysis. Using poetic transcription as an analytic device, the study offers a novel approach, creating a vicarious experience of the individual contexts of the two students. Through this approach, this thesis provides valuable insight into individual students' experiences of barriers and enablers which can be pivotal in shaping whether or not an educational environment is conducive to learning.

Employing a Foucauldian lens, issues pertaining to power relationships, bio-power, disciplinary strategies and the application of policy emerge as significant. The study illustrates the potential for individual agency and resistance through the students' development of survival strategies. This thesis lends insight into the impact of institutional procedures and actions upon the individual and how without relational pedagogies there can be a mismatch in perceptions of supposedly supportive strategies, leaving individual needs unmet, which may culminate in challenging behaviours, as well as having a deleterious impact upon student mental health. Implications from the study include a need to evaluate the efficacy of supportive and disciplinary policies and procedures that aim to address challenging behaviours, and the injurious effects of stigmatising discourses embedded in policy.

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Glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms

Within education, and particularly in special education, there exists an ever-growing and changing lexicon of acronyms and terminology. ‘Changes in terminology do not necessarily reflect changes in actual problems’ (Hellblom-Thibblin, 2018, p. 11), but rather changes in prevailing ‘attitudes, beliefs and knowledge of those who used them’ (Hurt, 1988, p. 107). Through incorporating the use of ‘disparaging disability metaphors and terminology’ (Derby, 2013, p. 376) based upon ‘inaccurate and pejorative language’ (Derby, 2011, p. 103), educational terminology remains highly problematic. Consequently, it is essential to note that the use of current and historic terminology within this thesis ‘does not imply any acceptance of the validity of the concept’ (Hurt, 1988, p. 107). Furthermore, ‘literature should not uncritically reiterate these categories’ (Derby, 2011, p. 103) because categorisation of disability not only propagates stigma but also helps perpetuate, reinforce and justifying prejudice. The significance of labelling is discussed in more detail in the literature review.

Table 1: Acronyms and terminology used.

Term/acronym	Definition
Academies	Publicly funded schools operating outside the control of a Local Authorities with greater flexibility around curriculum, finance and teachers’ conditions than maintained schools.
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
AP	Alternative Provision – any provision outside mainstream of special schools
AS	Asperger Syndrome – a form of autism
ASC	Autism Spectrum Conditions

ASD	Autistic Spectrum Disorders
BESD	Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties– a category of SEND
CAMHs	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services - services that work with children and adolescents experiencing difficulties with their emotional wellbeing and metal health
CSIE	Centre for Studies in Inclusive Education
DCSF	Department for Children, Schools and Families
DfE	Department for Education
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
EAL	English as an Additional Language
EAZ	Education Action Zone
ECM	Every Child Matters
EBD	Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties – a category of SEND
EHC	Education Health Care Plan (replaced statements of special educational needs in the third SEN Code of practice) A document that outlines a child's specific educational, health and care needs and lasts until aged 25.
LA	Local Authority
LEA	Local Education Authority
MAT	Multi-academy trust
MLD	Moderate Learning Difficulties – a category of SEND
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills.
PI	Physical Intervention
PRU	Pupil Referral Unit Established by the 1996 Education Act to provide education for pupils out of mainstream schools.
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
RCBDD	Royal Commission on the Blind, Deaf and Dumb &c of the United Kingdom, 1889

RoA	Records of Achievement
SEBD	Social, Emotional and Behavioural difficulties– a category of SEND
SEMH	Social, Emotional and Mental Health– a category of SEND
SEN	Special Educational Needs A term enshrined in legislation by the 1981 Education Act for a child who has a learning difficulty that requires special educational provision to be made.
SENCo	Special Educational Needs Coordinator - a designated teacher with responsibility for pupils designated as having special educational needs.
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disability
SEN Code of Practice **SEN CoP**	Code of Practice – first prescribed by the 1993 Education Act to regulate the provision for those with special education needs and subsequently revised twice.
SENDA	Special Education Needs and Disability Act (2001)
UNCRC	UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (1989)

Chapter 1: Introduction

“I recognise you, you came to my house!”

Nathan recalled that moment, that visit, the turning point in his education. The toss of a coin, sliding doors, serendipity … For me, another day, another home visit, another pupil with a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) on the verge of permanent exclusion. Whilst both being pieces, played within the world of education, Nathan was powerless, decisions had been made, there would be no return to the mainstream school. The piece I played had a different role, making recommendations for his future.

This story is not an isolated one. Indeed, despite over fifty years of rhetoric around pupils’ rights to belong to mainstream schools, concerns persist around the over-representation of ‘vulnerable’ students in exclusion data (Gazeley, et al., 2015), reflecting that the more insecure children’s lives are, the more likely they are to be excluded. The excluded child is ‘twice as likely to be in the care of the state, four times more likely to have grown up in poverty, seven times more likely to have a special educational need and ten times more likely to suffer recognised mental health problems’ (Gill, et al., 2017, p. 7).

Research indicates some pupils are not in mainstream education, or education at all, for a variety of reasons including: home-schooling; preferring a special school (Hick, et al., 2009); school refusal (Stevenson & Ellsworth, 1991); and exclusion, either by the reluctance of mainstream schools to offer a placement (Ofsted, 2006) or by a disciplinary sanction used by head teachers (Daniels & Cole, 2010). Whilst there are many different terms and phrases for separating out and removing children from their mainstream peers, for clarity I shall use the term ‘excluded’ as a portmanteau term for all those who are educated at school but outside of mainstream classrooms.

With specific regard to the exclusion of pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), headlines from Ofsted’s SEND review (2017) highlight two issues:

> **‘Children and young people who have SEND were found to be excluded, absent or missing from school much more frequently than other pupils nationally.** Even in some local areas that had implemented the Code of Practice well, leaders did not have appropriate plans to deal with the levels of exclusion for these pupils.
>
> **School leaders had used unofficial exclusions too readily to cope with children and young people who have SEND.** Across nearly all local areas inspected, an alarming number of parents said that some school leaders asked them to take their children home. This was in addition, or as an alternative, to fixed-term exclusions. It is illegal.’ (Ofsted, 2017, p. 5, bold from the original).

The first issue highlights that in both permanent and fixed period exclusions, the exclusion rates remain ‘higher among special educational needs (SEN) pupils’ (Gov.uk, 2020) as summarised in Table 2 below.

	Fixed Period Exclusion (per 10,000)	Permanent Exclusion (per 10,000)
SEN with EHC plan	1611	15
SEN without EHC plan	1559	32
No SEN	357	6

Table 2: Exclusion by pupil characteristics.
(Source: Gov.uk, 2020)

The second issue highlights that the extent of exclusions of students with SEND is actually unknown. Concerns that the reported data under-represent the true scale of the problem (Parker, et al., 2015; Gazeley, et al., 2015), reflect the view that official exclusion data represent the ‘tip of the iceberg’ (Gazeley, et al., 2015, p. 492). To uncover the true extent of exclusions there is a need to look at less visible practices beneath the surface. Examples include exclusion by ‘the backdoor through ‘hidden’ or unofficial exclusions’ (Children's Commissioner, 2017, p. 4), such as being placed on part-time tables (O'Brien, 2016) or being sent home due to ‘having a bad day’; cooling off following an incident; and insufficient staff to support their child (Children's Commissioner, 2017). In these cases,

incidents are recorded on the official register as a student being absent rather than excluded when sent home, which is illegal (ibid).

The significant body of evidence regarding the damaging impact of exclusion upon the individual, their families and society (Parker, et al., 2015; Daniels & Cole, 2010), resulted in 'pressure to reduce exclusion rates, leading to an exploration of alternatives' (Messeter & Soni, 2018, p. 170). Strategies included the use of isolation within schools (Barker, et al., 2010), 'managed moves' between schools, and referrals to Alternative Provisions (APs) (Bagley & Hallam, 2015). Political rhetoric describes 'managed moves' as providing a fresh start in a new school (DCSF, 2008), untarnished by the potential stigma of an official exclusion. These pupils have effectively been excluded from their former school without being formally recorded as excluded, with no right of appeal (Carlile, 2011; Children's Commissioner, 2017; Gazeley, et al., 2015). Between 1997/98 and 2009/10, a steep decline in the numbers recorded as permanently excluded from 12,300 to 5,740 (Centre for Social Justice, 2011), is 'explained, at least in part by the increased use of managed moves' (Gazeley, et al., 2015, p. 488). Problems termed as a 'data gap' identified in the official recording of exclusions in the school census reports may also account for a small part of the decline (Department for Education, 2010). Exclusion rates have subsequently risen in England, to 7,894 in 2018/19 (Gov.uk, 2020), with persistent disruptive behaviour cited as the most common reason.

In suggesting that 'negative behaviours communicate an unmet need' (O'Brien, 2016, p. 27) or 'an unsupported need' (Parker, et al., 2015, p. 238) attracting labels of "lazy", "rude", "naughty" or "aggressive" (Jordan, 1999; Buckingham, 2019), questions are raised as to whether some exclusions of children with SEND could have been avoided if their difficulties had been effectively supported. Indeed, 'children thrive when their individual needs are met and supported' (Steer, 2009, p. 51). This issue is epitomised by Spiteri's (2009) quote from Henri, a pupil with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD) who had attended a mainstream school. With Henri 'not portray[ing] characteristics that are usually associated with SEBD, such as being disruptive or engaging in delinquent behaviour', Spiteri had questioned Henri about his placement at a special school. Henri responded, 'why I was always seen as a troublemaker. I am actually a quiet person. I just want to be left in peace. This was the way I was at school and I am

still that way today' (p. 64). Despite the pathologising of his difficulties through the process of diagnosis of SEBD, Spiteri discusses how the root causes of Henri's needs and behaviours had failed to be understood and addressed. This example of Henri's experience illustrates the problematic providing the focus of my thesis. That is, due to a combination of a lack of understanding, lack of subsequent appropriate support and lack of interventions that should have been in place to ensure success in mainstream schools, the very entitlement to education had been placed in jeopardy due to exclusion both within and subsequently from the mainstream system.

The disproportionality of the rates of exclusion of those identified with SEN raises questions around the rationale of labelling a child as having SEN if they subsequently become excluded. Having identified and pathologised a specific 'problem', according to the SEN Code of Practice, schools should 'use their best endeavours to make sure that a child with SEN gets the support they need – this means doing everything they can to meet children and young people's SEN' (Department for Education, 2015, p. 92). So, if children are receiving the support they need, why are some still excluded?

Perspectives of being excluded from the mainstream and subsequently placed in a special school drive this thesis. The specific context is the perspectives from two case study students, Beth and Nathan, who have experienced this scenario. Their stories epitomise those of many students I have taught as a teacher and Assistant Head within non-mainstream settings. Despite having an underlying desire to be successful, they have 'travelled up the punishment escalator' (O'Brien, 2016, p. 41), culminating in exclusion from mainstream education, hence recruited into 'a near-hidden group of children and young people in our education system which is being failed' (Centre for Social Justice, 2011).

The convergence of the rising number of school exclusions and the vulnerability of many children's lives signal a significant challenge to the education system in how to provide for the diverse and complex needs of society's most vulnerable children. In attempting to address these challenges it is vital to listen to the educational challenges faced by vulnerable students and 'seek understanding of exclusion from the perspectives of those who are devalued and rendered marginal or surplus by the dominant culture of the regular school' (Slee, 2011, p. 107). The aim of this thesis is to explore, from the experiences and perceptions of two

students, the disciplinary techniques and practices operating in the English education system that serve to exclude vulnerable pupils from mainstream schools and in so doing perpetuate a segregated education system that impacts negatively upon their life chances.

1.1 Thesis Structure

This thesis commences by outlining the influences and inspiration for professionally focused research. In this introductory chapter, I present my backstory to explain the perspective that is being adopted in this thesis, specifically, how I became a teacher located primarily in professional settings designed for children excluded from mainstream education. This experience motivated a desire to better understand the experiences and perspectives of such students. The case of Michael is given focused attention, as I had a small part in influencing his educational journey. Work with Michael fuelled a quest to research and find answers to questions, which in the final part of the chapter I present as the main and subsidiary research questions of this thesis.

Chapter 2 begins by briefly outlining the post-structuralist influences that have shaped my analytical approach. I draw parallels between the penal system and disciplinary power outlined in *Discipline and Punish* (Foucault, 1977) and the practices I witnessed in my workplace. I also use his concepts of genealogy and bio-power (Foucault, 1982) to inform the theoretical framing for my study of pupil exclusion and special education. The chapter provides a brief description and critical reflection of these concepts within different educational contexts, and in the genealogical shaping of the literature review through its successive chapters. I conclude by briefly exploring the possibility of resistance to disciplinary strategies.

In the first part of the literature review, Chapter 3, I outline dominant discourses that were prevalent in the mid-nineteenth century and formed the roots of exclusionary practices in later modes of education. I identify the formative significance of changing attitudes and in particular with regard to the inclusion agenda and the ambiguity of the very term inclusion and how that has influenced

educational policy around exclusion. Finally, I explore how these trends are manifest in the current resurgence of placements in segregated provisions.

The literature review continues in Chapter Four. It is chiefly concerned with the rationales that are evident in pathologising difference and the associated labelling. I explore the historical roots of this phenomenon and how despite changing terminology, problems persist, mainly around ambiguous designations and subjective dissonances. In considering who actually benefits from the labelling process I review the economic and social impact of labelling from differing perspectives. I conclude with a discussion of the significance of disproportionality in the labelling process.

In the final chapter of the literature review, chapter 5, I consider the significance of listening to marginalised voices. Starting from the historical perspective of the domination of professionals in the SEN discourse, I explore the growth in parental and children's rights to participate in matters concerning them. The literature reveals, however, that despite changing attitudes certain voices are still privileged over others. In the final section, I briefly review literature concerning perceptions of pupils with SEN of being educated in a range of different settings. This provides examples of the valuable insights which can be acquired through engaging in dialogue with those who challenge the education system.

In Chapter 6 I introduce the main study that informs this thesis. I begin with a justification of the research design and my rationale behind using a case study approach. I explain the background to recruiting the participants for the study, how it evolved from classroom discussions following my transfer to teach at the MAT. I outline how qualitative semi-structured interviews were used to ascertain the perceptions and experiences of two case study pupils. As a teacher researcher I discuss the significance of researcher reflexivity as well as issues of the Insider/Outsider dilemma. With ethical considerations being essential within any research project, the chapter moves on to ethics in the context of research with children with SEN, including issues around informed consent for those with SEN, and how I addressed issues of beneficence, anonymity and privacy in the research process. I conclude the chapter with the rationale behind my choice of analytical tools, recounting how I struggled with coding the insights that participants had shared with me, as I felt the coding process was removing the crucially important emotional load of the participants' stories, and how this struggle led me to poetic

transcription. As I experiment with poetic transcription in my analysis, and in the spirit of poetry, I begin most chapters with a summary in the form of my own poetic interpretation of the chapter content.

Chapter 7 consists of the poetic transcription and analysis of the data. For each case study, I use Foucault's theories of power relations to analyse their interviews which I structure around stanzas in two poems. I conclude with a discussion of the key points raised drawing on relevant literature from the previous chapters. Key issues include: the significance of language in placing deficits within the child; the issue of rights in the identification of SEN and educational placements; and the significance of the school environment on the capacity to learn. In Chapter 8 I draw together evidence from the data analysis and the literature review to address the research questions. Finally, in chapter 9 I outline implications from the findings of the study for education practice and policy.

1.2 A Singular Professional Pathway

Looking back to a time of innocence

Believing

Comprehensive schools for all

Regardless of difference

Believing

We all trod that same path

Yet thirty years later

Looking back to a time of innocence

Knowing now

Comprehensive schools for some

Differences divided

Knowing now

We trod a different path

My decision to embark on doctoral study during the twilight years of my teaching career provided an opportunity to consider and reflect upon the significance of the interwoven nature of educational policies and practices upon my personal and professional educational experiences. Discovering Foucault during the initial phase of the doctoral programme sparked an inspiration to examine how the ways of thinking and prevalent discourses at particular moments in time provide insights into how and why decisions, choices and policies arose.

The 1960s, an era in which I took my first steps into the world of education, was also a time of transformation in education with the growth of the comprehensive ideal. Living within a city that had adopted the policy of comprehensive education I believed everybody was included in the local school. Now, many decades later, I look back at my innocent childhood from a critical perspective, realising I was blissfully unaware of the invisibility of some children, that not everyone had the right to go to the same school.

Entering the teaching profession in the same year as the Education Reform Act (1988) I still held the comprehensive ideal. For the next twelve years I taught at a small comprehensive. This was an era of significant change, including the introduction of the National Curriculum, the decline of local teacher networks and competition between and within schools. Disillusioned with teaching in a system which encouraged competition rather than cooperation between schools, I sought a new adventure. Despite a policy of comprehensive education, special schools still existed in the area. An opportunity arose at an inner-city school for 'Moderate Learning Difficulties' (MLD), so I stepped into the world of special education, leaving the relatively secure world of mainstream schools and embarking on a journey heavily influenced by local and national educational policy. My journey is illustrated in Figure 1.

Over time, I came to understand this non-mainstream world as a fragile, vulnerable space profoundly influenced by successive changes in policy. As a teacher I benefitted from working in a school within an Education Action Zone (EAZ) which prioritised Information and Communications Technology (ICT). My hobby in website design enabled me to build the ICT structure in the school, and resulted in my nomination to the role of 'Innovative Teacher' in the EAZ. A growing desire to showcase the work of the students I taught facilitated my working on

collaborative projects within the EAZ, local schools and external organisations such as Promethean and Microsoft.

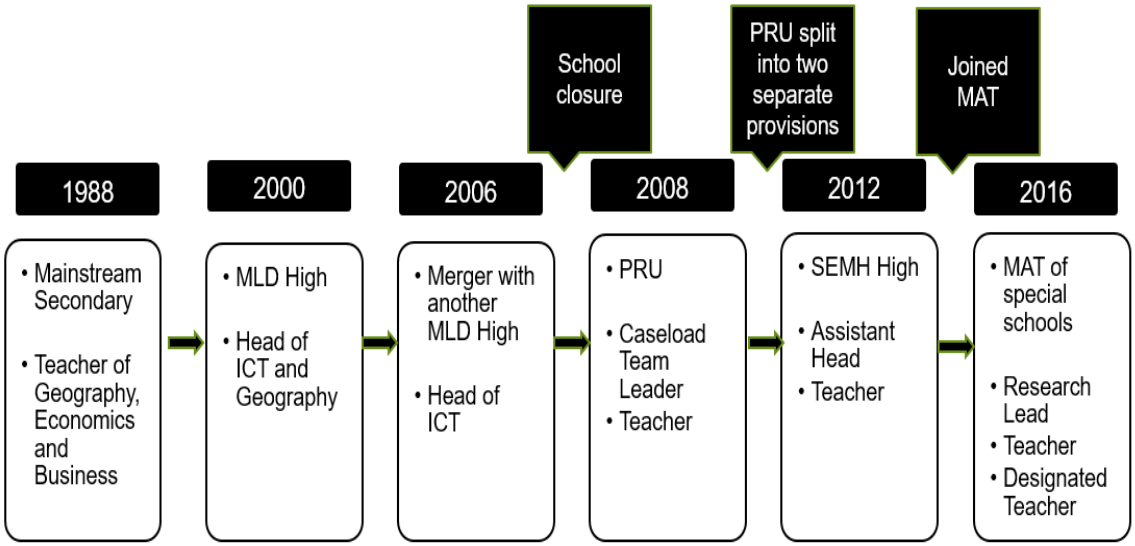


Figure 1: My teaching journey.

My time at the school and activities with the EAZ were curtailed by the planned closure of MLD schools and the re-allocation of pupils to local mainstream schools as part of the Local Authority's inclusion agenda. Concerns about disrupting the education of those in Key Stage 4 resulted in a temporary merger of the borough's two MLD high school. Upon subsequent closure I accepted a position in a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU). Established following the 1996 Education Act 'to make provision for students out of school for reasons such as exclusion or illness' (Tutt, 2007, p. 107), the PRU's cohort was an eclectic mix of pupils aged 11-16, some had been permanently excluded from school, whilst the majority had not. The Ofsted SEND Review (2017) refers to these pupils as 'unofficially excluded'. My position here was vastly different from my previous experiences. My management of a staff team facilitated a new perspective and I also taught a range of subjects to a mixed aged group. In addition, I regularly visited the pupils at home, visited other schools, planned reintegration processes, and chaired numerous meetings with other professionals. Curious to gain a better understanding of the world in which I worked, I embarked upon a part-time Masters' degree in Inclusive Education and SEN.

Whilst ‘PRUs are designated as “short stay centres” for pupils’ (Ofsted, 2007, p. 4), many also provide education for some students with ‘Statements of Special Educational Needs’. This designation was problematic because ‘this does not fully comply with the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) guidance that where a pupil’s special needs are long term the pupil should be given a special school rather than a PRU placement’ (Ofsted, 2007, p. 6). In accordance with this guidance changes were instigated. The PRU where I was based was restructured into two separate provisions, a smaller PRU as a ‘short stay school’ and a school for pupils with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs (SEMH). My previous experience of teaching in a special school resulted in the latter being the next stop on my journey. I was now the Assistant Head. Having completed an MA and still hungry to find more about the world of special education and exclusion I enrolled on the Doctor of Education (EdD) programme. The school subsequently joined a local special school Multi-Academy Trust (MAT). Following a conversation with the Chief Executive Officer about my passion for ICT and the EdD I became the MAT’s Research Lead, designated teacher for ‘Looked after Children’ at one site and teacher of ICT on their Key Stage 4 and 5 pathways.

My research and this thesis adopt the perspective of a teacher working outside the mainstream. I represent a significant minority in the world of educators as illustrated in Figure 2.

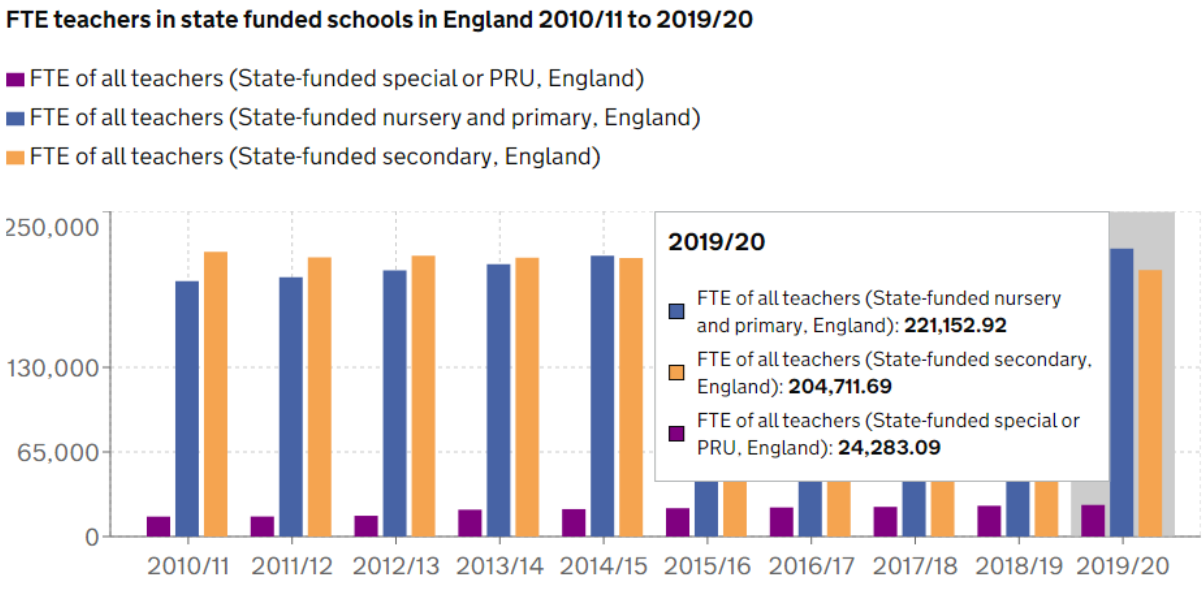


Figure *2*: Teachers by sector. (Source: Department for Education, 2020)

Given the passion of my personal commitment to this field of work, it is important to consider my own subjective experience and how this progressively revealed itself through the reflexivity of the research process, which is inevitably interwoven with my experiences of being a teacher during the past thirty years.

1.3 Thesis Inspiration: Michael

Teaching at the PRU my passion for listening to the stories and histories of these excluded pupils was ignited. Most wanted to learn and be successful, but something seemed to have gone terribly wrong, resulting in exclusion. The inspiration for this thesis is centred on one pupil, 'Michael' who I first encountered at the PRU, following exclusion during his first week at secondary school. As Thomas (2013) suggests, 'there is no clear disinterested knowledge – people have feelings and understandings and these affect the ways that they perceive and interpret the world' (p.109). For my research, Michael became a catalyst for a particular pathway of analysis being chosen.

Michael, a young boy aged 11 years, shared characteristics with those who seemed to be at higher risk of exclusion, that is, male, diagnosed with SEND and eligible for Free School Meals. In his initial year at the PRU when unhappy he would destroy things, but instead of in a tantrum, in an emotionless, controlled manner. Staff considered him to be a 'troubled child' and expressed feelings of compassion and warmth towards him and a desire to help him, condemning the 'act' not the 'actor' (Cole & Knowles, 2011). Over the following five years the numbers of incidents declined. By the end of Year 11 he had achieved a range of GCSEs and left. Twelve months later upon joining the MAT part of my role involved teaching ICT at their Key Stage 5 provision. Guess who was in my classroom! Serendipitously, having been tossed on the same waves of educational change as Michael, I witnessed a permanently excluded eleven-year-old, whose life was riddled with many hidden and complex difficulties, grow into a confident and self-assured young entrepreneur, a winner of regional and national awards as director of a Young Enterprise group. For me, Michael epitomises a pupil striving to be a

good student. He remains my inspiration, for my thesis and the contribution to knowledge this thesis yields.

1.4 Research Questions

Students are excluded on many levels within the education system. Yet in my experience, many just want to be a good student. Why then, despite an underlying desire to be a good student, are some construed so systematically as problematic? To address this phenomenon, it is vital to listen to the voices of those who are or who have been excluded, to try to understand 'the experiences of education from the perspectives of those who directly encounter it' (Messiou & Hope, 2015, p. 1009). This thesis presents research based upon two cases, one male, Nathan, aged 15, the other female, Beth, aged 16, both with Statements of SEN and both excluded from mainstream school. The aim of this thesis is therefore to generate new knowledge by creating a space to listen to and hear the experiences and perceptions of these two pupils' accounts of their journeys out of the mainstream system. My analysis of their accounts offers very specific and original insights into how and why mainstream education sometimes fails in its endeavours to educate children who do not sit comfortably within teacher and school expectations of a notional norm.

This thesis has been a journey of discovery, centred on the benefits of focusing upon a problematic situation through a theoretical lens. As Jackson and Mazzei (2012) argue, theorists, such as Foucault, 'help us think something that we cannot think otherwise, or with anyone else' (p. 15). Adopting such a lens has enabled me to see differently, to question how and why certain situations arose in my professional life, and has helped to mould the research questions addressed in this thesis.

Main Research Question

> What are the perspectives of pupils with SEN, excluded from mainstream schools, of their educational experiences?

The following subsidiary questions address specific aspects of the main research question:

a) What are the two students' experiences and perceptions of labelling?
b) To what extent do the experiences voiced by the two students resonate with the aspirations of the SEND Code of Practice 2015?

The literature review in chapters 3, 4 and 5 provides the contextual background to these questions. In Chapter 3 I review the historic emergence of dividing practices which sought to identify and label differences. In Chapter 4 I explore how special educational need and pupil vulnerability are conceptualised. I present a brief overview of the growth of the lexicon of difference to label children, from the mid-nineteenth century to present day, where terminology both reflects and evolves with the inherent biases, expectations and attitudes of different times. Two major problems emerge: firstly, the ambiguous nature and disproportional application of labelling; and secondly, the implications of being labelled for individuals. Finally, I consider who benefits from the labelling process. In chapter 5 I review existing literature pertaining to research into pupils' perceptions of their mainstream education experiences. Finally, in chapter 7 I build upon this existing knowledge through the presentation of new data and an analysis of the perceptions of the experiences of the two student case studies, Beth and Nathan.

In Chapter 8 I discuss how this thesis, through exploring the contextual background and the analysis of the perceptions of experiences of Beth and Nathan, has addressed both sub-questions, and how each contributes to a robust and research-informed response to the main research question. In the final chapter of this thesis, I outline my contribution to knowledge and consider the implications of the thesis findings of the dangers of viewing individuals as part of a homogenised group; the stigmatising effect of language embedded in SEN policy; the negative impact of supposed supportive strategies; and the challenge in addressing behaviours reflecting unmet need.

This study, by engaging with and hearing the voices of two students with SEN who have been excluded from mainstream schools, highlights the impact of exclusionary practices and policies. Their accounts provide insight into the impact of disciplinary and supportive strategies they have experienced; the stress and

anxiety presented by school environments; and the significance of inter-personal relationships. Through analysing their experiences, I propose a need to challenge existing exclusionary practices in order to create more inclusive classrooms by outlining some guiding principles for the creation of educational spaces in which all children can learn.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

Theories of power

Controlling populations

Techniques of discipline

Creating strategies to divide

Surveillance, observations

Creating the power of the norm

Docile bodies, individuals formed

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I commence by explaining why I situate my work within a poststructuralist framework, specifically how Foucault's notions of disciplinary practices (1977), genealogy and bio-power (1982) resonated with the educational practices I witnessed in my workplace. A discussion follows of the significance of complex disciplinary techniques used as 'ways of exercising power' (Foucault, 1977, p. 23) specifically concerning exclusion within and from schools. Finally, given 'within relationships of power emerge resistance' (Albers, et al., 2015, p. 117), the chapter culminates in exploring the possibility of resistance to disciplinary strategies through Brown et al.'s (2006) case of one pupil's resistance to exclusion from the classroom.

2.2 Adopting a Post-structuralist Stance

My adoption of poststructuralism is due to its disruptive, dissenting stance which seeks to question the status quo. It offers a theoretical framework which, 'encourages individuals to understand the basis on which their freedom exists and

to examine the external influences that govern their lives as well as the motives behind them' (Brown, et al., 2006, p. 188). Jackson and Mazzei's (2012) use of Foucault's theory of power relations to analyse the interview data of two female black professors' experiences in the academic world to 'see how they might disrupt historical truths' (p. 8) exemplifies this and how 'poststructuralist works cannot be abstract theoretical reflections … they take a given actual structure and deconstruct it, transform it, show its exclusions' (Williams, 2005, p. 4).

In this thesis, I am drawing upon discourse theory to challenge certain historic assumptions and misrepresentations of excluded children labelled with SEND to scrutinise the complex educational experiences of the case study participants and the relations of power that impact upon their supposed freedoms and rights. Within England, the right of a child with SEND to a place in the local mainstream school has historically been negated if the child's inclusion impacts upon the efficient education of others (Florian, 2008). The assumption that different education is needed for different pupils is rooted in exclusionary discourses that re-interpret the principles of inclusion as placing "special" children in mainstream environments where they are unable to learn effectively (Corbett, 2001; Warnock, 2010). Foucault's theory, 'provides a critical lens to contest … what is commonly thought to be "right" or best for children' (Flewitt & Ang, 2020, p. 3).

Whenever listening to the accounts of experiences of research participants, it is important to acknowledge that they have been asked 'to share their truths and experiences' (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 3). The participants, however, in selecting what to recount, have 'filtered, processed and already interpreted' their experiences, reflecting the poststructuralist claim that 'there is no purely objective knowledge, because knowledge itself is necessarily the property of the subject' (Belsey, 2002, p. 73).

2.3 Foucault's Influence upon my Thinking

One of the most striking theses of '*Discipline and Punish*' is the adoption of disciplinary technology originally introduced for criminals by other sites of control, such as hospitals and schools (Gutting, 2005). Foucault posits how punishment,

as exemplified by the graphic description of the torture of the regicide Damiens, evolved from the public spectacle to deter disobedience to the king into more insidious forms of control over others.

> For Foucault, power is not a force wielded by one group or sovereign figure against others, but a more sinuous and insinuating mechanism that works its way in a “capillary” fashion into the “very grain” of individuals (MacLure, 2003, p. 49).

This encapsulation resonated with my experiences of teaching excluded students with evident parallels between the penal system presented in *Discipline and Punish* and the reality in which I worked. Mechanisms of surveillance, hierarchical observation, the normalising judgement and the examination (explored in detail later in this chapter) were highly evident in the everyday practices within these settings. Constant supervision and surveillance were paramount – CCTV in every room, metal detectors on entering to ensure no prohibited items enter the building, etc. Every infringement was documented and in every lesson student performance rated. Disruptive students were physically removed and isolated in secure “quiet rooms” and observed through a panel in the door. The purpose of such strategies was to transform students who had been excluded from mainstream schools into teachable individuals. Foucault’s work has been critiqued as pessimistic (Allan, 2018; Marshall, 1990) and ‘bleaker than his 20th century peers’ (Kalantzis & Cope, 2015). In this respect, Foucault resonated with my thinking as I also project a bleak view of the systems in place in the institutions where I had worked. But it reflects a time when as a member of the leadership team we were challenging existing practices and looking for alternative approaches to behaviour management.

In Discipline and Punish, Foucault’s use of the term ‘carceral archipelago’ (1977, p. 297) was an intentional reference to Solzhenitsyn’s The Gulag Archipelago (Plamper, 2002). As I wrestled with Foucault’s writing, I slowly began to draw parallels between his conceptualisation of incarceration systems as an archipelago, and the spatial organisation of non-mainstream schooling as geographically distributed islands. The concept of an archipelago acted as a powerful metaphor for the geographical distribution of the special education system, where, in my professional experience, exclusion from mainstream schooling resulted in students being sent to special provision which was often situated both geographically and metaphorically at the margins of mainstream

schooling – the closest provision being on the outer limits of a school site, or provision might be many miles away from the student's mainstream experiences of education. This 'banishment' to isolated, distant islands of special education provision was potentially highly traumatic for students – not physically brutal as portrayed in the Gulag Archipelago, but an act of symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1998) which was likely to result in self-blame for those who had been subjected to the power structures of the educational system.

As is frequently the case in special education, my experience of visiting pupils at risk of exclusion at their mainstream school often involved visiting the SEN base which was usually based outside the main building. Then there was the PRU itself, located on the periphery of the borough and other separate provisions where education was provided, such as the AP, the library, the pupil's home. In this educational exclusionary archipelago there exists a continuum of establishments for those deviating by different degrees from the 'norm'. Transposing the archipelago to a mapping of the education system in England, I came to see mainstream education as the mainland inhabited by the so-called 'normal', whilst other provisions were represented as a cluster of remote islands, each positioned away from the central norm. Figure 3 provides a fictional diagrammatic representation of my interpretation of Foucault's 'carceral archipelago' as a metaphor for education's exclusionary archipelago.

Figure 3: Education's exclusionary archipelago (own photo)

These remote islands are for labelled and potentially stigmatised children, yet they are packaged as new lands of opportunity. Their existence highlights tensions and contradictions in the inclusion agenda, enabling exclusion, whilst acting as a safety net of inclusion within a wider education system.

2.4 Foucault's Genealogy

Foucault developed the analytical technique of genealogy to investigate and understand the social, cultural, historical and political contexts underpinning 'issues of contemporary importance' (Jardine, 2005, p. 115). In a discussion of *Discipline and Punish* for example Foucault explains how he sought

> to discover a system of thought, the form of rationality, which since the end of the 18th century has underlain the idea that the prison, in sum, is the best means, one of the most efficient and most rational to punish infractions in society (1996a, p. 423).

His concept of genealogy focuses on the 'minutiae of everyday life and the ways in which the sinews of power are embedded in mundane practices and social relationships' (Ball, 2013a, p. 6) and how out of all the suggestions why certain strategies are privileged (Foucault, 1996a). It provides a methodology that aims to provide 'a history of the present' (Foucault, 1977, p. 31) through which it is possible to 'understand how, within particular systems of knowledge certain human acts, practices, behaviours or characteristics emerge as specific problems' (Yates, 2015, p. 65). Indeed, in writing about the history of the prison Foucault stated, 'what I wanted to write was a history book that would make the present situation comprehensible and possibly lead to action' (Foucault, 1988, p. 101). Foucault however was resistant to providing any prescribed methods of analysis (Tambouku, 2018; Marshall, 1990), 'particularly with respect to genealogy' (Graham, 2005, p. 2). Indeed, his 'genealogies do not offer methodological certainties … but they do inspire the writing of new genealogies to interrogate the truths of our world' (Tambouku, 2018, p. 118).

Foucault's analysis of the changing penal styles, from public executions during the eighteenth century to contemporary prison regimes exemplifies the implication

inherent in his genealogy that historically constructed situations can be challenged and changed:

> We have then, a public execution and a time-table. They do not punish the same crimes or the same type of delinquent. But they each define a certain penal style. Less than a century separates them. It was a time when, in Europe and in the United States, the entire economy of punishment was redistributed (Foucault, 1977, p. 7).

Similarities may be drawn with the world of education. Within twenty years of the introduction of compulsory state education by Mundella's 1880 Elementary Education Act, questions arose concerning the 'education for children who appeared unable to benefit from the mass elementary education' (Read & Walmsley, 2006, p. 456). Following the resultant investigation into the problem, the School Board for London established a sub-committee to explore the possibility of establishing a new kind of school for these children, thus leading to the creation of special schools for children aged seven to fourteen (Read, 2004). Concepts such as the "ineducable child" and the need for special education considered as both natural and ethical at that time, have, almost a century later, been questioned. Since the 1960s the inclusion agenda has challenged such attitudes and practices, resulting in demands for the abolition of special schools and the education of all children 'in mainstream schools' (Landor & Perepa, 2017, p. 130).

Critics point out that Foucault's early work on power does not take sufficient account of 'the subject, its formation and its capacities for agency' (Goddard, 2010, p. 350) and freedom (Leask, 2012). Whilst in Foucault's later work, as Leask (2012) suggests, the emphasis changes to the possibility of 'self-fashioning' (p. 64), criticisms remain of his failure to propose strategies for social change (Allan, 2018) and resistance (Kalantzis & Cope, 2015) or explanations of why decisions are made to follow a specific course of action (Goddard, 2010). Bearing the above criticisms in mind, reading Foucault was invaluable to help me revisit the world of special education through a different lens - a lens which helped me to make important connections in terms of understanding the mechanism of power at play and their genealogical roots.

The literature review in chapters 3 to 5, where research is critiqued through the lens of Foucault's genealogy, presents a history of current controversies surrounding special education such as: rights to education; the terminology used; shifting balances of power from professionals to parents and children; and the inclusion agenda. It focuses on how the discourses at different times influenced the contemporary educational landscape, caused shifts in focus and created tensions to disrupt the status quo.

2.5 Power, Knowledge and the Body in Modern Society

2.5.1 Bio-power: Managing the Population and the Individual

Foucault was interested in the exercise of power relations, describing it as

> a total structure of actions brought to bear upon possible actions: it incites, it induces, it seduces, it makes easier or more difficult; in the extreme it constrains or forbids absolutely; it is nevertheless always a way of acting upon an acting subject or acting subjects by virtue of their acting or being capable of action. A set of actions upon other actions (Foucault, 1982, p. 220).

According to Foucault, the underlying principle driving systems of governance is to ensure a healthy, productive and competitive workforce. The term 'bio-power' is used to explain how the organization, manipulation and control of both the human species and the human body manages 'problems presented to governmental practice by the phenomena characteristics of a group of living human beings constituted as a population: health, sanitation, birth-rate' (Foucault, 2003a, p. 202). Understanding Foucault's concept of how bio-power seeks to manipulate populations and individuals is 'vital to any Foucauldian analysis of disability' (Tremain, 2015, p. 12), because of its centrality in the creation of the concept of the "disabled subject" - the child with SEN and the excluded child.

2.5.2 The Organization and Management of Populations

At the social group level, the focus is ‘on a nation’s population as a resource that must be protected, supervised and improved’ (Gutting, 2005, p. 96), an example of which is ‘the debate that took place in England in the middle of the nineteenth Century concerning public health legislation’ (Foucault, 2003a, p. 202). Growing industrial towns were plagued by problems arising from poor housing, overcrowding, poor quality water and subsequent widespread disease epitomised by the 1848 cholera epidemic, killing over 50,000. Improvements in disease control and public health became vitally important if the nation was to prosper economically. Subsequent improvements included compulsory vaccination against smallpox (from 1853), public health legislation through Public Health Acts and improved working conditions in factories and workshops. Significantly concerning education, following a series of Acts, the Factory Act 1878 decreed that children under ten should not be working and that education should be compulsory (Gillard, 2019).

Attempts were also sought to protect the “vulnerable” as exemplified by the case of a group of ‘children in workhouse, reformatory and industrial schools … whose welfare the state, prompted by a realisation of the social danger they posed, assumed responsibility’ (Hurt, 1988, p. 11.). Hence it was deemed necessary for such children to be segregated from, ‘adult contamination … [to] protect society from young delinquent, beggar and vagrant children [and] … a necessary means of checking the propagation of social undesirables’ (ibid).

Hurt uses the notion of “state” as a collective term for a government of an administrative area with its associated agencies and methods. Curtis (2002) similarly considers ‘the modern state is a governmental state; its agencies are multiple; the techniques and tactics at their command diverse’ (p. 525). Hence, in its capacity to protect society as a group reflects the view that ‘most of the time the state is envisioned as a kind of political power which ignores individuals, looking only at the interests of the totality, or I should say, of a class or a group among the citizens’ (Foucault, 1994, p. 323).

Foucault's concept of bio-power when studying "vulnerable" or oppressed groups offers a powerful conceptualisation of how governments seek to control society and individuals under the auspices of the good of society.

2.5.3 The Organization and Management of the Individual

At the individual level, Foucault (1977) considered the concept of binaries significant in that 'all authorities exercising individual control function according to a double mode, that of binary division and branding (mad/sane; dangerous/harmless; normal/abnormal' (p. 199). It allows both the identification of difference and for those identified to be targeted and receive special treatment.

It is possible to draw parallels between Foucault's concern with the use of medical treatments to manage the behaviour of those considered to deviate from the norm - namely homosexuals in Eastern Europe (Elden, 2017), with the role of schools in the medication of children with ADHD. Like homosexuality, ADHD is not a disease, however pupils with ADHD and their associated behaviours can cause difficulties within school.

In the context of ADHD, diagnosis is informed by observations of behaviours, assessments and reports from teachers, psychologists and other experts of difficulties in school, hence teachers are 'markedly influential' (Rafalovich, 2005, p. 28). Considering 'many parents described their children as well adjusted in other environments' and 'rarely discussed incidents of disruptive behavior outside of school' (Rafalovich, 2005, p. 35) the system of diagnosis highlights the significance of the influence of schools and the potential for tensions between schools and parents.

With 'Pharmacology … the principle form of treatment for ADHD … for school-aged children' (Keller, et al., 2014, p. 497), tensions exist with other involved parties. Whilst a psychiatrist in Rafalovich's (2005) study claimed schools have 'a behavioral problem they want solved, and they know that the best way to fix it is through meds' (p.39), there is resistance to medication from parents and children. Disagreements arise from: firstly, concerns around side effects including, 'decreased appetite, weight loss, headache, tics and stomach pains' (Toomey, et

al., 2012, p. 764), unstable moods and cardiovascular disturbances (Borg, 2009); secondly, medication only temporarily reduces 'the core ADHD features – inattentiveness, hyperactivity, impulsivity' (Keller, et al., 2014, p. 497); and thirdly, the 'reduction of core ADHD behaviours alone does not translate directly to improvement in social and academic functioning' (ibid, p. 498).

2.6 Disciplinary Techniques

Foucault provides examples of similar disciplinary mechanisms operating within differing institutions such as the factory, hospital, military and elementary school, in which the 'chief function of the disciplinary power is to 'train'' (Foucault, 1977, p. 170) the individual not into part of a homogenous group but through a process that 'separates, analyses, differentiates … into a multiplicity of individual elements'. Hence, 'discipline "makes" individuals; it is the specific technique of power that regards individuals both as objects and instruments of its exercise' (ibid).

For Foucault, the success of disciplinary power in creating and managing individuals arises 'from the use of three simple instruments: hierarchical observation, normalising judgement and their combination in a procedure that is specific to it, the examination' (ibid). The combination of these three instruments plays a significant role in the operation of schools and shapes the educational experiences of every individual who is 'labelled, tested, measured and calculated by the techniques of the examination. Literacy and writing, grading and examination were developed as forms of discipline and differentiation' (Ball, 2013a, p. 47).

2.6.1 Hierarchical Observation as a Disciplinary Strategy

Foucault's use of the concept of 'panoptic gaze' is based upon Bentham's "Panopticon", a prison designed in which all inmates are segregated into individual cells, positioned so each prisoner is potentially constantly visible from a central tower, and the central tower is designed such that those inside the cells are unable

to discern if they are being observed. According to Copeland (2002), 'the design of Bentham's Panopticon is at the pinnacle of hierarchical surveillance' (p. 50) because of the uncertainty of potentially being under constant observation, hence 'this invisibility is a guarantee of order' (Foucault, 1977, p. 200).

Within schools 'a relation of surveillance, defined and regulated, is inscribed at the heart of the practice of teaching, not as an additional or adjacent part, but as a mechanism that is inherent to it and which increases its efficiency' (Foucault, 1977, p. 176). At the classroom level surveillance could be through the watchful gaze of the teacher or teaching assistant, monitoring of work, grading assessments, and managing behaviour.

The growing use of CCTV in schools arose from concerns around pupil safety. However, whilst 'video cameras arguably have some panoptic qualities … Students uncertain that they are being watched, yet fearful of the possibility, might start to police their own behaviour' (Hope, 2016, p. 893), the reality in my experience is that fights still occurred. Reasons for this may be that in contrast to Bentham's Panopticon, where the success of the system in part relied on the inmates being isolated, unable to communicate with one another, within schools for those under surveillance a very different scenario exists with opportunities for individual actions. Similarly, Rafalovich (2001) proposes a limitation of Foucault's concept of Panopticism arises from lack of agency of the individual in the conditions of surveillance: 'For Foucault, the conditions are simply there before their subjective manifestations. We, as the disciplined, operate under the mere illusion of self-regulation' (p. 184). Consequently, in an age in which pupils have accepted such technologies of surveillance as the norm, they in themselves are no guarantee of passive behaviour and self-monitoring (Hope, 2013).

The success of a panoptic disciplinary technique also relies upon a coercive element, as 'the exercise of discipline presupposes a mechanism that coerces by means of observation' (Foucault, 1977, p. 170). The perceived threats or punishments need to have a certain level of visibility to be effective deterrents. In a school, consequences for infringements might range from minor punishments such as report cards and detentions, to more serious physical interventions and different degrees of separation, exclusion and seclusion, hence reflecting that, 'at the heart of all disciplinary systems functions a small penal mechanism' (Foucault, 1977, p. 177).

The management and manipulation of spaces inhabited by individuals, such as the organisation of spaces in schools and in classrooms, 'is fundamental in any exercise of power' (Foucault, 1996, p. 345). Barker et al.'s (2010) study which explored the geography of exclusionary spaces in a London Comprehensive found being visibly singled out and removed to a separate space within schools was 'an often-used spatial tactic associated with punishment' (p. 380).

Barker et al. (2010) observed the 'subtle and invisible' (p. 380) nature of strategies operating within seclusion rooms. Firstly, through the spatial organisation of individuals, separated from the main body of the school, within individual booths, facing a wall, supervised from behind, hence these booths have a panoptic effect due to the invisibility of the observer creating for the pupil a belief of being under constant scrutiny and observation. Secondly, through the control of activities, a different timetable and structure to the day is followed. Thirdly, through the organisation of the seclusion unit in the application of different rules and completion of alternative tasks to the main body of the school. No communication with others is permitted and no mobile phones are allowed. Barker et al. (2010) conclude that due to this combination of the tactics in the seclusion unit, the pupil works more effectively than when in the classroom with other pupils. This appears to affirm Foucault's point that one should 'not concentrate the study of the punitive mechanisms on their 'repressive' effects alone, on their "punishment" aspects alone, but situate them in a whole series of their possible effects, even if this seems marginal at first sight' (Foucault, 1977, p. 23).

One weakness in the assumption that without coercive power, through threat of punishment or reward, there will be some pupils who will cross boundaries, not comply and disrupt, is that coercive practices fail to address the causes of certain behaviours deemed unacceptable. Furthermore, the rising numbers of pupils being excluded from English schools (House of Commons Education Committee, 2017), raises questions about the effectiveness of coercive strategies in the education system.

2.6.2 Normalising Judgement as a Disciplinary Strategy

The inherent power in hierarchical observation is derived from its coercive nature, in operating a system of rewards and punishments and hence, 'the perpetual penalty that traverses all points and supervises every instant in the disciplinary institutions compares, hierarchizes, homogenizes, excludes. In short, it *normalizes*' (Foucault, 1977, p. 183). Individuals and organisations such as schools are constantly judged in relation to others. The concept of the norm, 'individualizes by making it possible to measure gaps, to determine levels, to fix specialities and to render the differences useful by fitting them one to another (Foucault, 1977, p. 184). In education, 'the notion of normality is a highly complex and contentious concept' (Gillmann, et al., 2000, p. 395) as 'judgements of ability are not value free because they are interlinked with the structural organisation of schools, and the beliefs and actions of different adults and children' (Davis & Watson, 2001, p. 384).

Historically, education policy has been dominated by discourses of performance, competition and standardisation. Consequently

> we now live in age in which discussions about education are dominated by measurement and comparisons of educational outcomes and that these measurements as such seem to direct much of educational policy and, through this, also much of educational practice (Biesta, 2009, p. 43).

The education system advocates a plethora of practices which exemplify how the use of normalising judgements act as a technique of power. This is epitomised by the requirement of schools to 'identify pupils making less than expected progress given their age and individual circumstances' (Department for Education, 2015, p. 95), gather evidence about the pupil and employ 'rigorous interventions designed to secure better progress' (ibid). The implications of this are discussed throughout this study.

2.6.3 The Examination as a Disciplinary Strategy

'The examination combines the techniques of an observing hierarchy and those of a normalizing judgement. It is a normalizing gaze, a surveillance that makes it possible to qualify, to classify and to punish' (Foucault, 1977, p. 184). Within educational settings, the examination is exemplified by the role of performativity. The teacher appraisal system is represented by Ball's (2003) definition of performativity as 'a technology, a culture and a mode of regulation that employs judgements, comparisons and displays as means of incentive, control, attrition and change - based on rewards and sanctions (both material and symbolic)' (p. 216). According to official guidance, appraisal should 'be a supportive and developmental process designed to ensure that all teachers have or fully develop the skills and access to support they need to carry out their role effectively' (Department for Education, 2012, p. 7). However, Ball (1990) argues the appraisal process epitomises the insidious nature of power relationships in schools, by bringing 'the logics of quality control and performance indicators into the pedagogic heart of teaching. It brings the tutelary gaze to bear, making teachers calculable, describable and comparable' (p. 159). The appraisee is set annual targets, is subjected to a regime of observations and self-surveillance and finally is responsible for creating a dossier of evidence to present to the appraiser to demonstrate: how they have achieved these targets; the progress their pupils have made; how they have met the teacher standards; and professional development they may have attended. The appraiser's decision results in recommendation for pay progression for some and being placed in capability measures for others.

2.7 Docile Bodies – Resistance

Definitions of the term 'docile' include, 'readily trained or teachable' (Dictionary.com), 'willing to obey' (Oxford Paperback Dictionary) and 'calm in manner and easy to control' (Cambridge Dictionary). According to Foucault (1977), 'a body is docile that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved' (p. 136), hence through employing the disciplinary strategies it becomes possible to create readily trainable and teachable individuals, or 'docile bodies'.

But, in power relationships ‘there always remain the possibilities of resistance, disobedience and oppositional groupings’ (Foucault, 1996, p. 339). Consequently, as Becket and Campbell (2015) point out, ‘power not only produces docile bodies, but also resistant bodies’ (p. 271). An example of this creation of resistant bodies is provided by Brown et al. (2006) who cite the case of a teacher attempting to employ disciplinary strategies by removing a pupil from the classroom. The teacher instructs a pupil to ‘stand outside the room until you learn some manners’, to which the student responds that he is ‘going nowhere’ and has ‘got manners’ (p. 231). Here, the pupil’s response illustrates Foucault’s (1989) assertion that, ‘if there was no resistance, there would be no power relations. Because it would simply be a matter of obedience’ (p. 386). Hence ‘power is exercised only over free subjects’ (Foucault, 2003, p. 139) such as the pupil who is resisting both being identified as having no manners and being removed from the room. Yet for the pupil who is a free subject, there is ‘a field of possibilities in which several kinds of conduct, several ways of reacting and modes of behaviour are available’ (ibid). The pupil can acquiesce or as in Brown et al.’s (2006) example choose to resist - which he does.

2.8 Concluding Comments

Disciplinary strategies operating in schools aim to create environments conducive for teaching and learning, which ‘contribute to processes of subjectification that allow those educated to become more autonomous and independent in their thinking and acting’ (Biesta, 2009, p. 8). In this chapter, I have provided a wide range of research examples where schools have adopted such strategies for the benefit of the so-called “normal” majority. For a minority, they are problematic and resisted. Resistant behaviours are problematic for schools, especially in the form of disruptive behaviour. Focusing on the cause of the behaviour, rather than labelling the actor “problematic” and examining resistance to practices established in schools through the perspectives of those who have resisted disciplinary strategies, may help alleviate and prevent future problems.

Disciplinary strategies often involve different levels of exclusion. In the next chapter I explore the instigation of dividing practices in the education system which

served to label some individuals as “problematic” and how despite rhetoric around inclusion, a key problem still exists within education policy - that of the right to exclude on the grounds that for some, mainstream education would be inexpedient.

Chapter 3: The Life Cycle of a Segregated Education System

A problem to be solved

Objectified

By practices of division

A rhetoric of inclusion

But

Danger …

A perfect storm has arisen

An explosion

In special education

3.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature to provide a contextual history of the problematic of the exclusion of pupils with SEN from mainstream settings.

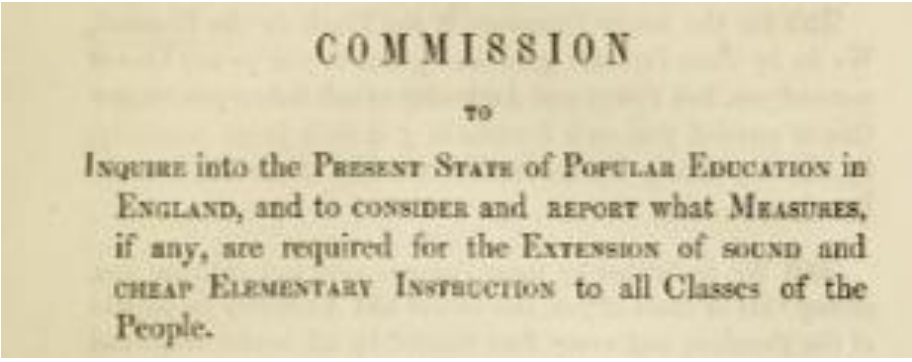
Changing political, economic and social attitudes since the mid-nineteenth century have impacted significantly upon the life cycle of special education. This chapter starts by exploring some of the discourses prevalent in the mid-nineteenth century concerning the value of educating all children to elementary level. The focus is on how through educational policy 'human beings are made subjects' (Foucault, 1982, p. 208) to be objectivized through dividing practices, 'either divided inside himself or divided from others' (ibid). The consequences of such practices enabled individuals to be identified as either able or unable to benefit from elementary education. For the latter an alternative was needed, creating the demand for separate classes and hence creating a segregated system, a system maintained

until the 1960s. The following section examines the impact of the Education (Handicapped Children) Act 1970 in removing the “uneducable” child classification and the rise of the inclusion agenda. Initially this resulted in discussions concerning placement issues, however, with lack of clarity of the term “inclusion” a segregated system has survived and is currently booming. The chapter closes by addressing the enduring factors that continue to influence the current rise in segregated provisions and placements.

3.2 The Roots of a Segregated System

Recognising that ‘history is one way in which a society recognises and develops a mass of documentation with which it is inextricably linked’ (Foucault, 2002, p. 7), in this first section I scrutinise a selection of historical documents to uncover the roots of the problematic of the segregated child and consider how deeply those roots underpin contemporary education.

The Newcastle Commission’s (1861) remit to report into the state of education, arose from an acknowledgement that ‘it is only within comparatively modern times that the importance of providing elementary instruction for all classes of the population has been recognised’ (p.15) and growing concerns about the state of the education system, as illustrated by Figure 4.


COMMISSION

TO

INQUIRE into the PRESENT STATE of POPULAR EDUCATION in ENGLAND, and to CONSIDER and REPORT what MEASURES, if any, are required for the EXTENSION of SOUND and CHEAP ELEMENTARY INSTRUCTION to all Classes of the People.

Figure 4: Remit of the Newcastle Commission, 1861.

(Source: https://archive.org/details/reportofcommissi01grea/page/n5)

The Commissioners identified one of the main weaknesses of the current system as the ‘low average level and irregular nature of school attendance’ (Copeland,

2002, p. 61), estimating that ‘in 1858 almost thirty-nine percent of children of school age attended school for less than one year’ (ibid). This mirrored concerns raised by Robert Lowe, vice president of the then recently established Education Department, regarding sporadic school attendance (Copeland, 2002). A second issue was the shortage of school places.

To address the issue of attendance, Lowe’s suggestion of utilising the forces of the market (Copeland, 2002) resulted in the development of a ‘payment by results’ system, in which ‘grants to schools were to be made dependent upon the attendance of pupils under a certified teacher and subject to the results of an examination of the child in the ‘three Rs’ (reading, writing, arithmetic) by an inspector’ (Copeland, 2002, p. 61). Furthermore, Mundella’s1880 Education Act, made attendance compulsory. To address the issue of school places, Forster’s 1870 Education Act, allowed School Boards to establish non-denominational schools. Whilst the success of these combined strategies resulted in a five-fold increase of pupils on school registers ‘between 1860 and 1885’ (Copeland, 2002, p. 65), new problems arose.

Prior to the introduction of compulsory attendance it was presumed that whilst most pupils in schools progressed annually through the prescribed syllabus, those who did not were quietly withdrawn by their families (Hurt, 1988). Whilst these children might once have quietly slipped out of the system they were now required to be in schools, be subjected to Standards tests, and became increasingly visible through the hierarchy of attainment derived from the performance of all pupils in these tests. This made groupings possible, identifying that ‘some are “ahead” and others “behind”, some remediable and others not’ (Ball, 2013a, p. 48). Consequently, by the end of the century, the value of mass elementary education was being questioned as it appeared that ‘some children are no more capable of contributing to the economic prosperity of the country than before they entered’ (Read & Walmsley, 2006, p. 456).

The combination of ‘large classes … a rigid curriculum … mechanically taught and mechanically learned’ (Copeland, 2002, p. 71) and a reality that not all would achieve the required Standard provided ‘the setting for the official emergence of the backward pupil’ (ibid). The solution found for children not conforming to the required Standard was their removal to certified special classes (Penketh, 2014).

Consequently, since the establishment of compulsory mass education in England, formal institutions such as the 'school' have been considered as 'arenas for the exercise of professional activity' (Schön, 1991, p.3), 'where ability confronts degeneracy, where the norm produces abnormality' (Ball, 2013a, p. 54). This has left a legacy of dividing practices within the English education system which labels and objectivizes the subject, such as the "able" and the "disabled", the "educable" and the "uneducable". Hence, a system evolved, running parallel to but separate from mainstream education, which legitimised the removal and exclusion of those who could potentially disrupt its smooth running, creating a separation between "normal" and "special" or "abnormal" education (Penketh, 2014).

For there to be a concept of "special education" there had to be criteria to define the "ordinary", the "normal", the "special", the "abnormal" and the "uneducable". By creating the concept of Standards such judgements became possible. However, the arbitrary nature of such criteria, based upon a school master's judgement, is reflected in the findings from the evidence of Dr Shuttleworth to the Egerton Commission (1889), concerning the potential education of those labelled "imbeciles" and "idiots". Further divisions were suggested, 'those capable of learning to read and write; secondly, those capable of benefiting in a minor degree by school instruction and discipline; and thirdly, the uneducable class' (Royal Commission on the Blind, Deaf and Dumb &c of the United Kingdom (RCBDD) 1889, para 661). One significant recommendation was for the separation of the "feeble-minded" child as they, 'required a different treatment to that of ordinary children (RCBDD, 1889 para 709). Such practices have since become 'embedded within the fabric of the educational system' (Hodge, 2016, p. 197) and are intrinsically linked to the very existence of special education and training.

Once the myth of the desirability of removing those considered as unable to benefit from elementary education had been established, the exclusion of pupils expanded to those deemed as having a detrimental effect on others' learning. Burt (London's first educational psychologist), for example, in his 1917 report on progress in London Elementary schools pronounced an urgent need for children in special categories, "backward", "defective", "unstable", "advanced" or "talented" to be educated in special provisions (Burt, 1917). Burt's (1917) rationale was based on his assertion that within this group are 'the majority of the most undesirable members of society' (p. 40). An attitude reminiscent of the mid-

nineteenth century, mentioned previously, of the segregation of the vulnerable within the workhouse from those deemed dangerous.

In the post-World War 1 era, attitudes perpetuated the segregation of different groups. Children with physical and sensory impairments were considered different, hence requiring a different education system (Frederickson & Cline, 2009) within certified special classes.

The Education Act 1944 legitimised a system which both defined 'several categories of pupils requiring special educational treatment' (p. 27) and recommended that the LEA 'so far as is practicable, provide for the education of pupils in whose case the disability is serious in special schools appropriate for that category' (p. 27). A further layer of segregation was maintained through Section 57 of the Education Act, 1944 in that:

> a child shall be deemed to be suffering from a disability of mind of such a nature and extent as to make him incapable of receiving education at school not only if the nature and extent of his disability are such as to make him incapable of receiving education, but also if they are such as to make it inexpedient that he should be educated in association with other children either in his own interests or in theirs. (p. 46).

Hegarty (1993) summarises the prevailing attitude towards this group prior to the 1960s as 'deemed to be quite distinct from the rest of the population … ordinary schooling was simply not an option for them, if indeed they were considered capable of benefiting from education at all' (p. 195). Even in 1959 references in official policy (the Mental Health Act) identified children as being either 'suitable or unsuitable for education in a school' (Hurt, 1988, p. 213). Their fate was decided by the powers of local health authorities rather than the LEA as 'ineducable children were then referred to the local health authorities' (Copeland, 2002, p. 210), which following the Mental Health Act, (1959) had a 'duty to provide training' (Hurt, 1988, p. 181).

3.3 Changing Attitudes through Integration and Inclusion

The 1960s brought significant social change and transformation, including the rise of equal rights movements, which drew attention to the existing selective and socially inequitable nature of the English tri-partite secondary education system. These concerns led a movement towards the more egalitarian ideal of comprehensivisation. Similarly, attitudinal changes in the conceptualisation of disability and the growth of the integration movement (Hegarty, 1993) resulted in 'moves to reverse the separation of "handicapped" children' (Frederickson & Cline, 2009, p. 74). The abolition of 'the concept of the "uneducable" child' (Warnock, 2010, p. 11) by the Education (Handicapped Children) Act 1970 signalled a shift in the world of health and education, removing the powers of both the LEA to 'ascertain children who were unsuitable for education' (Copeland, 2002, p. 213), and the local health authorities 'to make arrangements for training' (ibid). Whilst provision in the Act appears to be primarily concerned with the transfer of employees, property, rights and liabilities from local health authorities to the LEAs, this transfer impacted upon the lives of '34,177 children ascertained under the Education Act, 1944 as being unsuitable for school' (Hurt, 1988, p. 183). The provision for these children shifted from being a medical concern to an educational concern, thus marking a significant change in mind-set from a medical model of training children with "handicaps" to an educational model of teaching. Furthermore, the report by the Committee of Inquiry into the Education of Handicapped Children and Young People (DES, 1978) into the effective use of resources in educational provision for pupils 'handicapped by disabilities of body and mind taking account of the medical aspects of their needs, together with arrangements to prepare them for entry into employment' (p. 1) reflected the view that education of the "handicapped" would no longer be seen as a charitable affair in which they were tended and cared for in institutions (DES , 1978).

In stating, 'any special arrangements for the integration of a child with a disability into an ordinary class must be compatible with the interests of other children in the class' (DES , 1978, p. 103), the Warnock Report technically legitimised potential exclusion from mainstream classrooms. Furthermore, despite rhetoric in the 1981

Education Act of an ‘ordinary’ school placement for all children, a caveat exists enabling the exclusion of some children who met certain conditions (Norwich, 2014), mainly around the efficient education of others.

The initial impact of these changes became a placement issue. Terms such as “integration” and “mainstreaming” described placements in mainstream schools, but these varied, ‘from full-time placement … in mainstream class in his/her local school … to placement of a pupil in a special unit or class attached to a mainstream school’ (Hick, et al., 2009, p. 2). The latter still perpetuating a level of social exclusion.

By the 1990s, the focus of the notion of inclusion shifted to a human rights issue (Rustemier, 2002). Proponents of inclusion considered educational segregation as both ‘morally wrong and educationally inefficient’ (Rouse & Florian, 1997, p. 323). Decisions around educational placements became ‘linked to questions of rights and ethics because it was considered that the consequences of such decisions could bear upon a person’s status as marginalised, thus shaping future access to educational opportunities’ (Artiles, et al., 2006). Furthermore, advocates of inclusion called for the dismantling of the SEN system and the closure of special schools. This resulted in a 7% decrease in the number of special schools between 1996 and 2001 (Rustemier, 2002), as well as a decline in the numbers attending special schools. The number of special schools declined steadily until 2012.

Despite demands for inclusion, the establishment of PRUs by the 1996 Education Act enabled the perpetuation of exclusion. Whilst numbers attending special schools were declining, the numbers attending PRUs increased from 6,872 in 1996 to 9,200 in 2001 (not dual registered) (Cole, et al., 2003). Lunt and Norwich (2009) attribute this to schools being unable to include ‘pupils previously excluded and now placed in provision such as Pupil Referral Units’ (p. 97).

The lack of clarity over the meaning of the term ‘inclusion’ has been problematic for advocates of inclusion since the 1990s. The Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994), ‘which had a major impact on shaping policy development in many different countries’ (Hick, et al., 2009, p. 1), for example, stated that schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, linguistic or other conditions. Whilst inclusive education may now be established as a part of a global agenda with national governments and agencies striving to produce

and implement inclusion (Wright, 2010) a major barrier appears to be the continuing uncertainty (Hick, et al., 2009) and disagreement around the actual definition of inclusive education (Hyatt & Hornby, 2017) as well as the historical deep roots of exclusion that cloud public opinion. With no 'unanimity regarding the definition of the concept of inclusive education' (ibid p. 290) inclusion has become a hotly debated area within education, with definitions varying according to pedagogical, societal and policy aims.

The Centre for Studies in Inclusive Education (CSIE) for example defined inclusion as a process of increasing student participation and reducing student exclusion from cultures, curricula and communities of local schools (Rustemier, 2002), therefore children are not just present but they access quality teaching and learning and become successful learners (Nind, et al., 2004). However, if the key point concerns reducing exclusion, there appears some inherent acceptance that some will be excluded. A proposed alternative definition of inclusion is a school system that respects as well as responds to human difference in ways that include rather than exclude learners (Florian & Black Hawkins, 2011) and allows for a variety of school placements under which every individual feels safe, accepted and valued and is helped to develop his/her affective and intellectual capacities (Kauffman, et al., 1995). Through collaboration, schools can work together to support effective education of pupils providing a flexible continuum of education as advocated in the SEN strategy (DfES, 2004a) in which schools work in partnership to avoid exclusion and the whole system becomes more inclusive. Slee (2011) however maintains that the very existence of non-mainstream schools and provisions perpetuates the problem of exclusion as their presence enables the exclusion of children from mainstream schools. Within the context of the system in England, for me the concept of inclusion is one of everyone being educated within local mainstream schools, this would be my utopian ideal. The closest this ideal is realised in practice appears evident in the Finnish education system where ''special education' … aims to keeps students in their local comprehensive school by providing support in the early years before academic difficulties become entrenched' (Graham and Jahnukainen, 2011, p. 282). By contrast, education policy in England has resulted in a system based on an emphasis on efficiency, whereby a minority of students are excluded to facilitate the efficient education of others. In this system, the rationale for

exclusion is based on a concern around the efficient use of resources and the efficient education of others (Norwich 2014; Hallett and Hallett, 2021), hence perpetuating a system in which 'the potential for exclusionary practices grow' (Hallett & Hallett, 2021, p. 2) rather than a system focusing on inclusionary practices which are 'proactive' (McCluskey, et al., 2019, p. 1148) in preventing exclusion.

The Timpson Review (2019), into school exclusion similarly endorses the status quo of a system focusing on exclusionary practices by stating that 'exclusion – both fixed period and permanent – is an important tool for head teachers as part of an effective approach to behaviour management' (Timpson, 2019, p. 5) and that 'well-managed fixed period exclusion can be a positive intervention' (Timpson 2019, p. 96).

Behavioural policy and guidance around exclusion for head teachers in England is described by McCluskey et al. (2019) as devoid of 'discussion of the value or effectiveness of alternatives to exclusion – such as restorative practices' (p. 1149) hence steering practices away from the utopian ideal. McCluskey et al. (2019) compare the current 'punitive tone' of current educational policy in England (p. 1149), which focuses on 'descriptions of punishments' and 'the use of isolation and exclusion' (ibid) with the situation in Scotland. Scotland's significantly lower rates of permanent exclusion than England and the other devolved nations of the UK have been attributed to policy 'predicated on principles of prevention, positive ethos building and staged intervention' (ibid). Early intervention without the need for the administrative need for any diagnostic processes have been attributed as one of the key factors in the success of the Finnish system in creating more inclusive schools (Graham and Jahnukainen, 2011). Key factors in policy difference between Scotland and England, according to McCluskey et al. (2019) include an emphasis in Scotland upon '"inclusion" and "engagement" ahead of exclusion, and on "preventing" ahead of "managing" exclusion' (p. 1147).

Within the façade of inclusion, educational policy legitimises exclusionary practices. One example is chapter 10 of the SEN Code of Practice (Department for Education, 2015), which provides guidance on the commissioning of places in Alternative Provisions. This is the root of the problematic discussed in chapter 1, that of unofficial or hidden exclusions in the form of pupils on roll at a mainstream

school but actually educated elsewhere. With no official record of the number of actual providers, or of pupils educated in such provisions (House of Commons Education Committee, 2017; Thomson & Pennacchia, 2014), the extent of this strategy is unknown. Other examples of 'diverse, and often hidden, forms of exclusion' (Power & Taylor, 2018, p. 867) schools utilise include the removal from the classroom which 'for short duration removals, this can simply be the corridor, or sitting outside a senior teacher's office' or removal to special 'isolation units' (p. 873), including the use of hired external buildings, a practice I have witnessed during the past 20 years within non-mainstream provisions. These strategies were discussed in chapter 2 in the context of Foucauldian disciplinary strategies.

3.4 Growing Demand for Non-mainstream School

For the first time in three decades, the 2010s have seen an increase in the total number of special schools in England (Figure 5).

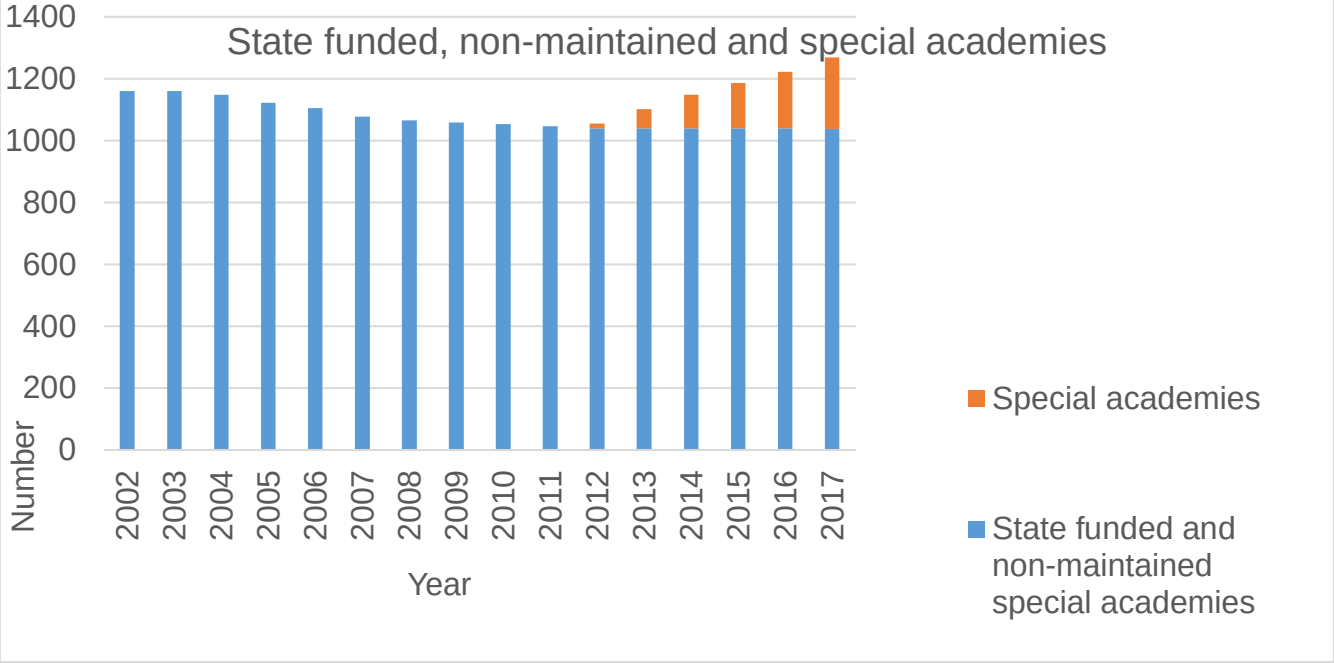


Figure 5: Numbers of special schools 2002-2017.

(Source: Department for Education 2017)

Despite the number of state-funded and non-maintained special schools decreasing, there has been considerable growth in the number of special academies, from 16 in 2012 to 232 in 2017, providing education for 26,466 pupils (Department for Education, 2017). The percentage of pupils with Statements of SEN or EHC plans attending special schools has also been increasing annually since 2010 (Figure 6) and currently stands at 43.8% (Department for Education, 2017).

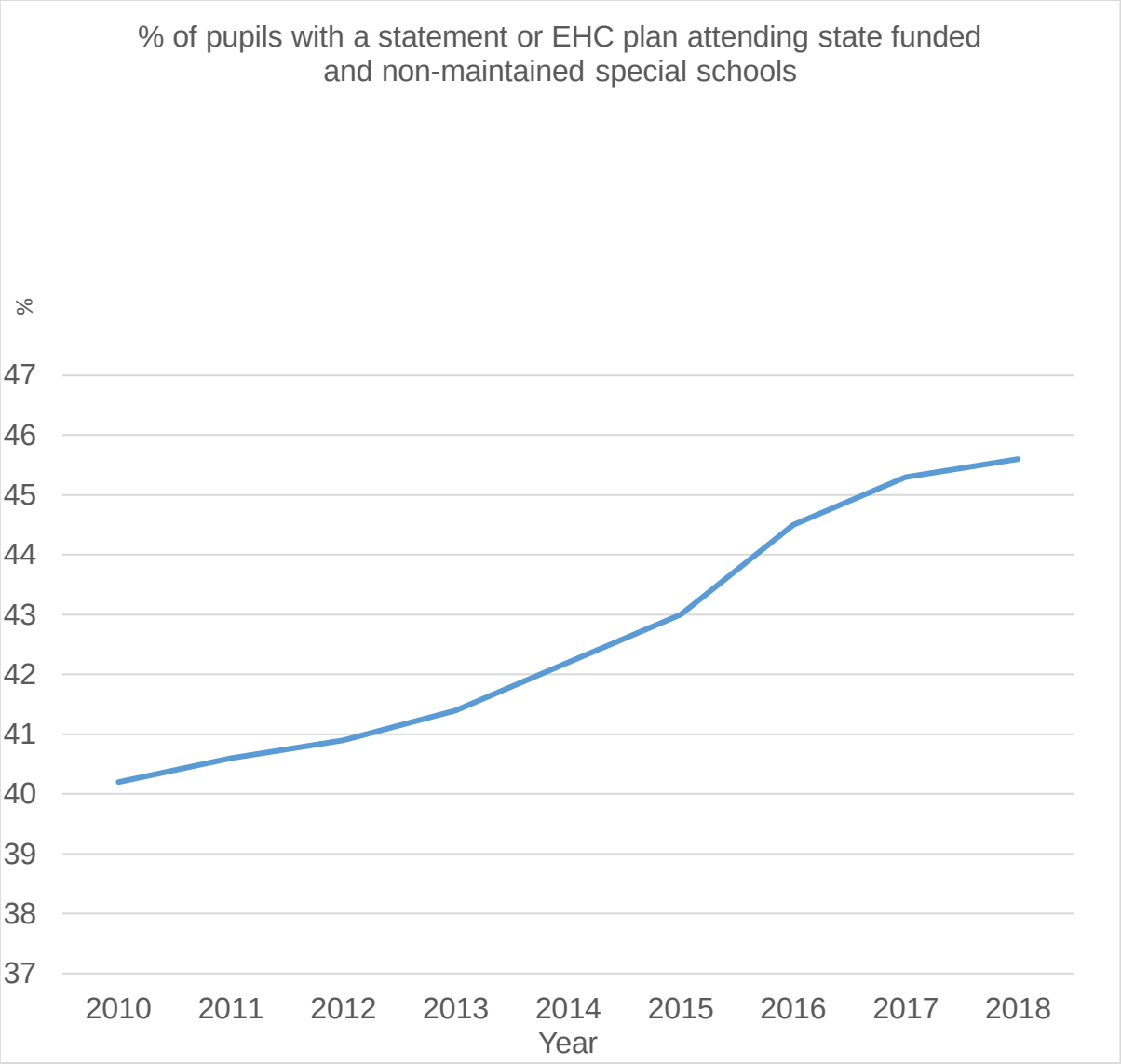


Figure 6: Pupils with Statements or EHC plans attending special schools. (Source: Department for Education, 2017)

Multiple factors have combined to create the current upsurge in demand for placements in special schools and academies. One factor is parental choice as

historically there has always existed some parental preference for placements in special schools and academies (Hick, et al., 2009). This may be due parental concerns about 'their own children's educational experiences' (Hick, et al., 2009, p. 2), 'the availability of Specialist staff and facilities within special schools' (Bajwa-Patel & Devecchi, 2014, p. 125) hence a lack of parental confidence in the ability of mainstream schools to meet the needs of their child (Ofsted, 2017) as well as limited 'available school choices' (Hick, et al., 2009, p. 2).

Several studies have raised concerns as to whether parents of children with SEND have a real choice of school placement (Byrne, 2013; Rizvi, 2018). Due to pressure placed on some parents by schools and professionals, Byrne (2013) identified that when 'parents elected for their child to go to their local mainstream high school, they felt that they had been free to make the choice that they wanted' (p. 138), whereas when the child transferred to a secondary special provision this had been based on the advice of 'the child's primary school and other professionals ... These parents felt that they did not have a choice' (ibid).

This tension between who has and does not have a right to a mainstream placement appears to lead to the legitimisation of a system open to interpretation and potential prejudice. Bajwah-Patel and Devecchi (2014) identified that 'with regard to whether parents had been given an actual choice, the results varied depending on the type of SEN' (p. 124). They found particular problems in the choices for BESD due to a 'lack of suitable schools' (ibid) to choose from. Similarly, Kniveton's (2004) study into attitudes regarding the inclusion of children in different categories of SEN found a reluctance of schools to accept children with emotional and behavioural problems because of the disruptive influence they could have on others. Not only were they considered 'bottom of the list' for being taught in mainstream, it was also felt that 'only a very small proportion of resources should be invested in students with behavioural difficulties' (p. 338).

Since the Warnock Report 1978, educational policy has allowed schools to refuse places to pupils if their presence would be impact on the education of others. The third SEN Code of Practice, 0-25 years (Department for Education, 2015), states 'the local authority must comply with that preference and name the school or college in the EHC plan unless … the attendance of the child or young person there would be incompatible with the efficient education of others' (Department for Education, 2015, p. 172). The application of such 'loop-holes' (Rizvi, 2018, p. 65)

within policy enabling schools to refuse admission raises uncertainty as to whether this growth in the percentage of those with EHC plans in non-mainstream schools is due to parental preferences or local authority decisions.

Byrne (2013) suggests that the idea of parental choice of provision 'runs contrary to the interests and constraints, either real or perceived, of many mainstream institutions' (p. 129). Schools are under pressure from accountability measures such as Progress 8 - progress across 8 qualifications from Key Stage 2 to the end of Key Stage 4 and the percentage of pupils achieving a grade 5 or above in English and maths (Department for Education, 2020b). Concerns that some 'pupils will undermine their position in the league tables' (Lunt & Norwich, 2009, p. 97) has resulted in a reluctance by some schools to accept pupils with SEN, 'unless they bring significant additional resources' (ibid). Indeed, Slee (2011) questions the extent to which schools use categories such as EBD to 'evacuate those students who threaten a school's standing on performance measures' (p. 121). The impact of 'off-rolling … to alternative provision, to home education or other schools' (House of Commons Education Committee, 2017, p. 12) has made some schools and some pupils increasingly vulnerable within the current education system of accountability, in which 'schools act strategically to avoid those lepers, costly and unproductive students – those with special needs, behavioural difficulties, unsupportive parents or another mother tongue' (Ball, 2013a, p. 109).

This assertion appears to be supported by the over-representation in special education of those with educational risk factors such as being from a language minority or low socio-economic status (Banerjee, et al., 2017) or having had a fixed term exclusion (Thomson & Pennacchia, 2014), and in my professional experience, a permanent exclusion. Contrastingly, Kalambouka et al.'s (2007) review of literature on the impact of the placement of SEN on academic and social outcomes for pupils without SEN, highlighted that 'schools should feel able to include pupils with SEN without fearing that it will damage the achievements of the remaining pupils' (p. 379). The success of inclusion, however, depended upon the commitment of staff and parents to the idea of inclusion, careful planning, and a flexible, well supported, well trained team of support staff as 'successful inclusion does not occur in a vacuum' (ibid).

Whilst mainstream schools have the opportunity to control their student intakes (Norwich, 2014), there has been a new competitor in the education market place;

the Special Academy and Free School keen to attract these students. Consequently, behind a rhetoric of inclusion, a perfect storm has been created within the education system resulting in the growth of special school placements.

3.5 Concluding Comments

Since the end of the 19th century there has been a systematic organisation and normalisation of student abilities in relation to designated standards (Ball, 2013a) which has legitimised the creation of a system that filters out those considered as not conforming to the norm, and a lexicon of difference with which to label those outside the norm.

Despite being a signatory to the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO. 1994), the inclusive dream of dismantling this segregated system has failed to be realised in England. A decline in special schools brought new tensions to light. Placements ranged from within classrooms to units attached to schools, which could be argued as maintaining segregation. Additionally, policies enabling exclusion meant that not all pupils from special schools were offered places in mainstream schools. Again, perpetuating not just a segregated system, but a subjective and discriminatory system.

Finally, since 2010 there has been a growth in special school provisions. Alongside this growth in the availability of provisions, the proportion of children with EHC plans attending non-mainstream provisions has also risen. Reasons for such changes reflect a complex number of factors including parental choice, pressure placed on parents in their choice making and the practicable choices available to parents. Impacting upon these choices is the rise in the performativity culture and economic constraints which have invoked the power of the market to promote a competitive environment between schools. The power to refuse a placement based on concerns about the efficient education of others limits the real choices available. However, this has also created an environment for the growth of non-mainstream academies and Free Schools, who are keen to recruit these children.

Chapter 4: The Significance of Labelling

Looking for difference

A wanting to divide

The Idiot, the imbecile, the feeble-minded

Had nowhere to hide

But the discourse is changing

A new lexicon to divide

Identified by the Code

Still nowhere to hide

Times are changing

Stigma might preside

Or an opportunity

To turn the tide

4.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature pertinent to the subsidiary research question:

What are the two students' experiences and perceptions of labelling?

In the previous chapter, I discussed how growing concerns about the state of elementary education resulted in the recommendations by the Newcastle

Commission to categorise children according to their perceived capacity to benefit from ‘school instruction and discipline’ (RCBDD, 1889 para 661) and in so doing labelling some as “idiots” and “imbeciles”. From this emerged a legacy of dividing practices within the English education system which labels and objectivizes the subject, such as the “able” and the “disabled”, the “educable” and the “uneducable”. In this chapter, I question who the beneficiaries of the labelling process are. I begin by focusing on the ambiguities of classifications which have persisted from the late nineteenth century and the significance of labelling for different parties - the school, the parents and the child. This leads on to a question of disproportionality, especially in the context of how labelling is massively disproportionate to the most vulnerable members of society. This raises questions of relationships of power between professionals and vulnerable groups.

4.2 Persistent Issues Arising from Labelling

Labelling an individual provides a mechanism to justify decisions based on others’ reactions to an individual’s perceived deviance from the “norm”. The use of labelling in educational contexts highlights how mechanisms of power exist within education systems as dividing practices, which have historically objectified and excluded individuals both within and from mainstream education as well as from education itself.

Whilst changing attitudes have been inter-twined with changes to terminology, (as illustrated in Appendix 1), problems persist as the terms used appear ‘rife with contradictions’ and ‘tensions internal to the classification itself’’ (Carlson, 2015, p. 135). The 1944 Education Act, for example, in which the term “handicapped” replaced “defective” (Copeland, 2002), created eleven subdivisions of handicap. Some categories appeared to have ‘had clear biological bases and more or less objective diagnostic criteria could be applied to them’, whereas others were ‘non-normative because their biological bases were uncertain and/or the criteria were less robust’ (Dyson & Gallannaugh, 2008, p. 36). The Report of Warnock Committee (DES , 1978), sought to reject ‘the language of the 1940s and the classification of children by their handicap’ (Runswick-Cole & Hodge, 2009, p. 200) by introducing the generic term ‘Special Educational Needs’ (SEN). This

continuum of ability would ‘avoid labelling them as members of fixed and immutable categories, like members of natural species’ (Warnock, 2018, p. 4). Despite recommendations for categories of need to cease, ‘introducing special educational needs was not an abandonment of categories, but a replacing of categories’ (Norwich, 2010, p. 84).

The first ‘Code of Practice on the identification and assessment of Special Educational Needs’ (DFE, 1994) prescribed by the 1993 Education Act (Department for Education, 1993), aimed to provide practical guidance around, ‘responsibilities toward children with special educational needs’ (DFE, 1994, p. 4). Variations arose in both interpretation and implementation, reflecting how ‘policy strategies, Acts, guidelines and initiatives therefore are often messy, contradictory, confused and unclear’ (Ball, 2013, p. 9). Indeed, the phrase proposed to determine SEN as having ‘significantly greater difficulty’ (Department for Education, 1993, Paragraph 156) when compared with the majority allows for differences in opinion and interpretation between schools, and Local Authorities. Furthermore, a fundamental concern arose as to whether the Statement of SEN reflected what the Local Authority could afford to provide rather than what was actually deemed necessary (Warnock, 2018). Despite the introduction and subsequent revisions of the SEN Code of Practice, difficulties have persisted.

Despite terminology changing through subsequent Acts and Reports, ambiguity remains embedded in the language of SEN as illustrated by the concept of MLD, with confusion as to whether MLD refers to generally low cognitive abilities or low attainment relative to others (Norwich & Jones, 2012). But whilst ‘the new Code indicates that low attainment per se does not constitute grounds for learning difficulty and a SEN’ (Norwich & Eaton, 2015, p. 126), the same code places an onus on teachers to identify when a child’s progress ‘is significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline’ (Department for Education, 2015, p. 95). This further illustrates how the application of policy is fraught with contradictions as the subjective nature of the term ‘significantly slower’ is clearly open to interpretation. Given that there are 537 designated MLD schools (Department for Education, 2017) the core issue is that whilst generic labels will always be restrictive and of only indicative value, they are still used to separate and exclude pupils.

Problems of uncertainty and variations in interpretations of terminology raise questions around power relationships in the process of labelling as to who benefits from it. The creation of the category 'maladjusted' provides a clear example of a 'category created from an intermingling of certain systems of knowledge (like psychology and medicine) on one side and a need for institutional order on the other' (Thomas, 2014, p. 25). Wearmouth's (1999) case of "maladjusted Jack" presents two perspectives. According to Wearmouth (1999), the term 'maladjusted' was introduced primarily to create a label which justified the existence of special schools for the maladjusted. Those who threatened the smooth running of schools were labelled 'maladjusted' making possible a placement in such schools. In contrast, from Jack's perspective, the experience of being labelled as "maladjusted" left him with a burning desire to be seen as normal. In Jack's opinion, the label was meaningless, used merely to victimise and segregate him from mainstream 'normal' society.

Abolished by the 1981 Education Act, 'maladjusted' was replaced by a range of acronyms: EBD (Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties); SEBD (Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties); BESD (Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties), (Frederickson & Cline, 2009); and currently SEMH (Social and Mental Emotional Health) difficulties (Department for Education, 2015). This latter modification, replacing behaviour with mental health, marked a significant change in emphasis. One argument for the rationale for the change was to reduce 'the number of pupils identified as having SEN' (Norwich & Eaton, 2015, p. 126). Indeed, by the following year the percentage of all pupils with SEN in secondary schools identified as having this new category reduced from 26.7% in 2014 to 19.3% (Sheffield & Morgan, 2017). This change also created some debate as to the validity of behaviour as an SEN. As the Third Code stated, 'persistent disruptive behaviour or withdrawn behaviours do not necessarily mean that the child has SEN' (para 6.21). This reflects Ofsted's SEN review (2010), which drew attention to the importance of looking 'beyond presenting behaviours to identify each student's needs' (p. 19), hence shifting the focus from the displayed behaviours to identification of underlying needs and a communication of unmet needs.

Despite the emphasis portrayed by a change in term to SEMH, and concomitant emphasis on mental health, similarities exist with the previous BESD definition.

For example, the Code states ‘Children and young people may experience a wide range of social and emotional difficulties which manifest themselves in many ways’ (Department for Education, 2015) and provides examples that include being withdrawn or isolated, displaying challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour. Therefore removing ‘the term “behaviour” from the new category does not mean that challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour will not be taken into account’ (Norwich & Eaton, 2015, p. 127). Similarly, rebranding BESD as SEMH term has not resolved the term’s ambiguity.

As this summary review of terminology suggests, defining and labelling different categories of educational need continues to be problematic. Blurred boundaries between the categories create further issues such as inappropriate placements in settings which exacerbate difficulties (Jordan, 1999). A child’s engagement in inappropriate social behaviours may be indicative of one diagnosis, but the same child’s special interests and difficulties following classroom routines could alternatively indicate another (Frederickson & Cline, 2009).

4.3 Implications of Labelling

The implications of the desire to label difference have both economic and social underpinnings and implications, in terms of schools’ resources, teachers’ tolerance and understanding of student behaviours, parents’ desire to ensure appropriate support for their children’s learning, and tensions between parents and teachers seeking a label to explain differences and alleviate perceived blame versus the potential stigma for the child of being labelled.

4.3.1 Economic Implications

In the context of schools, diagnostic labels are considered ‘the key’ (Hodge, 2016, p. 186) to accessing extra resources and determining the availability of specialist treatment (Holland, et al., 1998; Lauchlan & Boyle, 2007). If it did not, then one could ‘legitimately question its value’ (Lauchlan & Boyle, 2007, p. 37). Similarly, Goodley (2014) identified that ‘when labels worked well for some families and their

children this was related to a particular kind of functionality: the ability to release financial, cultural and relational support' (p. 87).

This capacity to enable access to resources which can 'make a label a desirable commodity' (Hodge, 2016, p. 197), highlights a dilemma of diagnosis and labelling due to a 'reliance on a specific label of disorder … for schools to put in place the right support for a child's unmet needs' (Latif, 2016, p. 293). Furthermore, for families and individuals, 'the lack of a diagnosis could substantively deny families access to specialised health and social care; no label, no help' (Goodley, 2014, p. 87). This creates a parental dilemma, on the one hand, concerns about the 'potential devaluation, stigma and rejection' (Russell, 2016, p. 263) the child may face but wanting specific support, for example 'from the autism specialist team to help their child to develop his use of language' (Hodge & Runswick-Cole, 2008, p. 642). However, in their application of policy 'the autism-specific team only works with children with a 'formal' diagnosis' (ibid).

Whilst many may feel a diagnosis will create a 'smooth path to access services' (Runswick-Cole, et al., 2016, p. 9) and support, the reality experienced is often quite different as a 'diagnosis may lead to a service, but often does not' (Russell, 2016, p. 263). This reflects Ofsted's (2017) findings from 30 LEA SEND inspections that many children labelled as having SEMH needs still could not access the support they needed.

4.3.2 Social Implications

Power relations according to Foucault are 'mobile, reversible, and unstable' (Sullivan, 2015, p. 39). Historically, professionals and the Local Authority held positions of power as parents and children were excluded from the decision-making process (Scorgie, 2015), unaware of their rights (Russell, 1978). But the power relationships have shifted with many parents/carers having a voice in the process as well being able to seek a diagnosis or label and appeal against LEA decisions.

Parents recognise the significance of a diagnosis in providing relief from 'the stress or the ambiguity of the unknown' (Gillmann, et al., 2000, p. 394). Strand and

Lindsay (2009) point to parents actively seeking a designation of particular categories: dyslexia and ASC. A diagnosis of dyslexia 'may help parents to neutralize in their own minds their child's learning difficulty as a matter of medical condition and not a result of poor parenting skills or the child's moral failure' (Ho, 2014, p. 87) or following an autism diagnosis, relief in being able to explain troubling aspects of their child's behaviour (Potter, 2017). It provides an 'explanatory device' (Hodge, 2016, p. 196) when dealing with other people, countering 'personal character assassination' (Bobb, 2019, p. 37) in being blamed as a bad parent, with poor parenting skills. Furthermore, it may be considered helpful in raising awareness of and understanding the difficulties faced by their children (Lauchlan & Boyle, 2007), hence reflecting the view that diagnosis and labelling is in their child's best interests (Hodge, 2016). However, Broomhead (2013) found that despite a diagnosis some parents continued to experience blame for their child's behaviour from the wider community.

From the perspective of a teenager receiving a diagnosis of autism, Buckingham (2019) describes her initial disbelief and subsequent comforting thoughts, 'I now realised why I was the way I was and started a journey to understand myself' (Buckingham, 2019, p. 19). This is not always the case as the impact of a diagnosis has been shown to have potentially devastating effects upon an individual, their self-perception, social behaviour and life chances (Walker, 1981; Gillmann, et al., 2000). Research has indicated that a diagnosis can have a detrimental influence upon teachers' attitudes and expectations of a child (Hodge, 2016), due to pre-conceived 'assumptions about groups seen to share certain characteristics and possibly forget to look at the individual' (Messiou, 2017, p. 153). Perhaps as Buckingham (2019) suggests, 'we need a change in mind set from the idea of overcoming deficiency to helping realise potential' (p. 25).

Inclusionists consider that due to the stigma of being labelled as having SEN it 'should be avoided' (Hornby, 2011, p. 325). But avoiding identification does not necessarily prevent stigmatisation. Hornby (2011) for example notes that some children attract labels from their peers despite no formal identification as having SEN. This reflects Frederickson's (2010) findings that the peer group's response to particular behaviours may be more significant than their knowledge of a peer's label. Similarly, Lander and Perepa's (2017) study of a resource base for autism

found that whilst the school did not formally label pupils in the base, their peers did, resulting in the creation of social barriers.

For some pupils, being identified as needing “support” highlights difference which they view ‘negatively … as stigma, particularly where support in school took on the form of segregation from the majority peer group’ (Sheffield & Morgan, 2017, p. 53). Such geographical separation for support acts to ‘broadcast that these students are “special” and reinforce deficit attitudes toward disability among students and teachers’ (Fellner, et al., 2017, p. 331). This raises interesting questions of acceptance and acknowledgement of diversity within schools and how awareness can be raised without labelling and stigmatisation.

Labels are never neutral, but tinged with moral significance, identifying difference and suggesting inferiority (Apple, 1990). Indeed, ‘language is able to create positive and negative images of children’ (Runswick-Cole & Hodge, 2009, p. 198), impacting upon self-esteem which according to Dwyfor Davies & Ryan, (2014) can exacerbate existing difficulties pupils experience in forging positive relationships. A further negative consequence is highlighted by the perspectives of pupils on being labelled as “deviant” and “failures” in Cefai and Cooper’s (2009; 2010) Maltese study. Pupils within the study stated they had felt victimised and abused by a system which had labelled them and consequently became disengaged from the educational system, actively detaching themselves through misbehaviour and non-attendance. Furthermore, from an analysis of language used by two sisters in discussing what it means to be special, Fellner, et al. ((2017) concluded the perception is ‘that to be special is to be different, needy, sick, inferior and vulnerable’ (p. 335).

Norwich’s (2010) assertion that the ‘use of the SEN term continues to label children negatively and its use is devaluing of them’ (p. 85) is reflected in terms used within the Third Code of Practice (Department for Education, 2015), summarised in Table 3. Through defining by “disorder”, “difficulties” or “impairments”, all terms used to imply a “dysfunction” within the pupil (Wedell, 2017), the language used perpetuates discriminatory attitudes. The passing on of these terms and phrases occurs because as Maybin (2013) posits ‘children appropriate the voices of other people and texts, for example teachers’ (p. 368) and through using terms they hear are ‘inducted into institutional policies’ (p. 387), in this case of negatively labelling difference. Hence,

children draw from the adult discourses of differentiation … to label each other. One group labels the other as “stupid” and the other as “miiiles behind” (sic). One employs the ‘doesn’t know how to behave’ criteria, the other the “not academically able” criteria (Davis & Watson, 2001, p. 681).

Terms of dysfunction	**Example**	**Paragraph**
Disorders	Autistic Spectrum Disorder Attention Deficit Disorder Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder Attachment Disorder	6.27 All 6.32
Difficulties	Moderate Learning Difficulties Severe Learning Difficulties	Both 6.30
Impairments	Vision Impairment Hearing Impairment Multi-sensory Impairment	All 6.34

Table 3: Terms of “dysfunction” used in the third Code of Practice.
(Source: Department for Education, 2015)

Consequently, it is evident that the ‘language of current policy which … emphasises individual deficits … plays a part in constructing and sustaining exclusionary practices’ (Runswick-Cole & Hodge, 2009, p. 200).

4.4 Disproportionality

Considering that ‘each LEA will have its own system of referral’ (Department for Education and Skills, 2001, p. 38), it is unsurprising that Ofsted (2010) identified a wide variation both within and between different local authorities in the identification of special needs. However, such openness to interpretation of policy and a lack of clarity around SEN, has aroused concern around potential discrimination and social bias in the identification process (Frederickson & Cline, 2009).

Disproportionality, 'the over- and underrepresentation of student groups within special education' (Cooc & Kiru, 2018, p. 163) has long been recognised as an issue within identification of SEN in general as well as within certain categories of SEN. The issue is that 'SEN provision reflects a diverse society in uneven ways across a range of dimensions of diversity' (Frederickson & Cline, 2009, p. 7). Dyson and Gallannaugh (2008) in utilizing statistical databases on 'the composition of school and special needs education populations to identify disproportionality' (p. 42), identified the overrepresentation 'of boys, children living in poverty, and children from certain ethnic groups'(ibid). The gender imbalance in the designation of SEN and attendance at special schools is illustrated in figure 7.

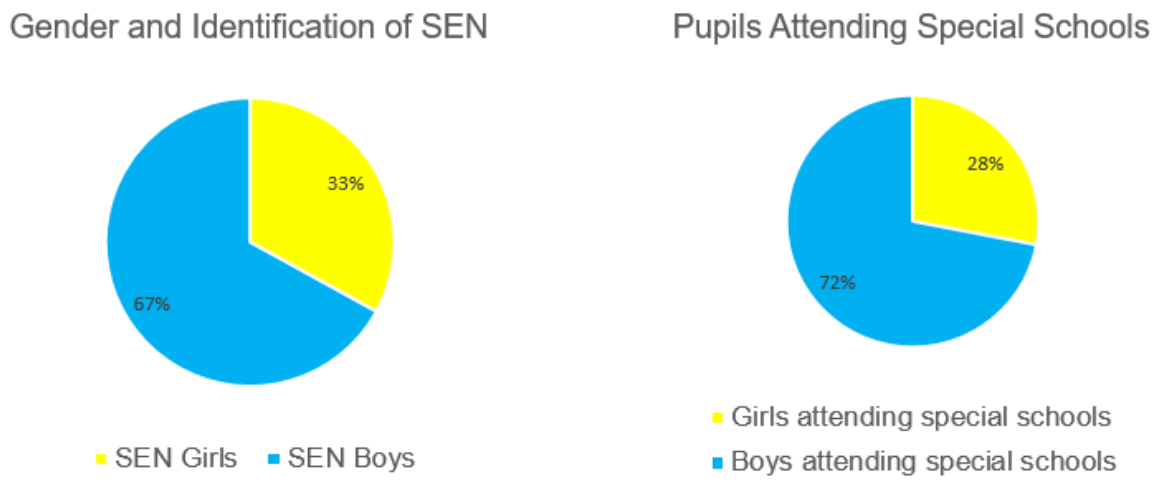


Figure 7: Gender imbalance in SEN.

(Source: Department for Education, 2020a)

Data, such as from the DfE (2017) School Census Report reveal disproportionate representation of certain ethnic groups as having SEN, for example whilst 2.8% of the school population in England have Statements or EHC plans, the percentage is significantly higher for those of Irish Traveller Heritage (4.4%) and for Black Caribbean pupils (4%). Overrepresentation 'is not an issue with respect to all minority groups' (Dyson & Gallannaugh, 2008, p. 39), for example just 1.8% of Indian children have statements or EHC plans (DfE, 2017). Strand and Lindsay

(2009) however consider that, ‘poverty and gender had stronger association than ethnicity with the overall prevalence of SEN’ (p. 174), hence highlighting the underlying significance of socio-economic factors. In using eligibility for Free School Meals as a proxy for socio-economic status, figure 8 illustrates the over-representation of pupils eligible for Free School Meals both with SEN and attending special schools.

Concern that labels of MLD and SEBD are assigned inconsistently (Cole & Knowles, 2011) reflects the view that ‘disproportionate representation occurs more frequently when identification depends predominantly upon a teacher’s [professional] judgment and contextual factors’ (Hibel, et al., 2010, p. 314). But this also may be attributed to the subjective nature of guidance provided by the SEN Code of Practice. Hence how many and which children are labelled as SEN varies according to teacher tolerance levels, management skills, temperament and expectations (Frederickson & Cline, 2009). Factors such as achievement in the case of MLD (Dyson & Gallannaugh, 2008, p. 40), and ‘children’s social functioning, not least in relation to their teachers’ (ibid) for SEMH play a role, but again the significance of socio-economic factors cannot be ignored, as ‘pupils identified with MLD come disproportionately from families who experience socio-economic disadvantage’ (Norwich & Jones, 2012, p. 5).

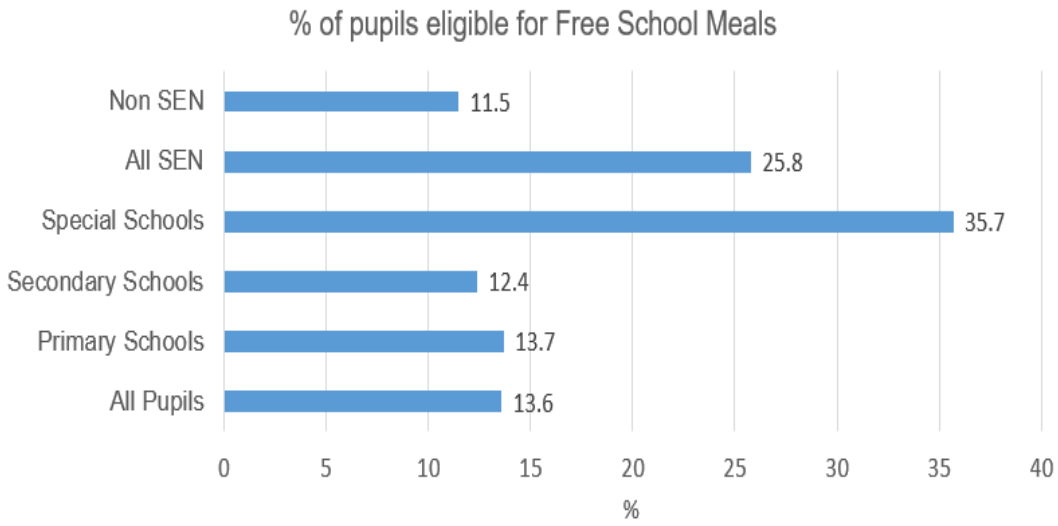


Figure 8: Eligibility for Free School Meals and SEN.

(Source: Department for Education, 2020a)

The gender imbalance in SEMH has raised concerns that boys are being readily labelled as having psychological problems by intolerant parents and school personnel, whereas girls' under-representation may be due to a variety of social factors which reduce the probability of identification and referral (Lindsay, et al., 2006; Frederickson & Cline, 2009). Furthermore, gender imbalance may also reflect gender differences in 'expectations of classroom behaviour' (Cooc & Kiru, 2018, p. 164).

Dyson and Gallannaugh (2008) suggest a deeper-rooted problem in that, 'the patterns of disproportionality do not reflect simply the arbitrary constructions of teachers or the institutional imperatives of schools but also underlying patterns of social and educational inequality' (p. 43). This reflects Becker's (1963) assertion that the degree to which an act is deemed deviant depends upon who commits the act as rules tend to be applied more or differently for some social groups than others.

4.5 Concluding Comments

The roots of labelling practices are derived from nineteenth century schools to solve the problematic of those not progressing within the existing system, of non-attendance and to divide the educable from the educable, hence providing a tool for exclusion. Notable shifts in terminology from "defective" to "handicapped" (Education Act, 1944), suggesting 'a greater understanding and sympathy' (Hurt, 1988, p. 172) of/for individual differences and from the identification of "deficit" to "needs" and in so doing introduced the term 'Special Educational Need' (DES , 1978) reflect changing attitudes, knowledge and beliefs (Hurt, 1988). Despite such shifts, problems persist (Hellblom-Thibblin, 2018) around ambiguity, inconsistency and disproportionality.

Variations in identification of SEN have raised to concerns over potential discrimination and social bias. Within those identified as having SEN there is evidence of a diverse society being represented unevenly. Over-representation of some groups, such as boys, those in poverty and certain ethnic groups and under-representation of other groups. Questions around this highlight the significance of

the arbitrary nature of judgements made by teachers and professionals within a wider context of educational inequality.

The labelling process of having SEN has a range of both positive and negative effects on schools, teacher, parents/carers and the child involved. For schools this has been shown through the access to specialist resources which then should benefit the child; for parents, a belief they are helping their child, but also as an explanatory tool alleviating feelings of guilt and blame, in that justification of the difficulties is explained by professionals; for the child, they may be able to receive appropriate and helpful treatment denied without a diagnosis. However, there are tensions within the relationships of power between parents and professionals when the harsh reality of policy and a pre-occupation of pathologising difference impacts on the availability of access to resources to meet a child's needs.

Pupil perspectives vary from feelings of relief and seeing a diagnostic label as the start of self-understanding, to those of devastation. The application of terms which imply deficit or disorder, have been shown to generate negative self-perception and potential disengagement from education. But 'being different should not necessarily mean being "disordered"' (Latif, 2016, p. 292), the problem is the derogatory language of SEN.

The historical legacy of pathologising difference and creating labels has created a tool with which to exclude children from mainstream education and to relocate them either in segregated provision within a school or to off-site and non-mainstream settings – a mechanism that perpetuates exclusion impacting disproportionately to the most vulnerable members of society. In the following chapter pupil perspectives of the impact of such exclusionary practices are explored more deeply.

Chapter 5: The Significance of Voice in the Special Education Discourse

Voices

Silenced by exclusion

Stories kept silent

Time for change

Listen to the voices

If

The aim is inclusion

5.1 Introduction

What constitutes voice is a complex issue (Blommaert, 2005; Mazzei & Jackson, 2009) which has been researched by many and is interpreted differently. The rhetoric of voice has been associated with issues of identity and empowerment (Maybin, 2013), agency and rights and movements concerned with emancipation, overthrowing exploitation and oppression, such as civil rights and women's rights movements (Thomson, 2011). With the focus of this thesis being the voices of excluded pupils with SEN, I am adopting the more political dimension to the concept of 'voice' which defines voice as being 'associated with varying degrees of agency and rights' (Thomson, 2011, p. 21).

This chapter commences by considering the significance of the historical silencing and ghosting of two important players in the world of SEN: parents and their children. This moves on to a discussion of why certain children's voices are privileged over others and the significance of engaging with marginalised voices. This is explored through a review of literature concerning perceptions of pupils

with SEN of being educated in a range of different settings and provides insights into both benefits and issues faced in different forms of provision.

5.2 Unheard Voices in the History of SEN

Issues of voice 'are not circumscribed by verbal or written texts; they are embedded in historically located structures and relations of power' (Fielding, 2004, p. 300). Unsuccessful attempts to listen to the authentic voices from the early days of special education lead Reed and Walmsley (2006) to conclude that the historical record had been documented solely by the voices of professionals, the teacher, the doctor or institutional staff and not the clients. Furthermore, according to Tomlinson (1982), 'the clients of special education – children and their parents … are subject to more strategies of persuasion and coercion and are less likely to have their views and opinions recorded than in any other part of the education system' (p.106).

'Voice' is 'inherently concerned with questions of power and knowledge, with how decisions are made, who is included and excluded and who is advantaged and disadvantaged as a result' (Thomson, 2011, p. 21). Historically, assessments and decisions were made by professionals and the Local Authority. Parents unaware of their rights (Russell, 1978) were excluded from the decision-making process (Scorgie, 2015). Furthermore, parental agreement was not required for a child to be assessed in relation to issuing a Statement of SEN and there was a lack of communication and sharing of records and assessments with parents (Stobbs, 2018). Failure to comply with an assessment could have resulted in being guilty of an offence and liable to a fine. Whilst parents could request for their child to be assessed, the Local Authority had the power to refuse such a request. Consequently, assessments and decisions about their child were made behind 'closed and threatening doors' (Russell, 1978, p. 29). Such denial of access to information about their child equates to being denied knowledge and power (Tomlinson, 1982). In a Foucauldian sense this is more a relationship of oppression than power, as 'power is exercised only over free subjects … who are faced with a field of possibilities in which… several ways of reacting and modes of behaviour are available' (Foucault, 1994, p. 342).

In introducing the Special Educational Needs Tribunal, the1993 Education Act created a forum for parental voices and resolving disputes. The emerging voices of the parents thus marked a shift in the power dynamics of determining the educational needs of their child. The first SEN Code of Practice not only acknowledged the vital significance of the 'knowledge, views and expertise of parents' (DFE, 1994, p. 13), but also importance of the views of the child as 'the effectiveness of any assessment and intervention will be influenced by the involvement and interest of the child/young person concerned' (p. 25). No longer were they to be oppressed but were emerging as partners in a new relationship of power.

This changing attitude reflects the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) recognition of children's rights. Within the Convention all the rights are linked, with no right considered more important than another. Regarding the rights to a voice, the Convention asserts children's rights to express their views freely in matters affecting them (Article 12), the right to be heard in any judicial and administrative procedures affecting them (Article 12) and the right to freedom of expression (Article 13) (United Nations, 1989).

Whilst in England, the recommendation of the original SEN Code of Practice (DFE, 1994) acknowledges children's rights to be heard, according to Toynbee (2009) the process at that time rarely allowed voices to be heard - raising questions of how policy is applied in practice. Since 1994, principles of listening to voices and opinions have evolved from being 'desirable' (DFE, 1994), to being 'sought and taken into account' (Frederickson & Cline, 2009, p. 56) in 2001, and to being a 'requirement' in 2014 (DFE, 2014, page 19).

Despite such change, a key finding in Sheffield and Morgan's (2017) research into perceptions of pupils labelled as BESD/SEMH is that 'young people with a statement of SEN for BESD are frequently unaware both that they have a Statement of SEN and that it is for BESD' (p. 60). This may reflect their positioning in society in terms of perceived competence and how their views are valued (Flewitt & Ang, 2020). This as Thomas (2014) suggests may be due a combination of 'a tradition of seeing the child as not only vulnerable and helpless, but also irrational' (p. 31) and viewing the child with BESD as 'not only irrational, but also emotionally disturbed, [which] effectively condemns them to voicelessness' (ibid). The child's competence is thus being questioned as is their right to participate in

discussions affecting them as outlined in Article 12 of the UNCRC (United Nations, 1989).

'Being heard is important to young people' (Rudduck & Demetriou, 2003, p. 277) and being able to talk about experiences at school enables a 'stronger sense of membership … of respect and self-worth … of self-as-learner … of agency' (ibid). According to Flutter (2007), the UNCRC (United Nations, 1989) constituted a major catalyst in the increasing recognition of the importance of pupil voice. Indeed, since the early 1990s there has been a resurgence of interest in student voice (Fielding, 2010). However, there are concerns that 'student representation is often tokenistic and... what students discuss is limited' (Thomson, 2011, p. 25). Just as the concept of voice is open to different interpretations and meanings, the term 'pupil voice' embraces a broad spectrum of purposes as summarised below.

Figure 9: The spectrum of uses of pupil voice.
(Based on Czerniawski & Kidd, 2011 and Wisby, 2011)

It is, however, often a minority, 'the so-called gifted and talented or good students' (Czerniawski & Kidd, 2011, p. 430) and 'the more articulate, confident learners whose voices are heard' (Flutter, 2007, p. 349). Consequently, other voices are rarely heard, such as the "difficult student" (Thomson, 2011), or those who present as 'too strident, too offensive or too irresponsible' (Fielding, 2004, p. 303). There is also the reluctant student who may lack confidence and competence 'in

articulating their views' (Dwyfor Davies & Ryan, 2014, p. 358) and needs convincing they have a valuable contribution to make (Cefai & Cooper, 2010).

Once again, the question of disproportionality arises. These same groups are disproportionately over-represented in the exclusion data, over-represented in the labelling of SEND and under-represented in the issue of voice. In the introduction to this thesis, I raised the significance of listening to the educational challenges faced by some students in an attempt to gain a wider understanding of exclusion. The rationale for listening to and hearing the voices of 'those who are inaudible in the education systems' (Urquhart, 2009, p. 76) is that through engaging with and acting upon these once silenced voices, 'more inclusive educational systems' (ibid) could be achieved. Not hearing these voices leads to missing out on important information (Fielding, 2004). A consequence of not hearing voices of excluded girls with BESD, for example, is not only that they are 'denied the opportunity to express their views on barriers to participation' (Clarke, et al., 2010, p. 1), but also educators are missing out on potentially valuable information, a better understanding of the causes of learning and behavioural difficulties (Cefai & Cooper, 2010) and consequently on the root causes of exclusion (Clarke, et al., 2010). The significance of dialogue with those who find school challenging is articulated by Eleanor (aged 16) in the report of the National Autistic Survey (2006). As a consequence of being bullied she wrote graffiti on the school walls, but nobody asked her why. She questions, 'Why can't they ask "what's wrong, why did you do this?" and I'd tell them. They never asked me, they just said, "this is terrible; what is wrong with you?"' (Reid & Batten, 2006, p. 12).

5.3 Pupils' Thoughts and Reflections of their Educational Experiences

Differences in teacher and pupil perspectives underline a need to engage in dialogue and give pupils a valid voice (Cefai & Cooper, 2010). Capturing the views of those who challenge the mainstream system provides an understanding of why the education system is failing them as they have 'essential evidence to share about their educational experience' (Toynbee, 2009, p. 27) and the impact of policies, procedures and intervention (Dillon, et al., 2016). In this section I also

focus on the reflections of excluded pupils with SEN on their perceived challenges in mainstream schools, and positive and negative consequences of attending segregated provisions. These reflections are significant in providing insights into the social and academic implications of educational exclusionary practices.

5.3.1 The Significance of Teacher-Pupil Relationships

The significance of teacher–pupil relationships is a recurring theme in the literature, indeed the 'importance of the relationship forged between teachers and pupils cannot be underestimated' (Dwyfor Davies & Ryan, 2014, p. 354), especially considering the nature of this relational encounter is 'fundamental for learning' (Hickey & Riddle, 2021, p. 4).

According to Cooper et al. (1991), students once labelled in some way 'deviant' often have highly negative views of teachers in mainstream schools. Similarly, in Cefai and Cooper's (2010) study that sought the views of secondary school students with SEBD in Malta, pupils expressed resentment towards mainstream schools as they felt the schools and teachers had labelled them as deviant, been unwilling and/or unable to understand them and failed to meet their needs and they had been subsequently victimised. Furthermore, Cosma and Soni's (2019) review of literature of mainstream experiences by pupils with BESD identified 'participants attributed past negative relationships with members of staff as a key contributor to their behavioural responses and ultimately, exclusion' (Cosma & Soni, 2019, p. 430).

This reflects the opinion that pupils with SEBD internalize school as something at best unpleasant and at worst an ordeal in which they felt fairly powerless (Fovet, 2009), feeling ''wronged' in some way and [hence] seemed to attribute their experiences to factors beyond themselves but to the environment and the mistreatment by others' (Cosma & Soni, 2019, p. 430). Similarly, blaming others for their difficulties was identified by Sheffield and Morgan's (2017) in which pupils attributed their poor behaviour to 'boredom, work being pitched at a level that was too difficult or easy for young people and staff management' (p. 57). Waddington and Reed (2017) consider mainstream education enhances the quality of life and educational and social development of pupils with SEN. This however is not the

case according to Ashburner et al. (2010) who found a high rate of academic underachievement for pupils with ASC within mainstream settings. This underachievement was attributed to perceived relationships with and perceptions of staff, reflecting the impact of labelling on teachers' assumptions, attitudes and expectations (Hodge, 2016; Messiou, 2017). As a consequence of poor relationships, participants in Ashburner et al.'s (2010) study also felt their challenging behaviours were often misunderstood, which combined with frequent reprimands and lack of academic achievement eroded self-esteem and motivation.

The teacher's expertise and authority are reflected in their behaviour and research evidence suggests that the nature of this behaviour is crucial in determining whether pupils with disrupted learning experiences re-engage or not in education. Cooper (2011) in carrying out research based on a review of international research literature on teacher strategies for effective intervention with students presenting SEBD found whilst the behaviour of these young people pose enormous challenges to schools and society, positive contributions by teachers can facilitate effective responses to these challenges.

Benefits from developing trusting relationships with teachers and peers reported by Harris et al. (2008) in their study of pupils who had attended a primary residential EBD school include suppressing poor behaviour and positively influencing the individual's conceptualisation of their school experience. Significantly in Hart's (2013) research involving the views of children attending a PRU, not only did they feel 'trusted' by the staff at the PRU, describing them as 'kind', 'fair' and 'fun'' (p. 203), these trusting relationships enabled them to learn to cope with difficult feelings, develop coping strategies and how to manage their own behaviour. All of which enabled pupils to remain in class during lessons.

Such benefits can be attributed to the nature of the learning environment. For example pupils identified positive aspects of the learning environment at the PRU as smaller class sizes and higher staff-pupil ratios which create a more humane environment in which relaxed conversations were possible (Thomson & Pennacchia, 2016), as well as a more engaging and appropriate curriculum and the use of effective sanctions (Michael & Frederickson, 2013; Polat & Farrell, 2002).

One advantage of a smaller class is that the teacher has the 'the opportunity to get to know and understand EBD pupils and their backgrounds and needs' (Dwyfor Davies & Ryan, 2014, p. 352). Despite these reported benefits, due to issues of funding and size, many non mainstream provisions offer a restricted curriculum (Thomson & Pennacchia, 2014; Dickson, 2019) resulting in students feeling they are missing out on not just the academic side of school but also the social side (Sheffield & Morgan, 2017). Hence attending such provisions brings 'opportunity costs for the young person' (Power & Taylor, 2018, p. 876) as the reduced curriculum offer is 'a curriculum largely devoid of languages, humanities and social science' (Thomson & Pennacchia, 2016, p. 622).

5.3.2 The Significance of Peer Relationships

A study of year 11 pupils attending off-site provision highlighted that whilst positives had included developing trusting interpersonal relationships, pupils regretted not completing their education in their mainstream school (Toynbee, 2009). This articulates the value pupils place upon the social aspects of school, describing a loss of common sense of belonging with their peers and were outsiders. A sense of 'belonging encompasses the desire for some sort of attachment with people and spaces' (Nind, et al., 2012, p. 653) and contributes significantly to attitudes towards different schools and provisions, and the resultant educational experience (Cosma & Soni, 2019; Jalali & Morgan, (2018); Nind, et al., 2012).

The benefits of the social aspects of school, the opportunity to develop friendships as well as an opportunity to develop academic and social skills (Dillon, et al., 2016) are considered the main reasons in favour of all children attending a mainstream school. The significance of positive peer relationships in enabling successful inclusion within their school is highlighted in a study of pupils with ASC educated within mainstream schools (Humphrey and Lewis, 2008). Pupils with ASC report higher levels of bullying than any other group of pupils with SEN. In their survey of 28 children about their educational experiences, the National Autistic Society (2006) found over 40% reported having been bullied at school (Reid & Batten, 2006). Indeed, it is estimated that pupils with ASC are three times more likely to

be bullied compared to other pupils (Humphrey & Symes, 2012). The experiences reported by individuals in the National Autistic Survey include being left out, being shouted at and kicked, laughed at, teased, having paper and stuff chucked at them in class and happy slapping (Reid & Batten, 2006). The consequences of which impact negatively upon the child's self-esteem and mental health, often leading to school refusal (Ashburner, et al., 2010). These experiences indicate a significant problem in society in which some attitudes towards ASC appear to locate the problem within the victim rather than the perpetrators. An example of this is the attribution of the vulnerability to bullying as a combination of their social naivety, eagerness to makes friends and difficulties understanding the nuances of social interaction (Humphrey & Lewis, 2008). This however masks the underlying issue of bullying representing a much larger societal problem. Incidents of school bullying 'constitute dynamics of difference that circulate throughout broader social and political spheres, filtered down and expressed in school yard interactions' (Walton, 2018, p. 22). Responses to bullying such as isolating the victim during break and lunchtime to protect them from bullying, keeping them "safe", as reported in the National Autistic Society survey, not only serves to socially exclude the victim but also reinforces negative attitudes and behaviours towards difference. By 'defining the solution in terms of the need for [the victim] to change, reinforced the bullies' perspective' (Davis & Watson, 2001, p. 675).

Whilst all pupils in the Humphrey and Lewis (2008) study reported as being bullied to some degree, some reported that friends had stood up for them. The significance of peers is similarly evident in Carrington and Graham's (2001) descriptive study of two Australian teenagers with Asperger's. Both described stress around relationships with others, teasing and not fitting in and hence the desire to mask their deficits. The significance of "fitting in" is apparent in Bagatell's (2007) case study of Ben, who prior to his diagnosis of Asperger Syndrome at the age of 15 was encouraged to 'fit in', to try to make friends, to 'act normal' (p. 416). But Ben's case suggests this needs to fit in was actually somebody else's concern, not his.

The school environment also harbours a 'silent curriculum' which can have a profound impact on any pupil (McAllister & Sloan, 2017). This concept is explored in McAllister and Sloan's (2017) study with pupils around the design of a school and potential location of their ASC Base. In this study, pupils raised concerns

around issues such as safety and security, and the difficulties arising from noisy and crowded spaces in the main school building. The problem of crowded spaces is explained by one of the participants, Dan who states, ‘Schools are too squashed. I get squashed in the corridors, in the hall-ways and the canteen. It’s ... like.... claustrophobia’ (p. 341). This study also revealed the significance of the location of the base to the pupils. In every suggested school design, every pupil wanted a central location to their base, not out in the periphery of the school, reflecting wanting a sense of belonging to the school, of being included. This supports the findings mentioned in the previous chapter where pupils viewed geographical segregation negatively (Sheffield & Morgan, 2017).

5.3.3 Future Concerns

Geographical segregation on a much larger scale than within the school grounds can provide difficulties with relationships with family and friends. For those attending a residential school, concerns were raised by some pupils ‘about missing out on family, friends, and things happening at home’ (Harriss, et al., 2008, p. 39). Furthermore, being educated away from the local communities, combined with ‘negative stereotypes among the general population can make it extremely difficult for pupils at such schools to integrate with their friends and family back home’ (Polat & Farrell, 2002, p. 105) and consequently upon their return they had become isolated within their communities.

Pupils who had attended segregated provisions expressed concern about future potential employers having negative pre-conceptions about them due to the nature of educational provision they had attended (Michael & Frederickson, 2013). In particular, pupils having attended residential schools expressed concerns that ‘naming such a school on a CV may be the kiss of death when it comes to obtaining employment’ (Polat & Farrell, 2002, p. 105). These concerns reflect the issue that labelling and the nature of educational provision attended does not just impact upon opportunities whilst in education, but also can impact on future educational and employment opportunities. Hence, whilst some pupils had expressed a positive attitude towards their experiences of attending special school, the benefits dissipated once they had left (O'Riordan, 2011).

5.4 Concluding Comments

This review of literature provides insights into how difficulties can be overcome, but also concerns that short-term solutions may have long term negative consequences. In whatever setting pupils are educated, a major factor in their success appears to be the social support provided by peers and teachers. Their experiences also reveal the benefits of smaller, more personalised learning environments that offer opportunities to develop trusting relationships, improve self-esteem and strategies to cope with difficult emotions, which are all crucial for engagement in learning and fostering a sense of belonging.

There are negatives, however, such as restricted curriculum offers and a loss of sense of belonging. Furthermore, as a result of being removed from mainstream settings pupils expressed feelings of isolation and alienation from their mainstream peers. This was intensified in the experiences of those attending residential provision to their families and local communities. Their perceived stigma from attending some provisions also impacted negatively on perceptions of future employment prospects.

Since the introduction of the term ‘Special Educational Needs’, there has been no clear definition resulting in a disproportionality in the identification and assessment of a child’s educational needs. Despite the introduction of a Code of Practice designed to give guidance to schools, the issues of ambiguity and disparities between schools and LEAs have continued. Four key points have emerged from this review of literature:

- Schools have become accountable for the records of support given to pupils they identify as having SEN.
- The language of the third Code of Practice (Department for Education, 2015) reflects existing tensions within the system.
- Despite recommendation for the removal of categories of deficit, pupils are still referred to by terms implying deficit and dysfunction.
- The rights of parents/carers to be heard have improved, a major positive from the original Code of Practice being the establishment of the parental tribunal.

Prior to the 1981 Education Act, the voices of the clients in the SEN industry had rarely been heard. The importance of listening to these voices has grown with the instigation of legislation around the rights of the child to express their opinion on matters concerning them. However, there is evidence that some voices are still not being heard and opportunities are being lost to understand the difficulties faced by many children in the education system. Just having a voice is not enough (Cefai & Cooper, 2010), what is needed is 'engaging with student voices, in a genuine way' (Messiou & Hope, 2015, p. 1019). It is this that is driving my thesis. The opinions of children who have lived with exclusion from mainstream education are needed to help inform policies and practices. This 'is an important step in the development of inclusive practices in schools' (ibid). Listening to the voices of all students therefore is essential to the development of effective, inclusive education communities, as 'giving voice is the ultimate purpose of education' (Breslin, 2011, p. 57). In the following chapter I explain how I designed my study to hear the voices of two case study students who have faced challenges resulting in exclusion from mainstream schools.

Chapter 6: Research Design

Project planned
Research prepared
Only ….
Just be patient
Ethical approval
Consent
To partake

Data collection
Emerging codes
Sorting
I'm experimenting
Going poetic
Nervously writing

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter I outline my choice of methodology, methods and analytical tools. This begins with a brief explanation of why I chose to use a case study approach and the methods used. This progresses onto how the participants were recruited before discussing the significance of ethical considerations when carrying out research with vulnerable young people and the importance of reflexivity as a teacher researcher. The techniques used in transcribing and analysing the data are presented along with the rationale for experimenting with poetic transcription and the insights this approach affords.

6.2 The Case Study

'In the simplest sense, a case is an instance, incident, or unit of something and can be anything' (Schwandt & Gates, 2018, p. 341). Whilst I have a specific knowledge about school exclusion processes and practices from the perspective of a teacher working with children who have been excluded, at the core of my thesis is the aim to gain an understanding of the practices from the perspective of those who have been excluded, to lend insight into the significance of disciplinary strategies, the function of which according to Foucault (1977) is to create 'docile bodies'. As Foucault argues, resistance is possible in any relationship of power,

but in schools, resistance for some can lead to exclusion. Exclusion, as discussed in the literature review, disproportionately impacts upon those most vulnerable in the system.

In this thesis the two participants are each individually a case, with each case providing a unique unit of analysis, case 'Beth' and case 'Nathan'. Listening to the voices of these two excluded pupils with SEN reflects the epistemological position that children with SEN, 'have essential evidence to share about their educational experiences' (Toynbee, 2009, p. 27) and through their unique experiences, disciplinary techniques which serve to exclude.

By using case study, I am looking to the 'uniqueness of the case as a means of understanding complex human situations and human encounters' (Simons, 1996, p. 226). Both participants' individual educational experiences will be unique and have differences, making generalisations difficult (Stark & Torrance, 2005). However, one of the strengths of case study is what Simons (1996) considers as the paradox that 'by studying the uniqueness of the particular, we come to understand the universal' (p. 231).

6.3 Qualitative Case Study Design

In case study, the three 'most commonly employed research methods are interviews, documentary analysis and observation' (Stark & Torrance, 2005, p. 35). In this study I used semi-structured qualitative interviews, documentary evidence and observational notes from my teacher journal.

The qualitative interview, is frequently applied to 'case studies, which focus on a specific person, situation or institution' (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p. 143) and has been described as an 'essential tool of the researcher in educational enquiry' (Scott & Usher, 2011, p. 115). My rationale for using qualitative semi-structured interviews was based on the assumption that interviews can 'yield rich insights into people's biographies, experiences, opinions, values, aspirations, attitudes and feelings' (May, 2011, p. 131) enabling participants 'to discuss their own interpretations of the world in which they live, and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view' (Cohen, et al., 2001, p. 267). Furthermore,

Barbour & Schostak, (2005) point out ‘the sense of the ‘real’ is at the heart of the interview’ (p. 42). To achieve this Barbour & Schostak, (2005) identify three types of strategy: ‘imposition, grounded and emergence’ (ibid). Following this strategy, for the first stage I utilised themes and issues which had emerged from the review of literature as the basis for a pre-prepared interview schedule (see Appendix 2). These concerned issues around experiences of mainstream schools; around labelling and identification of having special educational needs; being involved in decisions concerning them and future plans. In employing a flexible semi-structured interview approach, the pre-planned interview schedule acted as a guide or ‘aide memoir of important points’ (Thomas, 2013, p. 198). I was looking to allow interesting ideas or concerns that arise to be followed and discussed in depth (Smith & Osborne, 2015; Cohen, et al., 2001), and to allow for ‘deviation and more open discussion’ (Howell, 2013, p. 199). Also, this approach acknowledges the participants ‘as the experiential expert on the subject and should therefore be allowed maximum time to tell their own story’ (Smith & Osborne, 2015, p. 31).

The interviews occurred during November 2017 in the school building where the two participants were based. The first interview took place during the morning tutor period in the library. It was a room we were both familiar with as I had taught Nathan in this room during the previous academic year, and he also used the room at lunch times. I started by double checking he was comfortable participating and asked his permission to record on my voice recorder. The interview lasted 32 minutes. The second interview took place at lunch time. Beth had asked if we could use this time as she disliked lunch times in the gym – the space used by pupils prior to dining. Her form room was empty, so we met in that space. Her interview lasted approximately 45 minutes.

In preparing the interview schedule I aimed to keep questions neutral rather than value-laden or leading, avoiding jargon, and the use of open rather than closed questions (Smith & Osborne, 2015). I however inadvertently used jargon in Nathan’s interview and used the term “Annual Review” when asking about airing opinions. This led to a misunderstanding as he assumed I was talking about the school council, but his response did yield an unexpected insight into how he felt schools valued students’ views. In both interviews, the use of open-ended questions enabled ‘flexibility rather than fixity of the sequence of discussions’

(Cohen, et al., 2001, p. 147) as well as allowing 'respondents to answer in their questions in their own way' (Cohen, et al., 2001, p. 270). At times there were silences. Homan (2001) points out that children are 'susceptible to intrusions of private space and behaviour by researchers' (p. 334), hence the desire to hear the pupil's voice needs to be tempered with respect for their desire for silence and not to articulate their thoughts. One example was when Nathan was talking about his secondary mainstream school. I had asked about aspects he had enjoyed. He mentioned friends but then stated that the "rest of it was like terrible" and then there was a long pause. I employed my seven second strategy, i.e. counting silently to 7. This respect for silence, or not answering, is important. Indeed, in adopting a post-structuralist stance such silences are valued. The 'unsaid' is often as significant as the 'said'. It is important therefore to allow pauses in the conversation, allowing the participants, 'ample time to associate and reflect' (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p. 162).

Whilst a criticism of semi-structured interviews is the schedule and hence interviewers 'define and control the situation' (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p. 6), accentuating power imbalances between the interviewer and interviewee in both interviews the dialogue extended into areas I had not envisaged, such as the participants' lack of involvement in decision making or their anxiety of being on report. Therefore, whilst I acknowledge the limitations of using semi-structured , such as 'allowing subjective influences' (Howell, 2013, p. 199) and less comparability between responses (May, 2011), the approach I adopted allowed for the uniqueness of experiences and the significance of events they had encountered to be revealed.

It was my intention to record and later transcribe the interview data. I was aware that whilst audio recording might be unobtrusive it might constrain the respondent (Cohen, et al., 2001, p. 281), 'affecting the degree and type of privacy experienced by the interviewee' (Scott & Usher, 2011, p. 118). The first participant, Nathan, was happy to be recorded. In contrast, Beth felt uncomfortable about her voice being recorded so we decided to work together on writing down her thoughts. Whilst making notes can be less intrusive than audio recording (Scott and Usher, 2011) taking notes during an interview can be off-putting (Cohen, et al., 2001). I respected this participant's opinion, and she was happy to work together on the interview notes and a timeline drawn on A3 paper. This approach allowed her to

develop her thoughts and return to the timeline to add new recollections and assisted me in developing a deeper understanding of how Beth made sense of situations and communicated them to me.

The first piece of documentary evidence I utilised was Nathan's written leaver's speech. When Nathan finished school at the end of the 2017-18 academic year to continue his studies at the local college, on his final school day he made a speech thanking the staff for their support. He gave me a copy of his leaving speech which he gave permission to be used as data in this research project. Whilst the transparency of participants' accounts through which we learn truths might be questioned (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013), the value of such accounts is derived from their representation of actual life events which aid a better understanding of the subject. This speech as documentary evidence provides a pre-prepared written account of Nathan's experiences and his gratitude towards those who had supported him. The 'Leavers' Assembly' provides an occasion where pupil voice and opinion is officially sanctioned, sought and valued. Not everyone has the courage to make a speech. Nathan's written speech whilst constrained by the social context of being a leaver, provided an opportunity to convey how he would like to be remembered. He refers to past and present experiences and gratitude to those who have helped him. But he has an underlying message about being a "decent" person.

Whilst the content of his speech therefore must be considered as selective, integrating participant perspectives and perceptions is crucial in establishing the validity of research (e.g. Luttrell, 2010). Finally, in considering validity of data, the data from the interviews and the speech 'lies in its ability to represent the informant's subjective reality, that is to say his or her definition of the situation' (Cohen, et al., 2001, p. 133).

Following the interviews, documentary evidence was also obtained by accessing information about the participants' previous schools and PRUs from their institutional websites. The AP does not have a website, just a paragraph on the LA Pledge page but this provided some useful insights. The aim of examining the websites was to find more specific information about elements of school life the two participants had described, such as the house system which arose from Nathan's interview, the Green Room from Beth's interview. I also was keen to read specific school policies on SEN provision and behaviour policies.

6.4 The Research Site

The research site was a purpose-built Academy built in 2015 originally for around 50 pupils aged 4 to 19. It is a specialist provision co-located with a generic special needs schools, with which it shares a number of facilities such as science laboratories, swimming pool, and theatre and music rooms. It forms part of Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) of five special schools and four 16-25 provisions. The sites are all located within two boroughs of a large conurbation in the north of England. Whilst most pupils live within the conurbation, some travel much longer distances.

6.5 The Participants

Ethical considerations underpinned the selection of the participants. Firstly, in obtaining ethical consent from the university I needed to be confident that those participating had the capacity to decline to participate. Following advice received from the university ethics committee, I decided to focus on older pupils in Key Stages 4 and 5. Practical considerations also came into play with this selection, for example, I no longer worked at the site which I had intended to use, where I was based at the start of the EdD programme.

This research project, and the recruitment of the participants, evolved following some of the informal discussions I had with Key Stage 4 pupils when I first became part of the MAT. This was a small class, nominally with ten students, but attendance for several in the group was sporadic, so students' committed participation could not be assured. Discussions initially arose when I first arrived in their ICT lesson one Thursday afternoon in January 2017, when I was recognised by Nathan. The co-teacher had introduced me and explained that I was from another school in the MAT. Some of the group knew this school and pupils there so were keen to talk and dispel certain myths. They were particularly keen to know about restraining pupils and if I had ever done it. This progressed onto discussions about my different roles at the MAT as teacher, why I had an office, what I did as the research lead and then why I was a postgraduate student.

As several children were actually older than the Key Stage 4 group they had been placed in, they also raised concerns about being older and not yet having GCSEs. My aim was for my pupils to realise going to university is possible at any age, even over 50!

The Academy was only two years old when I first arrived and many of the group talked about having been on a merry-go-round of different schools and provisions. They all had struggled coping within mainstream settings and were described as a ‘challenging group’. Having taught ‘challenging’ pupils for many years my initial strategy as a teacher was to encourage dialogue. These informal discussions revealed experiences that mirrored the problematic which concerned me. Their voices needed a space in which to be heard. Out of these discussions a small group emerged interested in sharing their experiences of mainstream in my research. Some just wanted to chat informally. In applying for ethical consent, one challenge was proving the participants had the capacity to withhold their voluntary consent. The reality for one member of the group was the capacity to decline as he stated that his memories were too traumatic.

In considering an optimum number of participants I decided a maximum of three as I wanted to immerse myself in the data, to drill down and analyse in depth each unique case. Three participants basically self-selected to take part. However, the school attendance of one pupil participant was sporadic, making his participation impracticable. Hence from this group there were two students who were very keen to share their experiences as part of the research. I then spoke with their parents about the research, what it would involve and measures I would put in place to minimise potential distress.

Two participants were selected:

> Nathan, a white male aged 15, had attended many primary schools due to moving around the country and finally to the borough in year 6 then transferring to a large comprehensive. During year 9 he spent time out of school before referral to an AP. He had transferred to the special school in year 10. I had previously met Nathan in year 9 in my role as Assistant Head to consider him for a placement at my school, and he had recognised me when I entered his classroom.

Beth, a white female aged 16 had attended one primary school and a large comprehensive. In year 9 she had become a school refuser and hence referred to the PRU. She left the PRU in year 10 to attend the special school.

Whilst Beth was technically in Year 12, and a Key Stage 5 pupil, she was at the time being educated in Key Stage 4 so she could take her GCSEs.

6.6 Researcher Reflexivity

'Reflexivity is about exploring how meanings, including the meanings given to and generated by research, are discursively constructed within the research process' (Scott & Usher, 2011, p. 21). As research is considered 'a product of the values of the researcher and cannot be independent of them' (Mertens, 1998, p. 11) some account needs to be taken of the researcher's influence upon the research, including personal beliefs, values and interests.

The Insider researcher as defined by Dhillon and Thomas (2019) is one who 'may relate to the relationship of the researcher to the organization they are researching, their membership of a specific group or community, or shared history, values or motivations for engagement in a particular form of research' (p. 444) . This extends from the traditional view of the 'insider' teacher-researcher who studies their own practices in the classroom (Zeni, 2005). In some respects, I am both an Insider and an Outsider, reflecting the Insider/Outsider dilemma. This dilemma is explored by Flewitt and Ang (2020) through describing the experiences of two researchers investigating literacy in a Bangladeshi community. It had been assumed that one of the researchers represented an Insider of Bangladeshi culture, however in the role of being a researcher, felt more like an Outsider.

As an insider, I am part of an educational landscape shared with the participants, but also an Outsider in that I am not a member of the inner community of peers. This clearly creates issues pertaining to power relationships between myself as a professional and the participants, who are also students I taught. My motivation for this thesis, however, arises from my observations as a cultural insider, inside the educational world of educating the excluded.

Advantages of Insider research include easy access to participants who meet the research criteria and familiarity (Humphrey & Lewis, 2008) with the researcher. Establishing a trusting relationship between the researcher and participant is an essential element of the ethical processes involved in research (Flewitt & Ang, 2020). One advantage therefore of established familiarity with the researcher is 'insider researchers usually have considerable credibility and rapport with the subjects of their studies, a fact that may engender a greater level of candour than would otherwise be the case' (Mercer, 2007, p. 7). This familiarity, however, could also be seen as disadvantageous as the researcher has 'to contend with their own pre-conceptions, and those their informants have formed about them as a result of their shared history' (ibid).

In Insider research, 'ethical and methodological issues are heightened' (Dhillon & Thomas, 2019, p. 442). Whilst ethical considerations are discussed in detail in the next section, I was highly aware that in participating in the research the participants were placing considerable trust in me as a professional. The element of trust was particularly significant as they needed the confidence to share their perceptions of their experiences 'without fear of correction, ridicule and reprisal' (Flewitt & Ang, 2020, p. 96).

As an Insider I need to be very aware of my own influence upon the research process as my actions, questions and responses can influence the responses from the participant (Clandinin & Connelly, 2003). I became conscious of this during the first interview. I asked Nathan a question about going to college. His response referred to the tram. My next question about his feelings about the tram was influenced by our first meeting in a totally different context. When I listened to it on the recording it made me realise the impact of the amount of background knowledge about pupils' lives I had encountered in that role and how this could influence an interview schedule. I also had experiences with their schools, supporting pupils at risk of exclusion, knowledge of the AP Nathan was sent to and had worked at the PRU where Beth attended (not at the same time).

6.7 Ethical Considerations

In this section I explain how ethical concerns were addressed during the research process because 'morally responsible research behaviour is more than abstract ethical knowledge and cognitive choices: it involves the moral integrity of the researcher, his or her empathy, sensitivity, and commitment to moral issues and actions' (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p. 97). Prior to the commencement of the research, I gained ethical approval from the university.

> Ethics are ubiquitous. They permeate all aspects of our lives (Soltis, 1989, p. 123).

As a teacher and a researcher this is something which is vital. I must consider in my daily work and in carrying out my research. Firstly, as a teacher researcher I needed approval from my line managers to conduct the research within the school. During the EdD process this represented interesting challenges as I experienced mergers, restructures and academisation. Each new Head Teacher and eventually Chief Executive (CEO) of the MAT which my provision joined was required to give permission for me to continue my research activities in completing the assignment from phase A of the programme and the thesis in phase B. I could not assume having received permission from the first Head it would automatically be accepted by two subsequent Head Teachers. Also, it was important that I was open and transparent about my research as I was basing my research upon my own professional practices within each establishment. Fortunately, each line manager was interested in my research and I was able to draw upon the resources available through the university to research significant school issues such as pupils walking out of class and non-attendance at the SEN Annual Review. Elements were incorporated into my appraisal targets, such as establishing a research presence across the MAT.

Upon joining the MAT, the CEO wanted to introduce a research element into the professional development programme which I was asked to lead. Within this role I researched implementing "Lesson Study" within the MAT. Staff were encouraged to research particular areas of concern in their particular settings. Each participant enrolled on an on-line learning programme through 'AC Learning' pertaining to their area of interest, following which I supported them in designing, carrying out

and reporting on their findings. Research projects were carried out across four different sites involving sixty staff.

Transparency is a necessary pre-requisite in research. In my case working with vulnerable young people meant that throughout the EdD process I needed to be transparent in order to safeguard myself as well as the participants. Throughout the period of the EdD I have endeavoured to follow British Educational Research Association's (BERA) guidelines that 'all educational research should be conducted within an ethic of respect for: the person; knowledge; democratic values; the quality of educational research; and academic freedom' (2018, p. 5).

Regarding beneficence, researchers have a responsibility to consider how to balance maximising the benefits and minimising any risk or harm to participants. Therefore prior to designing the study thought was given to possible distress caused by discussing sensitive issues from the past and a Risk Assessment was completed as part of the university ethical clearance process (Appendix 3). Indeed, a crucial factor was from an ethical perspective was my clear willingness to terminate the interview should the pupil show any sign of distress from recalling negative and sensitive situations.

As 'issues of participants' right to privacy are central to anonymity and confidentiality' (Flewitt & Ang, 2020, p. 49) prior to the interview process the participants were asked to choose their research name. We discussed who would have access to the data and how the data would be stored on a password protected drive and destroyed after the completion of the research process.

Following approval from the university ethics committee, consent was obtained on a number of levels: firstly the CEO of the MAT; secondly the Heads of the specific school site I was carrying out the research; thirdly the parents/carers of interviewees; and fourthly pupils involved in the project. Gaining consent to carry out any research in any situation is 'at the heart of the notion of respect for persons' (Groundwater-Smith & Campbell, 2009, p. 17) and voluntary informed consent is the condition in which participants understand and agree to their participation without any pressure prior to the research starting (BERA, 2018). It entails informing the participants about the purpose of the project, how they will be involved as well as potential risks and benefits from the project (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). This was provided by an information sheet. Prior to the interviews

the participants were asked if they were still willing to participate. Both were and signed the consent forms. Written consent forms were based on a proforma provided by the university. Copies of the project information sheet and pupil consent form are included in Appendix 4 and 5.

In involving children in research, concerns exist around the issue that whilst consent may be freely given, care needs to be taken that children firstly do not feel obliged to take part (Masson, 2005); secondly they understand what they are consenting to (Lindsay, 2000); and thirdly they are aware that they are free to withdraw from research at any stage (Zembylas & McGlynn, 2012). In the context of research involving children with SEND, the second point is particularly pertinent as there is an additional layer of complexity related to perceptions of the capacity of the child to give informed consent. Indeed, in the decision-making process around participation in research, Masson (2005) points out that young children are rarely free to decide entirely for themselves, consequently 'reliance on the consent of others denies the child respondent information thought essential for an adult participating in research' (p. 231). Concerns about the involvement of participants with SEND in the consent giving process were raised in Kellett and Nind's (2005) research with preverbal children with severe learning difficulties, for whilst they had parental consent they wanted to 'ensure the subjects were participating with informed consent … and make real the notion of the participants' right to withdraw at any moment' (p. 171).

For the teacher researcher there also needs to be awareness of the differential relationships of power between the teacher, pupil and parents (Doyle, 2007). For example, where the person seeking permission for a child's participation is in a position of power, such as a teacher, 'children may feel that they have to agree or, worse still they will be penalised if they do not' (Masson, 2005, p. 237). Furthermore, when research is within a school environment, there is a possibility that some students and their parents could feel reluctant to decline to participate for fear of acquiring a reputation of being uncooperative and difficult (Homan, 2001). The 'vital point is not that the pupils are free to say no, but that they feel free to say no' (Denscombe & Aubrook, 1992), and thus do not feel any pressure or obligation to participate (Masson, 2005).

6.8 Analytical Tools

6.8.1 Data Analysis

In analysing the interview data, it is important to bear in mind that the experiences shared are not purely accounts of things that happened, but something the pupils themselves have already filtered, processed and interpreted (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012). These were events which had had significant impacts upon their lives. With a notable link between emotion and memory the accounts were contingent upon memories of specific points in their stories. They also were choosing what to share with the researcher and what not to share.

My original intention was to transcribe and analyse the interview data through coding. The first step involved listening to the voice recording and typing the conversation. I included a note in the transcript when there was a long pause. I had identified certain themes in the literature review, so my coding started as 'concept driven' using codes developed in advance (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). I decided to work manually, using coloured pens to make notes and identify and code recurring, salient themes. I was guided by the 'coding rule of thumb' proposed by Strauss (1987): firstly looking for in-vivo codes, specific terms used by the interviewees; secondly I named each code; thirdly I interrogated specific words and phrases the participants had used, looking into the meanings and definitions of these words.

With the initial phase of coding, key themes emerged. However, 'while coding involves the discovery and naming of categories, it must also tell the researcher much more than that' (Strauss, 1987, p. 27). As I became immersed in my data certain phrases captured my attention and began to trouble me. Something was starting to bother me.

Coding was somehow taking something away. 'Coding demands immersion in, and entanglement with, the minutiae of the 'data'' (MacLure, 2013, p. 174) and as I became immersed in the data I became troubled. I could see themes emerging, but this method was taking something away, thematic coding could not bring the data to life. Recurring phrases started to stand out, above the coding. As MacLure

(2013) found ‘during the process of coding, some things gradually grow, or glow, into greater significance than others, and become the preoccupations around which thought and writing cluster’ (p.175).

From my original attempts at coding, themes and patterns around for example relationships with peers and teachers, identity and bullying were emerging but by categorising them it was as though I was filing them into little compartments. The participants’ accounts resonated with Foucault’s concepts of power relations, in particular the successful categorisation of the deviant, the use of penal mechanisms and in particular how when ‘faced with a relationship of power a whole field of responses, reactions, results and possible inventions may open up’ (Foucault, 1982, p. 220). I wanted a way to analyse the data which reflected how the participants reported they had responded to and reacted to power relationships and disciplinary techniques and the consequences of their compliances and resistances. Specific phrases had been repeated during the interviews and were ‘glowing’. For me, their emphasis needed to be represented. The data was emotional and in coding I was worried about diluting the emotional impact. So, I experimented with the data in the form of poetic transcription, creating a separate poem for each participant.

6.8.2 Poetic Transcription

Through the dual processes of transcription - typing their words verbatim and coding - I felt I was losing an essential element of the research, the voices of the participants. Reflecting on Brinkmann and Kvale’s (2015) warning ‘‘*Transcripts’ – beware!* Do not conceive of the interview as transcripts –the interviews are living conversations’ (p. 218), I sought a different way of approaching the data.

I was initially drawn to the idea of poetic transcription because it not only provides a method which ‘represents richly the voices of others’ (Byrne, 2017, p. 41), but also by creating two distinct poems I was preserving the uniqueness of each case. Indeed, the use of poetry according to Byrne, (2017) adds ‘value to the data whilst leaving space for and also inspiring the readers’ interpretation’ (p.45). The creation of the poem serves to ‘weave together fractured and incomplete thoughts, ideas

and feelings' and enables the reader to 'see, feel and hear the participants in their own words' (Gasson, et al., 2015, p. 739).

One of my main influences was Legge (2015) who used case study and poetic transcription to gain an understanding of trainee teachers' experiences. Legge (2015) explains how the idea of 'taking a 'disruptive' stance and rewriting the transcripts this way I became more aware of how the … students felt and reacted to their teaching' (p. 149). This resonated with what I was hoping to achieve.

When re-analysing the interview data it became evident to me that speech is more like poetry than prose (Richardson, 2001) and a poetic transcription arguably provides a 'better account than prose extracts' (Legge, 2015, p. 147). Furthermore, according to Cahnmann (2003) through the use of poetry 'we can surprise ourselves and audiences with new possibilities' (p. 34). Indeed, through looking to alternative ways of presenting voice, 'can result in the reproduction of the same knowledge with a different literary twist' (Mazzei & Jackson, 2009, p. 2).

Poetry touches both the cognitive and sensory in the reader as 'poems are consciously constructed to evoke emotion' (Richardson, 2001, p. 4) hence the reader experiences 'how it is to feel something' (ibid p.6). Indeed, the use of poetic language creates 'a richly textured, insightful and complex means to make sense of the world' (Percer, 2002, p. 1). It 'represents a different means of analysing social worlds and different ways of knowing about these worlds' (Sparkes, et al., 2003, p. 155) providing insights into the affective lives of the participants (Gasson, et al., 2015). Indeed, for Mazzei (2007) through immersing herself in poetry she was able 'to cultivate a less restrictive means of analysis and representation' (p. 32) of her research.

Poetic transcription is a method which 'represents richly the voices of others' (Byrne, 2017, p. 41), providing 'an opportunity to write about people in ways that honour their speech styles, words, rhythms and syntax' (Richardson, 2001, p. 5). However, there is limited literature about 'how this approach takes place and the specific techniques' (Cahnmann, 2003, p. 30). The 'poetic transcription process began with coding and sorting' (Glesne, 1997, p. 205). The researcher then chooses and arranges the phrases and stanzas (Kennedy, 2009).

In my interpretation the voice in the poem represents an intertwined, 'tangled voice' (Mazzei & Jackson, 2009, p. 2). It is an assemblage of the words and

phrases used by the participants, in which I am ‘an agent in the creative process of representation and the participant as holder of the voice and content’ (Kennedy, 2009, p. 1423). By writing the poems using only words from student voices, challenges arise, ‘metaphor, rhythm, rhyme, onomatopoeia and imagery, the poet’s tools of the trade are missing and without taking huge poetic licence with the words of others, difficult to manufacture’ (Byrne, 2017, p. 42). But by using their exact words, their voices are heard.

In the case of Beth, the poem presented in this thesis reflects the chronological sequence of the events she talks about in her interview, the issues of being made to feel different, and the emotional impact of being excluded. The poem used Beth’s original words and emphasis was created through using phrases which had been repeated. When Beth’s poem was shared with her, she became quite emotional and thanked me. She did not want to change anything.

For Nathan, the poem also incorporated phrases from his leaving speech. I had a more creative role as the poem did not follow the sequence of the interview. His poem presents a contrasting perspective of his self-perception of his transformation as a person, with the exclusion being a crucial point in his story. As with Beth, the poem incorporated his original words and phrases. This is exemplified below using data from Nathan’s interview. I highlighted and extracted key words and phrases from the interview, whilst preserving the essential points of Nathan’s story.

> “*Erm I actually got excluded because I just couldn't cope with the school and most the work I couldn't do and so basically I just looked for distraction and just like find a way out of doing work and you know when confronted like why not doing your work I just probably be a bit negative and a bit aggressive and basically just being a bit naughty all the time. Before towards I got excluded like I just got more and more aggressive like and one situation finally kind of finished it off*.”

Much later in the interview:

> “*Maths I think maths because I always struggle at maths. And I didn't understand anything and I get really stressed and arrgh I can't do this and*

I 'd get confronted you are not trying but I clearly am. It would spiral out into an argument
And I would get punishment or whatever
and then you get put in detention. You will do it for you would get into more trouble if you didn't do it. what you are you stupid"

From this I created the following two stanzas, the first using the elements highlighted in purple, the second from the highlights in yellow.

The old me
Struggled at maths
Looked for distraction
Ending in confrontation
Stupid not to
Do my detention

Before
The old me
Couldn't cope
Being a bit naughty
Bit aggressive
More and more aggressive

Nathan was given his poem after he had left school, during the final few weeks of the summer term. He returned after he left to practise with the band. His reaction was a nonchalant, thanks miss.

In poetic transcription 'the author's influence is explicit rather than hidden' (Byrne, 2017, p. 44). The data therefore through my representation as a poem 'is my interpretation of their meaning, emphasis, rhythm and nuance' (Jones, 2010, p. 593) and hence 'a third voice that is neither the interviewee's nor the researcher's but is a combination of both' (Glesne, 1997, p. 215) is created by the poem through an intertwining of myself (the researcher) and the student (the interviewee).

There are inevitably strengths and limitations in all approaches to data analysis. With regard to poetic transcription, there were issues around data selection, lack of prescribed techniques, and subjectivity. Firstly, acknowledging that 'transcription is selective transformation' (Cohen, et al., 2001, p. 281), with poetic transcription the selective nature is intensified by issues arising around the selection of which data to use to create the poems (Glesne, 1997) as well as what data to leave out. There is a need for reflexivity on the part of the researcher in the poetic transcription process due to their close immersion in the data, and in my case also due to my relationship with the participants as their

teacher as well as my relationship with them as a researcher. It was also challenging to determine which words and phrases to incorporate and to maintain an awareness of how different stories could be told. In creating the poems, the researcher is the 'key tool in selecting, filtering, analysing and presenting and through this subjectivity to presenting an interpretation of the material' (Jones, 2010, p. 593).

In the poems I created, when I turned to using them as the scaffold for the analysis, I realised I had missed out some important chunks of data. Hence, in my analysis section I needed to return to the original interviews to draw upon sections of the transcripts to provide stronger evidence for the analytical points being made. This reflected an ethical decision not to amend the poems once they had been shared and approved by the two participants.

Whilst Glesne (1997) suggests two approaches to poetic transcription, Glesne does claim not to be presenting 'the way to do poetic transcription; rather it is one way' (p. 205). It is the lack of prescribed techniques in the creation of research poems that Cahnmann (2003) considers a limitation. Leavy (2010) in contrasts states that 'if research is to search and search again, there is no prescription for how it must be done. It is a project not a plan' (Leavy, 2010, p. 242).

In using poetic transcription, the researcher is not presenting 'objective, generalizable findings or replicable empirical evidence' (Jones, 2010, p.604). The subjective nature of poetic transcription thus challenges 'epistemic traditions that claim the knower is detached from the known and can be objective' (van Rooyen & d'Abdon, 2020, p. 2)'.

In my study the discovery of poetic transcription and the decision to experiment with this method arose after the participant interviews. As a consequence, the participants were not directly involved in the creation of the poems, although only their words were incorporated. Jones (2010), who similarly hadn't considered poetic transcription in her original project design, felt the 'minimal involvement' participants in her study had in the creation of the poems to be a limitation of her study because 'the process of poetic transcription … was not a collaborative one' (Jones, 2010, p. 593). In the context of my study, greater involvement of the participants raises certain ethical issues; the original parameters in which they

had agreed to participate would have been changed. Furthermore, the process of creating the poems was time consuming and the participants were already working under pressure for their Key Stage 4 accreditations. Their involvement through being asked their opinions about the poems however does provide validity to the process. And whilst I invited their contributions, they were each moved by the poems and preferred to leave them as they were.

For me, discovering poetic transcription as a way of presenting and analysing data sparked excitement. It offered an opportunity to move away from the desensitising constraints of coding, which was creating feelings of being bogged down. Using poetry resonated with aspects of my professional life as I regularly used poetry in my teaching, as a centre point of my assemblies, as well as a method to prompt students to explore feelings and emotions through their own poetry.

Initially in creating Beth's poem I felt I was riding a personal emotional rollercoaster, both excited yet anxious. Excited to experiment in transforming the data into a poem, but also apprehensive around the acceptance of my attempts by the participants and by academia. I don't consider myself a poet so looked to poems I enjoy to get a feel of structure. But when sharing Beth's poem with Beth I was moved by her reaction and approval and gained in confidence to share the outcomes with my supervisory team.

Through exploring this methodology further, my research was taking a new and exciting turn and I was relieved to discover that such poems were considered research poems rather than literary poems (see Cahnmann, 2003; Byrne, 2017), that there were not rigid rules to follow, just guidance from those who had moulded their own poetic transcriptions.

The second poem, Nathan's, felt more complex to create. Through crafting the poem, I realised his story reflected two contrasting sides to his life as a student – his current positive self-realisation and his former negative self-perception followed by, so the events in the poem were not chronological. Decisions of what data to include were difficult and required a deep focus on the interviews and the key messages coming through. His response after reading the poem, 'Thanks, Miss!' was a huge relief.

In experimenting with a creative way of presenting Beth and Nathan's experiences in the form of poetry, I felt a sense of responsibility to represent their stories accurately in poetic form, hence the participants' responses to the poems and views about them were extremely important to me. The two poems express the emotional impact of their experiences of labelling and exclusion and whilst at times in the analysis chapter I needed to return to the original interview transcripts and quote from these to substantiate a point further, I felt very strongly the need to preserve the poems that had been shared and approved by the participants. I didn't have the right to then alter the content.

6.9 Concluding Comments

In this Chapter I have explained the design, implementation and analysis of my study that informs this thesis. Relationships of power are clearly evident in all stages. Firstly, in the design of my case study which involved semi-structured interviews. Whist an advantage of this technique is in allowing a more free-flowing dialogue, the interviewer ultimately controls and manages the topics for discussion, although by being open to anything the participants wished to speak about, unexpected turns were taken in the interviews. Furthermore, as an Insider there is the dilemma of the imbalance in the relationships of power posed by being a teacher. Ethical considerations enable the rights of the child to be protected in the research process. Indeed, from an ethical perspective, focusing on the students' perspectives, 'requires an acceptance that children have a right to be listened to and heard' (Toynbee, 2009, p. 29).

In the process of the analysis of the data, and in utilising poetic transcription the significance of the researcher is evident through the choices made, in particular in the selection and re-presentation of the data in poetic form. The two poems created through poetic transcription form the structure of the analysis in the next chapter.

Chapter 7: Analysis

Two poems

Two experiences

One of emotion

One of transformation

Both of exclusion

The review of literature presented in chapters 3 to 5 identified the impact specific policies had on the instigation and perpetuation of dividing practices inherent in the English education system. Such practices underpinning the education system have left a legacy which seeks to examine, classify, sort, divide and label children. Hence despite the rhetoric of inclusion, some pupils are still labelled as problematic, thus requiring special education rather than regular/mainstream education. This chapter opens a space for listening to the voices of two students who have been subjected to this legacy. In posing the question, 'how is power exercised?' Foucault (2003) proposes that to answer that question is 'to undertake a critical investigation of the thematics of power… "How is it exercised?" and "What happens when individuals exert (as we say) power over others"' (p.135). The stories told by Beth and Nathan, explored through the two poems generated through poetic transcription, shed light on both how power relationships were exercised within their respective schools and the consequences of these power relationships. They describe their coping/survival strategies, strategies of resistance thus reflecting how 'power is exercised only over free subjects … subjects who are faced with a field of possibilities in which several kinds of conduct, several ways of reacting and modes of behaviour are available' (Foucault, 2003, p. 139).

The structure of this chapter is scaffolded by the poems. Each poem offers a unique story hence preserving the uniqueness of each case study. The first poem based on my interview with Beth reflects the emotional impact of the actions of others in being made to feel different, whilst at the same time wanting to conform.

It also captures the consequences of the disciplinary strategies employed in the schools she attended. The second poem based on Nathan's perceptions reflects a journey of self-transformation in which the key turning point is exclusion from mainstream school. The poem reflects his perception of being two different people, the person before, the '*old me'*, and the person after.

Evidence is also drawn into the discussion from the websites of the mainstream schools attended by Beth and Nathan and some observation notes made during my time as a teacher. Through an analysis of their perceptions of the schools and systems experienced, insights can be drawn into the significance of the school environment in creating educational spaces where pupils can learn, the significance of language used to denote 'special needs', and attitudes prevalent in school systems which situate the problem within the child.

7.1 Poem 1: 'I just wanted to be a good student'

OK Primary School, more bad than good

But

Nobody knew something was wrong with me

'Acute Angle' shouted the teacher

I did not understand

'Acute Angle'

I cried

I just wanted to be a good student

The older girls, they pushed me out

So

They knew something was wrong with me

Horrid names shouted the girls

I did not understand

From a book

I cried

I just wanted to be a good student

Secondary school, I wanted to be a good student

But

Nobody knew something was wrong with me

They thought I was rebellious, put me on report

I felt sick and anxious every morning

It made me late

I cried

I just wanted to be a good student

Year 9, they send me to 'The Green Room'

So

They must know something is wrong with me

It's the room for additional needs

The EAL students sit together

I am alone, too anxious to work

I never return

I just wanted to be a good student

The title of Beth's poem, 'I just wanted to be a good student' is derived from a phrase she repeated throughout the interview. It is ironic that the title of the poem epitomises the aim of the disciplinary strategies to create trainable and teachable

individuals, docile bodies. The poem serves to exemplify disciplinary strategies employed in the schools she attended and their consequences.

This wanting to be a good student also has echoes of one of the aspirations of the third Code of Practice (Department for Education, 2015) which is 'to achieve their best'. In aspiring to be a good student, there is an assumption that Beth should be aspiring to achieve her best. But this aspiration lies uncomfortably within a system underpinned by dividing practices, entangled in 'values of competitive individualism' (Slee, 2011, p. 155). A system which 'should seek to identify pupils making less than expected progress given their age and individual circumstances' (Department for Education, 2015, p. 95). Attempts to achieve "one's best" within a system dominated by comparisons with others, based on assessments and targets, for some doing "one's best" may never be sufficient.

7.1.1 Primary School: Nobody knew something was "wrong" with me

The interview began with me asking Beth about her memories of primary school, usually, in my personal experience a place of happy memories. However, in response to the open question, 'What was life like at primary school?' Beth initially hesitated then answered:

> *OK Primary school, more bad than good*

Her immediate response to being questioned about primary school was 'OK'. However upon further contemplation and recalling her experiences she self-questions and concludes that actually it was 'more bad than good'. Hence suggesting it wasn't OK. Being asked to recall this time led to Beth voicing mixed memories of mixed experiences. By prefacing the statement with bad before good the implication is the bad outweighed the good, this is clarified by the use of 'more'. So not entirely bad, but on reflection she portrays it as a predominately bad time. There is not necessarily confusion or contradiction here but reflection of the nuances of this period in her life at school.

She attributes some of the bad experiences to her belief that …

> *But*

Nobody knew something was wrong with me

The way a student makes sense of themselves and their world is through a 'range of complex and of often non-rational ways of understanding' (Rose, 2007, p. 110). When first talking about her primary school experience Beth is ponderous. There was a silence. There are many possible reasons for silences when recalling the past, whether just trying to recall past events or maybe also contemplating and reflecting upon what to disclose and what to keep silent. This silence appears to reflect the fact that, 'silences are ubiquitous in the conversations between/with qualitative researchers and their participants' (Mazzei, 2007, p. 29). As a teacher-researcher I employed one of my teaching strategies in the interview process of remaining silent because, 'increasing the wait time can help more students become involved in discussions and increase the length of their replies' (Black, et al., 2004, p. 12).

The silence was broken by Beth expanding her answer with '*OK like but, more bad than good, but nobody knew something was wrong with me*'. She immediately tried to explain the use of the word "wrong" and explained using this word as it didn't really match up with her situation. *"I don't mean something is wrong with me … I don't know how to explain it. You know what I mean miss I don't mean something is actually wrong with me … just that Oh I can't really explain".*

The term 'wrong', which originates from the Old Norse, 'rangr' means awry or unjust. As a verb 'to wrong' implies to have bad motives or misrepresent, whilst as a noun it implies an unjust, dishonest or immoral act. The connotations of the concept of having something 'wrong' with oneself are of being a flawed person, someone who falls short of a set standard, therefore the opposite of the "normal" or desired standard. Thus, right from the start of the interview she is presenting herself using the language of deficit, embedded in the language of SEN (Fellner, et al., 2017). Indeed, the spontaneous application of formal and informal labels to one-self such as "special needs" or "different" is not uncommon for those subsequently assigned a SEN category (Sheffield & Morgan, 2017).

These negative self-perceptions might be influenced or tarnished by her later knowledge and experiences, in which the discourses experienced were 'interrelated with subjective notions of essential difference based on judgements of cognitive, physical and social ability' (Davis & Watson, 2001, p. 684). Hence a

culmination of her educational experiences in which she is constantly subjected to judgement and dividing practices created this self-identification of being different from other pupils and having “something wrong” with her. This perception of the problem being within the person, reflecting the medical model of disability, is exemplified by Oliver (1990) who highlights attributing a sense of having some ‘inadequacies or functional limitations’ in the very first question for disabled respondents in the 1986 survey by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys ‘Can you tell me what is wrong with you?’ (p. 7). Although the language of Cyril Burt (1917) is archaic and derogatory, there is some resonance in his opinion of being made to feel there is something “wrong”’ with yourself, ‘the feeling that he is not wanted, not understood, not like other children, in short subnormal and a nuisance, damages the child more than the sub normality itself’. Equating Burt’s assertion to Beth’s recollections: “not wanted” = excluded; “not understood” = negative experiences with school staff and systems; “not like other children” = bullied and singled out for additional needs. Power is insidious and by being subjected to these negative experiences her self-perception was being eroded.

This thus raises the issue as to who has the authority to make someone feel there is something wrong with them, that they are the problem rather than the system. Whilst Beth believed that at the time she was at primary school, nobody knew “something was wrong”, there is now also Beth’s deficit self-belief that she had “something wrong” with her.

7.1.2 Primary School: Difficulties with Angles

Beth’s recollection of primary school as not being a good time is exemplified by her memories of the teacher’s reaction to her difficulties in maths. Indeed, this problem in knowledge about angles was making her the focus of special attention.

‘Acute Angle’ shouted the teacher

I did not understand

Foucault (1977) points out that ‘a pupil’s offence is not only a minor infraction but also an inability to carry out his tasks’ (p. 179). In struggling to understand her task, Beth would have not only have committed the offence of being unable to

complete whatever task was being asked of her, but also indicated some level of difference based on her perceived academic ability. Hence her lack of understanding of angles now resulted in her as a subject being deemed punishable. Her punishment was being repeatedly shouted at in front of her peers and hence humiliated. Beth's reaction to the shouting she recalls was crying. In this scenario the crying communicated 'an unsupported need' (Parker, et al., 2015, p. 238).

In looking 'how the children negotiate their way through these moments, and how they position themselves as active and/or audient members of classroom micro-cultures' (Benjamin, et al., 2003, p. 550), Beth is positioned centre stage, whether she wants to be or not. The other children are the audience, watching the performance between the teacher and Beth. With 'teachers, being in positions of power, not only have a great effect on how students feel about themselves, they also model permissible attitudes and can advance or obstruct a student's possibilities for academic success' (Fellner, et al., 2017, p. 335), so the significance of this moment may be not purely be in the messages given to Beth concerning her mathematical ability, but also the message to others about Beth and how she can be treated by others.

Just as Foucault (1977) describes how disciplinary power creates 'subjects who have to be seen' (p.187), by being the focus of the teacher's attention, and probably the rest of the class, and also being singled out from the rest of the class she is now highly visible as is her offence, not understanding angles. Hence in identifying that Beth has deviated from the expected norm of understanding angles, she has become a subject, 'caught in a punishable, punishing universality' (Foucault, 1977, p. 178). The exchange with the teacher provides a knowledge for the teacher regarding Beth's lack of understanding of angles. This public verbal examination of her knowledge or lack of knowledge of angles, 'extracted from the pupil a knowledge destined and reserved for the teacher' (Foucault, 1977, p. 187). But the failure of the teacher also created another layer of knowledge - that of the teacher's perceived competency to teach angles and ability to respond effectively to the pupil's difficulties. Indeed, this illustrates a wider issue identified by Davis and Watson (2001) in that 'schools have to address the issues which lead to unreflexive adult practices' (p. 684). However, the teacher's strategy of shouting reflects the possibility that, 'as Foucault phrased it, People know what they do;

they frequently know why they do what they do; but what they don't know is what what they do does' (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 187). In this case such a 'combination of … bullying and humiliating treatment by others mediates feelings of inferiority and fear' (Fellner, et al., 2017, p. 333), contributing to the perception of having something "wrong" and potential future emotional barriers to learning.

'Acute Angle'

I cried

In order to be a successful learner, Beth needed to be able to tolerate these difficult periods of not understanding. Yet the experience became overwhelming. She could not respond in any other way than showing her distress through crying. Her experiences meant she did not have the emotional strength or self-belief to learn or succeed. Despite her desire that:

I just wanted to be a good student

Conflict with the teacher was potentially damaging her self-esteem, making her believe she was not a good student. The repeated shouting suggests there is a poor teacher-pupil relationship, unconducive for articulating thoughts about angles and developing the conceptual knowledge necessary in understanding geometry (Lobato, et al., 2005; Steinberg, et al., 2004). Beth's capacity to learn is therefore diminished as the task is becoming threatening, reflecting that 'faced with a learning environment and/or task that takes us out of the securities we are used to' (Urquhart, 2009, p. 68), intolerable feelings of anxiety and hopelessness can be invoked. Intolerable levels of stress could manifest as wild outbursts (Jordan, 1999); refusal to engage (Geddes, 2006); abandonment of the task and classroom, and non-attendance (Reid, 2008).

The emotional response recalled by Beth of crying when the teacher repeatedly shouted 'acute angle', could be seen as frustration from not understanding, a reaction to the shouting, or a combination of the two as well as perceived humiliation in front of the other pupils. Reflecting the view that nature of this 'relational encounter between students and teachers is fundamental for learning' (Hickey & Riddle, 2021, p. 4), a consequence of the failure to make the pupil feel safe and accepted, is learning will never happen. Consequently, those with insecure relationships with their teachers demonstrate lower levels of academic

achievement, lower levels of social competence and have more behavioural problems than peers experiencing positive supportive relationships with their teachers (Reicher, 2010).

7.1.3 Primary School: They Pushed Me Out

'Friendship may be seen as an increasingly important form of social glue in contemporary society. Young adolescents heavily depend on their peers for social support and self-identity' (Pahl, 2000, p. 1). One of the good things in Beth's account from the early years at primary school was having a circle of friends, but issues with friendships emerged as she progressed through the primary school years. The feeling from using the term 'pushed out' portrays a physicality of the situation. Whilst in Beth's account there was no physical violence, she experienced the psychological force of being rejected and excluded from her peer group. Reflecting on being physically pushed out of the group who were previously, in earlier, happier years at primary school were perceived as friends, Beth stated that these girls must have sensed something was "wrong" with her.

The older girls, they pushed me out

So

They knew something was wrong with me

The years of middle childhood are according to Baines and Blatchford (2009) a time when girls tend to form small networks and cliques. The other girls were creating these exclusive networks at primary school and through a range of techniques, recounted by Beth, were excluding her. Friendship may be considered an essential part of a positive school experience (Croll, et al., 2008), therefore for those like Beth the lack of friendships and being pushed out of cliques made her experience traumatic. The detrimental impact of a lack of friendships can often result in difficulties in school, engagement in undesirable behaviours and being susceptible to victimization by peers and consequent feelings of loneliness (Normand, et al., 2007) as well as having a damaging effect on psychological well-being.

Bullying according to Morrison (2007), ‘is one of the most insidious and common forms of violence in schools’ (p. 8). The emotional scars from being a victim of bullying ‘can last a lifetime’ (ibid). Beth was being bullied by being pushed out of the group of “friends” then from older girls in the form of name calling.

Horrid names shouted the girls

I did not understand

From a book

Beth uses the adjective “horrid” to describe the names she was subjected to. They were based on the characteristics of a character of a book they had read in class. She could not remember the title but did remember the characters were really horrible. By comparing her to these characters they are inferring she is different, like the undesirable characters.

‘Bullying is a systematic abuse of power meant to oppress another’ (Morrison, 2007, p. 20). The bullying reflected an imbalance of power between the group of girls and Beth. By pushing her out they are using their power to socially exclude her. But this was then further compounded by their persistent name calling. The repeated use of derogatory names from a book they had read together as a class meant that the bullying was not a one-off. She could not understand why she became the subject of this victimisation and could only surmise in retrospect that these girls thought she had something “wrong with her”.

Victimised pupils tend to be alone during break-time, the consequences of such isolation are the potentially detrimental impact on both physical and mental health (Slee, 1995). This in turn has implications for a pupil’s ability to function academically as Boulton (2008) notes victims of bullying not only experience depression, loneliness, and reduced self-esteem over time, but also these factors are associated with cognitive and emotional changes which can disrupt the ability to concentrate.

Roth (2010) linked being bullied with low self-esteem, mental health problems and poor academic achievement. In Roth’s research amongst ASC children in 56% of instances the bullying resulted in children missing school or changing schools. Bullying had a massive impact upon Beth’s school experiences and as in Roth’s study the anxiety invoked by this resulted in eventual school refusal.

The power of the bullies is experienced as isolating and traumatic, fuelling Beth's anxieties about going to school and feelings of being different. The bullying by the girls and the shouting by the teacher, also bullying behaviour, resulted in the same emotional response, crying. Furthermore, it represented a culture of negativity towards Beth reflecting an underlying lack of sense of community, as the 'general well-being of a community depends upon the extent of friendly feelings that its members share' (Pahl, 2000, p. 160). Indeed Greenhalgh (1994) stresses the importance of being a valued member of a peer group for students with low self-esteem, so they can internalise a greater sense of self-worth. The lack of friendly feelings and a supportive peer group compounded Beth's social anxieties around school.

I cried

I just wanted to be a good student

Beth's difficulties with relationships with both staff and pupils resulted in her desire to not attend school. The very thought of school, she explained, made her anxious. From Beth's account, school was being portrayed as a place synonymous with anxiety, bullying and intimidation, rather than a place that was conducive to learning and becoming 'a good student'.

By year 5 in the primary school Beth reflects that her anxieties around school resulted in her not wanting to attend. She talked of the problem of the large class sizes of over thirty pupils, '*we were a really big class, too many, like over thirty'.* With so many pupils, Beth believed she did not receive the support she felt she needed. Beth mentioned that in this class were two pupils who also now attend the same special school and in her class group. One, she explained had had his own support teacher, whereas she and the other were just treated the same as everyone else. As highlighted by Ofsted (2010), without a formal diagnosis, struggling pupils often received no extra support. Indeed, as identified in the review of literature, policy often dictates that support can only be accessed with a formal diagnosis.

Beth's anxieties in attending school worsened in her final year of primary school and she explained how she used to cry going into school. She recalled having struggled throughout in maths and had traumatic memories of the year 6 teacher who shouted so much. Such negative views of their teachers by pupils labelled as

“deviant” are according to Cooper (1991) a common occurrence. Her primary school years are a time before being officially labelled, but still she perceived herself as having “something wrong with her”.

The significance of the impact of the actions of peers in Beth’s story upon the self-belief as “having something wrong” are summarised in Figure 10 below, in which the top of each box is from her account, in italics is the consequence.

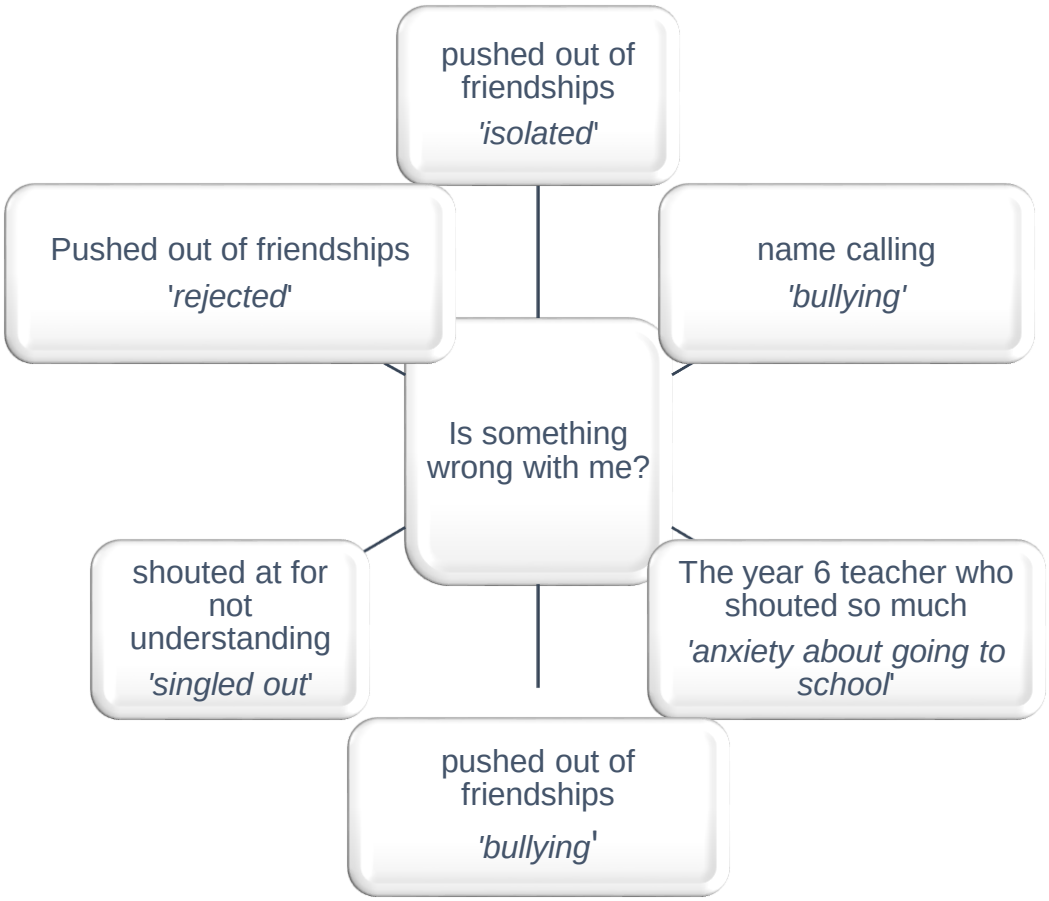


Figure 10: Impact of teacher's and peer's actions upon Beth's self-perception.

Beth’s desire to be safe from the bullying girls was a significant factor in her choice of secondary school, hence her choice of secondary school was a conscious move to be physically apart from her primary school bullies, who went to a different school. However, in retrospect she felt the school she chose was, in her words, the ‘*worse mistake’*.

7.1.4 Secondary School: The Report and the Green Room

Beth started secondary school wanting to be good and scared of being in trouble.

> *Secondary school, I wanted to be a good student*
>
> *But*
>
> *Nobody knew something was wrong with me*
>
> *They thought I was rebellious, put me on report*
>
> *I felt sick and anxious every morning*
>
> *It made me late*
>
> *I cried*
>
> *I just wanted to be a good student*

'At the heart of all disciplinary systems functions a small penal mechanism' (Foucault, 1977, p. 177). Beth's story includes being subjected to three examples of such mechanisms: the report card; internal exclusion; and confiscation of forbidden objects.

The Report Card is a common mechanism employed in schools to monitor problematic behaviours such as punctuality, poor behaviour in class and truancy. Its purpose reflects how

> the workshop, the school, the army were subject to a whole micro-penalty of time (lateness, absences, interruptions of tasks), of activity (inattention, negligence, lack of zeal), of behaviour (impoliteness, disobedience), of speech (idle chatter, insolence), of the body ('incorrect' attitudes, irregular gestures, lack of cleanliness) of sexuality (impurity, indecency) (Foucault, 1977, p. 178).

Beth attributed her problem with lateness to anxieties, which were making her feel unwell. The anxieties were around bullying at the school. Pupils are expected to be punctual and failure to comply results in the disciplinary strategy, 'the report'.

As a disciplinary strategy the report card functions as a mechanism of surveillance which records the extent of the problem. Strategies such as report cards depersonalise the individual, transforming them into an object that can be scrutinised. The report card not only served to monitor and record her lateness, but also divided her from 'others', the punctual students. Hence becoming the focus of special attention. According to Jull (2007), such punitive actions do not reflect an inclusive approach to pupils with SEN and this is reflected by the impact it had upon Beth's resultant attendance.

Whilst the purpose of the report system was meant to improve punctuality, in Beth's reality, she explained how it exacerbated the situation. As she repeatedly stated, Beth wanted to be a good student and described how she perceived being on report as being labelled "rebellious". Goleman (2011) states, our motives give us our aims and the drive to achieve them, hence in the case of Beth, despite having a desire for to be a 'good student', something happened to disrupt this drive, creating instead an overriding desire to escape the classroom and the school. The motives of the school placing her on report in contrast are driven by the need for maintaining institutional order and creating docile bodies. Lateness is an undesirable behaviour and needs to be monitored. Punctuality is considered the norm and she has deviated from that norm, hence she needs to be put under surveillance with her deviance reported upon. By being placed on report, a strategy to improve punctuality, she recalled how her anxieties were fuelled by her perception of others considering her lateness as a rebellious act. In the application of the disciplinary mechanism to create a docile body, the underlying cause of the problem, distress from the bullying was not addressed. Her reaction she recalled to being on report was to make her even more anxious about being late, she didn't want to appear rebellious, but this fuelled further anxieties in the mornings, feeling sick about the thought of being late for school, perpetuating the lateness. Hence Beth became entrenched in a vicious circle of lateness illustrated by Figure 11.

For Beth being on a report card appears ineffective and like many punitive systems, the strategy was counterproductive resulting in both exacerbating the situation and creating new undesirable behaviours. From Beth's account, despite being on report repeatedly her punctuality did not improve. In order to break the cycle, she employed a strategy of resistance, she became a school refuser. It is suggested by the DfES (2004) that in order for there to be equality of opportunity

for all children, some will need additional support. Different schools adopt different models for providing support. For Beth, this was in a segregated space, known as The Green Room.

Figure 11: Beth's account of the vicious cycle of lateness.

The use of such segregated spaces within schools, often using euphemisms such as the 'inclusion room' (Slee, 2011), exemplifies dividing practices which remove those deviating from the "norm" such as, 'the difficult, disruptive and disabled students' (Slee, 2011, p. 156). The occupants of these segregated spaces become recognised as distinct groups, which according to Slee (2011) 'reinforce arbitrary social divisions and carve out surplus populations' (ibid). Beth had been monitored and codified as someone requiring special attention, a victim of bullying and someone struggling to work in the large mainstream class group, so she was divided from the others and sent to work in The Green Room, where she also did not feel a sense of belonging.

Year 9, they send me to the 'Green Room'

So

They must know something is wrong with me

It's the room for additional needs

On the school's website, The Green Room is described as providing 'safe and supportive surroundings for students' and 'also the place where most of our interventions take place'. Hodge's (2016) assertion that labels 'are embedded in the fabric of the educational system' (p. 197) is exemplified by how readily Beth appropriates the language of SEN to describe the others in 'The Green Room' as "additional needs", "the EAL", the "dyslexics", thus reflecting how 'children draw from the adult discourses of differentiation… to label each other' (Davis & Watson, 2001, p. 681).

Beth's account of the organisation within The Green Room exemplifies how such rooms apply the main conditions of discipline to create docile bodies. Firstly, the spatial organisation of individuals in this case the location of The Green Room away from the main school and secondly, the spatial organisation within the room.

The EAL students sit together

I am alone, too anxious to work

Beth felt the "EAL" students had a shared sense of belonging from which she felt alienated, having a common purpose in learning English. Beth described how they all sat together in friendship groups learning English and had their own teacher, whilst she worked alone on a different table.

The "*dyslexics*" Beth explained worked together on specific tasks with support in the form of dedicated teaching assistants. Beth in contrast was expected to go back to the main school building, collect her own work from the classroom teacher and then complete it on her own. This created feelings of alienation and social exclusion both from the others in The Green Room as well as her peers in the main school building. Whilst for some the constant gaze and manipulation of space may prove beneficial, safe and supportive, for Beth it was isolating and excluding. Isolated from bullies but also from friends and the freedom to make friends.

Ofsted's Special Educational Needs and Disability Review (2010) concluded that a major barrier to learning was the poor deployment of staff. Staff supported the other students, but without supportive staff the experience was isolating for Beth. Indeed, for Beth reflections of her experiences may seem contradictory, at primary

school she felt aggrieved that everybody was treated the same (except one boy), whereas at secondary school she was treated differently. Yet neither approach met her needs nor helped her gain the education she was entitled to.

7.1.5 Secondary School: Confiscation

Spaces pupils occupy, such as classrooms, recreational spaces and dining areas provide settings for daily activities which impact significantly upon pupils' behaviour, social interactions, and sense of belonging, value and self-worth. A space which Beth recall's as creating a huge amount of stress was the "pastoral office", a small office where the school pastoral team were based.

Whilst she had been a victim of bullying both in both primary and secondary settings, Beth recalled a specific bullying incident in a classroom before break-time. Whilst the teacher was out of the room, objects had been thrown at her, so she had run out of the room, in tears, to the toilets and phoned her mum. Her mum came into school and spoke to the "pastoral woman". The person Beth refers to as the "pastoral woman" assured Beth and her mum that everything would be sorted. But the reality was different. The following lesson she was summoned to the "pastoral office". The assemblage of confrontational adults within the confines of this small office to interrogate Beth created an atmosphere full of anxiety and intimidation. It became a hostile space. She described how she felt trapped by three teachers. One teacher blocked the door, another sat next to her and a third opposite her. She was interrogated about why she had used her phone in school. After explaining about the bullying and how she had phoned her mum, she was instructed to hand in her phone. The phone was then confiscated for a week.

Confiscation of items constitutes a legitimate disciplinary strategy according to the Department for Education (2018) in that a 'School's general power to discipline, as circumscribed by Section 91 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, enables a member of staff to confiscate, retain or dispose of a pupil's property as a disciplinary penalty, where reasonable to do so' (p.11). This power is stated on the school website: 'The school will confiscate any items which are deemed "inappropriate"'. The term "inappropriate" in its vagueness enables a flexible

interpretation as to what they have the powers to seize. This strategy thus reflects one of domination, as Beth could not offer any resistance.

The lack of positive relationships with either peers or adults in a school can have a detrimental effect upon the development of a sense of belonging to a school. The disciplinary strategies and poor relationships with peers and teachers experienced by Beth meant that by year 10 she had no sense of belonging. Her form of resistance evolved into no longer attending school. Hence, in considering 'the deepest effect of power everywhere is inequality, as power differentiates and selects, includes and excludes' (Blommaert, 2005, p. 2), the impact of the power discourses in Beth's schools appear to have created immense feelings of anxiety which forced her to eventually leave.

I never return

I just wanted to be a good student

7.1.6 Secondary School: School Refusal

Whilst according to Geddes (2006) the desire to leave the classroom can often be associated with anxiety about risk in a situation out of school, with the physical walking out serving as a communication about an 'external' problem, Beth's story reveals a different perspective. Those risks causing the anxieties had manifested inside the school, not just one school but her primary and secondary school. They were in response to difficult relationships with both teachers and pupils, low self-esteem, loneliness, as a sense of being "othered", and misunderstood at school. All issues which were at least in part due to widespread and sanctified practices within the education system.

The hidden curriculum refers to the unspoken part of the learning experience, which conveys silent messages to students about the values, attitudes, behaviours, procedures, and norms that exist in schools and classrooms (Alsubie, 2015; Kentli, 2009). It is 'determined by the teacher's attitudes and behaviour rather than a formal syllabus' (Serbin, 1983, p. 19) and 'unexpected, unintentional interactions between teachers and students' (Kentli, 2009, p. 88). Foucault (1988) for example considered the hidden curriculum in the classroom to be an agent of

power and domination through which docile bodies are created. Indeed, concepts of domination, control, power, subjugation and resistance are considered significant in the evaluation of the hidden curriculum (Kentli, 2009).

In order to become a good student, there needs to be crucial interrelated elements including a positive learning environment, together with an inclusive educational ethos and positive emotional well-being. However, the reality experienced was hugely different. The power of the disciplinary techniques, the report card, the confiscation and exclusion disrupted the synergy of these elements. The hidden curriculum and educational ethos impacted on Beth's emotional well-being making her feel as though something was wrong. Under such circumstances the good student cannot emerge. The lack of bonding to either peers or adults in a school can according to Stevenson and Ellsworth (1991) result in having a detrimental effect upon the development of a sense of belonging to a school. This sense of belonging they consider is a key factor in preventing school truancy. This lack of bonding and sense of belonging combined in Beth's case with punishments which were counterproductive and exacerbated her problems resulted in non-attendance.

This reflects the view that disciplinary structures, policies and practices in schools are less about addressing needs of pupils with SEN and more about ridding the school of difficult to manage, "problem" students (Jull, 2007; Slee, 2011). The disciplinary strategies Beth was exposed to heighten her anxieties, resulting in her refusal to attend. Just as those in the mid-nineteenth century who potentially disrupted the smooth running and financial viability of the school system through non-attendance or failure to meet the required standard were designated as a problem, over a century later Beth was experiencing similar responses from the education system. Consequently, she was 'dispersed from education into the shadow-lands of schooling' (Slee, 2011, p. 165), the system's version of the carceral archipelago (Foucault, 1977) with its myriad of Alternative Provisions, PRUs and Special Schools.

The response to her school refusal was to send Beth to the PRU, a provision which according to the PRU's website provides educational placements 'for pupils whose social, emotional or mental health needs create a barrier to their attendance at school'. Due to having a Statement of SEN Beth only stayed a short time at the PRU before acquiring a place at the special school. Unfortunately, Beth's reality

mirrored the statistic that pupils with SEN are more likely to be absent from school or excluded than non-SEN pupils (Ofsted, 2017).

7.2 Poem 2: ‘From Attitude to Gratitude’

Thank you … you’re great

I’m going to college now

So I’ll get there on the tram

I used to hate it for some reason.

I just want to go to college, get good job

Believe it or not

I’m quite decent

I found I got a talent

So I’m doing drumming

And

I’m good at sport

Believe it or not

Compared to what I was

The difference is substantial

People have shed blood sweat and tears

So, I’ve changed

Before

I wanted to fit in

I made jokes

Made people laugh

So I could make friends

Before

Break time

Well it was terrible

It was weird

I didn't know what to do with myself

So, I got into trouble

Before

The old me

Would just flicked around his hair

Probably start to swear

They thought

He just didn't care

Before

The old me

Struggled at maths

Looked for distraction

Ending in confrontation

Stupid not to

Do my detention

Before

The old me

Couldn't cope

Being a bit naughty

Bit aggressive

More and more aggressive

Then

They kicked me out

I went to this place

Not sure what it was

But

You have to be somewhere

Before

I was trying to learn

I didn't know

I learned differently

Or difficulty socially

I thought I had a strategy

It's calm here

More relaxed

I can learn here

I realised I had a talent

Thank you … you're great

Nathan's poem, *From Attitude to Gratitude,* epitomises how he perceives he has changed since leaving mainstream education. His poem reflects how his metamorphosis from someone with 'attitude' into what he perceives to be a decent and able person was not always easy for him or the staff at the schools he attended. I have extracted these words for the poem title from his leaving speech at the special school where he publicly wanted to thank the staff for helping him gain a place at a local college. Nathan's poem combines elements from our interview at the start of the academic year and his speech at the end of the year.

Thank you … you're great

I'm going to college now

So I'll get there on the tram

I used to hate it for some reason.

I just want to go to college, get good job

By starting the poem with the positive outcome of his secondary school education experience, taken from his speech, my aim is to emulate Nathan's optimism for the future, a new beginning, leaving behind the difficulties and his struggles in the past, hence as the poem progresses it goes back in time. During our interview at the start of the academic year we had discussed future plans and opportunities. Nathan's goal was to achieve a place on a music course at college. Nathan had already chosen to stay on at the school post year 11 to repeat his GCSEs but he felt it a bit odd that there were pupils in year 13 in some of the Key Stage 4 classes repeating GCSEs. In repeating three times "*I can't do that"* indicates a belief that he could not stay on at school for another year and was really focused on just getting his place at college. This change in attitude, almost becoming a different

person is often ‘associated with a critical moment of realisation where a conscious decision was made to change their behaviour’ (Sheffield & Morgan, 2017, p. 58).

7.2.1 Leaving School: A Decent Person

Nathan was not convinced he would achieve the grades required but was working towards six GCSEs. He had become a teachable young man, a docile-enough body. By the end of the academic year this goal had been achieved, a place at college. Leaving school and going to college is not the end, but the start of a new journey, full of opportunity, full of optimism, potentially leading towards a happy life. His account suggests someone ready to leave school and venture into his new life, going to college, travelling independently by tram, unafraid. As his story unfolds it is evident that his fears were not just around travelling by tram but with coping with different situations or “uncertainties” in school.

Believe it or not

I’m quite decent

I found I got a talent

So I’m doing drumming

And

I’m good at sport

In speaking at the ‘Leavers Assembly’ Nathan has the sanctioned opportunity for his voice to be heard and present a particular view of himself. In using the phrase “believe it or not” and “I’m quite decent”, Nathan’s own words from his speech, he is suggesting that some listeners may disagree or not believe it, although in considering Marshall’s (2017) opinion that, ‘the challenge for teachers is to maintain the belief that their day-by-day work, joined with that of other adults inside and outside the school, will pay off… to ensure that each student leaves as a well-educated, decent human being’ (p. 45), he has realised the educators dream.

He is presenting a positive self-image, in which he describes himself as “quite decent”. He does not need to justify this belief, it is his opinion of how he views

himself. But what does it mean when somebody describes themselves as “quite decent”? The word decent evolved from 16th century Latin *decere* or “being fitting”, so somebody therefore who, according to the Oxford Paperback Dictionary’s definition, is ‘conforming to accepted standards of what is proper, not immodest or obscene… respectable’ (Hawkins, 1979, p. 158). So now he not only perceives his behaviour and demeanour is of an acceptable standard but also reflects on his behaviour in the past as being of an unacceptable standard or as he terms it, “*attitude*”.

There are claims of links between good school performance and raised self-esteem (Baumeister, et al., 2003) and for Nathan his evident positive self-image appears to have been boosted by discovering his talent, drumming, which was encouraged by his teachers at the special school. He was allowed to practise at lunch times, at another school belonging to the MAT but on the same site, and was the drummer in the school productions, the other musicians being members of staff. Being part of a special school MAT afforded him a range of opportunities to follow his interests and have his talent recognised and utilised, reflecting that ‘the best schools guarantee that every child is known well by at least one adult and make it their business to learn about students’ interests, widen their horizons, and spark new passions’ (Marshall, 2017, p. 45). By being accepted into the “staff band” he was a valued member of the school community whose talents were genuinely being acknowledged. Nathan’s talents were not just musical but also in sport, as he stated “*Yerr I gained confidence in my sport a lot … I enjoy sport*”. Representing his site in inter-site festivals of sport as well as the whole MAT in national sporting events, he was valued and had a sense of belonging.

His “*believe it or not*” however refers to his perception of how others may have previously viewed him and his behaviours.

Believe it or not

Compared to what I was

The difference is substantial

People have shed blood sweat and tears

So, I’ve changed

The behaviours of the past which he presents are in his opinion were not of a decent person. His reflection of his previous behaviour was that it was indecent. He had what he termed "*attitude*", in his opinion not a positive attribute to have. He swore, was aggressive and confrontational to teachers. It is as though he is talking about two quite different people or perceptions of self, his metamorphosis is from the "*old aggressive, rude, confrontational*" me to the new "*decent*" me. This reflects Lacan's (2017) view that anger 'is what happens when the little pegs won't fit into the little holes' (p. 14). When Nathan was unable to cope with the disciplinary mechanisms within the mainstream system he had responded with his aggressive outbursts. In an environment in which different disciplinary strategies existed there was no anger.

He appears very aware of how this happened. The phrase referring to the efforts of his teachers and teaching assistants "having shed blood, sweat and tears" is quite emotive. It is not just "thank you" but a genuine, heart-felt, recognition of how staff have worked with him to help him through his final school years to gain his place at college. How they supported him and kept fighting for him to be successful, highlighting the significance of positive teacher-pupil relationships.

He feels he has changed, but this begs the question did he change or was he always "*quite decent*" but hid behind a defensive cloak employing complex strategies to protect his vulnerable self in resisting the disciplinary mechanisms employed by the school in their failed attempts to address his needs. This raises a further question about what extremes students go to just to survive in mainstream schools, in which they are considered "the problem" and the extent to which survival strategies culminate in exclusion, either within a large school in separate spaces, or subtly removed to APs, PRUs or placed in the circle of managed moves to other schools. All acknowledged tactics that schools have employed to remove the "problem" (Power & Taylor, 2018; Slee, 2011).

7.2.2 Secondary School: Attitude!

'Attitude' in the title of Nathan's poem refers to how he reacted to life in a large mainstream comprehensive. When asked about positive aspects of his mainstream experience he referred to making friends and spending time in the

library. The rest he stated as "*terrible*". At this point of the interview Nathan paused for a long time. Mazzei (2007) proposes that 'we should pay increased attention to silent subtexts, to what is being left out, not said, intentionally repressed in our ongoing quest to discover the "truths" within our spoken stories' (p. 9). In paying attention to this silence questions could be asked about its meaning. On the one hand, possibly too painful to discuss, perhaps he was intentionally choosing to leave out some memories from his story, from a time of his life he described as full of negativity, or perhaps his memory was unsure or he simply couldn't remember.

The pause was broken with Nathan stating, "*I was so negative about things*". During this pause, of concern for me as both a teacher and researcher was my concern regarding beneficence (Nathan's welfare) and thus not probing too deeply.

One of the things he was comfortable discussing in his interview was the previous school's 'house' system and its highly competitive ethos of inter-house rivalry, involving inter-house sports competitions. The values and symbols within a school, through the subliminal messages they portray, have a powerful impact upon a student's emotions, attitudes and perceptions. In Nathan's previous school this is epitomised by the school's house system. According to the school's website, 'a variety of house competitions take place throughout the duration of the academic year … to secure points for their allocated house'. The website in using terms such as the 'coveted House Trophy', 'the triumphant house captains', 'ribbons to display the triumphant house colours' reflects the significance of the house system in the school and the value placed upon winning.

Nathan explained "*there were three houses and you'd be sometimes be forced to … like cross countries errm and things like that, you had to do them and a lot of competitions and so there is a lot of pushing and shoving*". Dividing practices are clearly at work in this competitive environment which looks to hierarchize individuals and "houses" into winners and losers. For Nathan, the discomfort felt by the significance of this particular symbolic aspect of the school environment culminated in a hatred of sport. "*I used to be like I hate sport and I don't want to do it … I would do like sport badly*", hence he developed a strategy to cope with a competitive system – to do sport badly. In doing sport badly he was resisting the power of the system. He successfully employed a survival strategy as a bad

performance would potentially result in not being chosen to participate in such a highly competitive environment.

7.2.3 The Significance of Friendships

Having frequently moved schools due to moving around the country he had developed strategies to achieve the one thing he desired, friends. He valued friendships and that was his prime motivation in school, and one of a few positive memories, friends.

Before

I wanted to fit in

I made jokes

Made people laugh

So I could make friends

For Nathan the desire to fit in and make friends outweighed any consequences and subsequent punishments reflecting the importance of social aspects of schooling and how they may outweigh academic aspects (Porter, 2011). His experience of the uncertainties from moving between schools resulted in a need for peer approval and acceptance. In order to make friends at primary school his strategies were to act funny, make jokes and make people laugh. Such strategies, according to my field observations continued into the special school when he decided to make a website about his passion for pens, ‘pen island’. This aroused chuckles around the ICT room.

Before

The old me

Would just flicked around his hair

Probably start to swear

They thought

He just didn’t care

The phrase "*they thought*" implies perceptions of what he perceived others thought of him and his mannerisms, of flicking his hair, as reflecting that he didn't care, in reality he did care. His behaviour had a purpose, a reaction to a difficulty in coping with the pressures of school life.

7.2.4 The Significance of the School Environment

Nathan's story moves on to provide insight into the significance of the environment within the schools he attended and how that impacted upon his ability to cope. According to Jackson (1990) there are three facts of life in a classroom: 'crowds, praise and power' and thus 'learning to live in a classroom, involves among other things learning to live in a crowd' (p.10). When Nathan talked about his mainstream secondary school he highlighted a problem with living in this reality: "*there's a lot of people, probably too much to cope with' and 'you have classes of like 30...32*".

Nathan recalls running around and not knowing what to do with himself at break and lunch times and feeling "weird". He mentions his dislike of the massive atrium, a large impersonal, noisy space, in which the majority congregated during break and lunch times. For Nathan, however, this noisy space created distress. This reflects Gallagher's (2016) notion of sound not only 'activating sounds and emotions' but 'is also a kind of affect – an oscillating difference, an intensity that moves bodies, a vibration physically pushing and pulling their material fabric' (p. 43). The noise from the crowds in a large enclosed space added to Nathan's discomfort making it a place he did not want to be, exemplifying the problem experienced by many marginalized students who similarly feel 'large impersonal school environments are a major contributing factor to their unhappiness, leading to truanting and antisocial and disruptive behaviour' (Dwyfor Davies & Ryan, 2014, p. 351).

The space Nathan sought for comfort and security was the library. This reflects Carson et al.'s (2005) findings that students identify school spaces in terms of comfort and discomfort, inviting or uninviting. The openness of the atrium was uninviting, creating an uncomfortable space. In contrast the library, a quiet place for solitary endeavour was inviting, fostered feelings of safety.

Consequently, unstructured time proved to be difficult, in Nathan's words:

Before

Break time

Well it was terrible

It was weird

I didn't know what to do with myself

So, I got into trouble

This resonates with Heinrich Böll's (Böll, 2001) story of teenage Angst in which the only outlet for boredom is sin (own translation). Nathan's outlet of not knowing what to do with himself and insecure feelings in certain spaces combined with possible boredom was causing trouble. Choosing the word "weird" implies a mystery or something uncomfortable, unnatural and eerie. The lack of perceived organisation and structure and the need almost to entertain himself was just too much for him to cope with. Nathan's description of the difficulties created by the school environment suggest a rationale for explaining some of his behaviours. This adds some credence to Ho (2014) who questions whether in looking to pathologise differences there is the potential of missing alternative explanations for behaviours hence 'ignoring the disadvantaging potential of educational environment and social structure' (p. 89).

When considering pupil attitudes to different aspects of school life, most pupils questioned in mainstream settings valued friendships (Croll, et al., 2008), enjoyed break-time (Alderson, 2000), and complained lunchtime was not long enough (Symonds & Hagell, 2011). However, studies have revealed a significant minority of students experience problems of negotiating school as a social environment (Croll, et al., 2008). Boulton et al., (2009) whilst considering the significance of break-time liking in overall feelings about school believe a dislike of break-time should be a cause for concern. They postulate disliking break-time results in increasing negativity to school, resulting in disengagement from school, which consequently is linked to behavioural difficulties, declining academic achievement and ultimately school failure (Covell, 2010). Whilst Woodward and Ferguson (1999) found no association between peer related problems and anxiety and

depression in later life, Symonds (2009), considers negative attitudes to school as a potential portent of future anxiety and depression.

The strategies Nathan employed to learn to live or at least survive in the crowd resulted in him getting into trouble. He talks of being aggressive when confronted and looking for distractions and ways out of doing work. For Nathan these behaviours had a purpose. He states "*I'd get into trouble but I just didn't care*". He just wanted to fit in and make friends. Allan (1996) states that 'all children are the objects of scrutiny within schools, but for those with special educational needs, the gaze goes further' (p. 222). Consequently, Nathan became subjected to an intensified disciplinary gaze, focusing on not just his work but his relationships with adults and peers, his everyday interactions and perceptions of his mental well-being. His entire dossier created under the gaze created a Nathan as an object of knowledge.

Nathan felt that during his time in mainstream secondary he never really learned anything, "*I didn't understand and if I say I didn't get it they just explained it the same way or give me a load of sheets or say that I wasn't concentrating or wasn't trying*". Hence when he did not understand he felt others perceived him as not concentrating or not trying, reflecting yet again the view, 'a pupil's offence is not only a minor infraction but also an inability to carry out his task' (Foucault, 1977, p. 179). He found maths particularly stressful. Nathan had a deficit perception of himself as someone who could not cope and could not do maths:

> *I always struggle at maths. And I didn't understand anything and I get really stressed and arrgh I can't do this and I'd get confronted you are not trying but I clearly am. It would spiral out into an argument. And I would get punishment or whatever*

Nathan described how efforts in maths culminated in confrontations with his teachers who felt he wasn't trying, spiralling into arguments. This resulted in punishment in the guise of detention. This reflects O'Brien's (2016) experience of children excluded from mainstream who felt mainstream schools were places that were psychologically unsafe as they were given work they were unable to complete, subsequently punished for not completing their work, yet despite the punishment never progressed in the subject. So just as in the case of Nathan looking for distraction, children according to O'Brien (2016) often sabotage the

situation, so they can leave on their own terms. This exemplifies how students employ their own strategies of resistance to exercise power within an institutional regime. Nathan's account of his strategies in mainstream schools and spiral of confrontations with the maths teacher in particular reflect that:

> between a relationship of power and a strategy of struggle there is a reciprocal appeal, a perpetual linking and a perpetual reversal. At every moment, the relationship of power may become a confrontation between two adversaries (Foucault, 1994, p. 347).

Before

The old me struggled at maths

Looked for distraction

Ending in confrontation

Stupid not to

Do my detention

The concept of detention is frequently employed as a disciplinary technique in schools, however its effectiveness is questionable, when as in the case of Nathan, there are pupils who just accept it and turn up. This action reflects the view that receiving a detention is often perceived by students as a relatively inconsequential sanction (Sheffield & Morgan, 2017). For it to be an effective punishment surely it would deter the offender from committing the crime repeatedly? Therefore, to be fully effective nobody would receive detention. The acceptance of a disciplinary action to mask academic difficulties is exemplified by O'Brien (2016) in recalling a pupil who despite being subjected to a full range of disciplinary sanctions, 'detentions, letters home or periods of isolation' (p. 37), still would not attempt any written work. His acceptance of the sanction was to avoid revealing his difficulties in literacy.

In Nathan's story, the punishment in the form of detention appears ineffectual for a different reason. The confrontations with his teacher were a response to being perceived as lazy and not concentrating. He acknowledged his aggressive outburst as being unacceptable, so he accepted the consequence of his

infringements. In his opinion it would be "*stupid not to go*". But the root cause was not being addressed, the derogatory comments and personal accusations which fuelled the anger as well as an unmet academic need. For power to be exercised there has to be resistance, but he was managing the situation not resisting it. The detention as a punishment had no impact on his ability to understand and complete his work, he provided no resistance, just accepted and attended the inconsequential sanction, detention.

Before

The old me

Couldn't cope

Being a bit naughty

Bit aggressive

More and more aggressive

This possibly is the most significant point in Nathan's story. Instead of receiving the help he needed, his difficulties were misunderstood, and he attracted negative labels: "aggressive", "rude" and "confrontational". Pre-empting describing his behaviours with "*bit", "a bit aggressive", "bit naughty*" serves to downplay the seriousness of his misbehaviour. However, there was "one incident" he explained which led to the final sanction, but he did not want to discuss this incident. The sanction for these behaviours was far from the inconsequential detention, it had serious consequences, and Nathan was excluded. At that time, he matched the profile for the most permanently excluded groups: aged 14 (25% are aged 14); male (boys are three times more likely than girls); and having an EHC plan (those with an EHC plan, five times higher than without) (DfE, 2010). In stating, "*they kicked me out*" there is a sense of injustice, something "*they*" did to him, after all he was only "*a bit naughty*".

Power and power relationships are insidious. Eventually Nathan was off-rolled/excluded/exiled/banished to "*this place … It's like a thing …. I don't really know what it is. It's just an alternative to school*". Whilst little is actually known about the ways schools refer pupils to APs (Thomson & Pennacchia, 2014), the guidance in the Third SEN Code of Practice enables schools to 'commission alternative provision for other children and young people who face barriers to

participation in mainstream education or training' (Department for Education, 2015, p. 216).

The use of different dividing practices to segregate children into different educational spaces is a major feature of the education system and in being off-rolled to an AP Nathan became a subject of education's carceral archipelago. Its secret existence, its 'invisibility from the mainstream' (Ball, 2013a, p. 84) is epitomised by the fact that he did not know where he was going. Indeed, APs are 'too often seen as a forgotten part of the education system' (House of Commons Education Committee, 2017, p. 3). I utilised a web search to find out about the AP Nathan was referred to, but it revealed little insight into what it exactly was. It was listed under the section of the LA's SEN pledge but the description contained just three sentences. A redacted version is presented in Appendix 6.

He just knew or thought that you had to go or be somewhere, reflecting a resignation to his lack of choice in the matter.

Then

They kicked me out

I went to this place

Not sure what it was

But

You have to be somewhere

The use of the phrases "*this place*" and "*not sure what it was*" to describe the AP suggests an uncertainty as to what was happening at that time. This uncertainty could be a result of a number of factors around his involvement in the decision-making process or how it was explained to him. What is evident is that in recalling this exclusion he was still, several years later, unsure of where and what this educational provision was. The guidance provided in chapter 10 of the SEN Code of Practice (Department for Education, 2015) only refers to the commissioning of places and makes no reference to the involvement of those affected. This reflects the finding of the House of Commons Education Committee (2017) that parents and pupils are often unaware of their rights regarding exclusion, and that in the case of being 'directed off-site, there is no system of redress' (p. 16).

When asked about what he had done at this place he responsed, "*Errm I did a load of AQAs and I did a BTEC in Creative Media. Err just like small project things where, day in day out you do new things. Then like today let's do some basic maths".* The website describes the provision as a "unique and exciting learning environment".

At the start of his secondary education, Nathan had fallen under the investigative gaze for not conforming to a perceived norm and the process of labelling and problematization had started. Nathan was being made into child with a SEND. Nathan talked of when in early secondary school he was referred to CAMHs, an 'NHS services that assess and treat young people with emotional, behavioural or mental health difficulties' (Young Minds, 2020). Nathan was unsure why he was referred in the first place but recalls he was "*under, I was under, under, under investigation*". The desire to 'seek explanation for children's failure, disengagement, distraction, anger and defiance in their genetics and medical profiles' (Slee, 2011, p. 151), reflects 'ingrained sets of beliefs about the origins of these young people's difficulties at school' (Thomas, 2014, p. 31).

The investigation to diagnose 'something' also reflects the arbitrary nature of assigning labels as discussed in Chapter 4. Gwernan-Jones' (2012) view is that 'the use of a continuum of terminology where boundaries are not defined except in relation to each other is perhaps a reflection of the purpose for which they were created' (p. 38). That is, the purpose followed the Royal Commission's (1889) assertion that some children need different treatment and schools. The reason for investigation may therefore be to remove the problem.

He was under investigation, in a submissive position, they were looking for facts about him. He was now subject to the disciplinary gaze. He had become a subject to be investigated. Dossiers of documents were to be produced by professionals who were looking to categorise and label him, "*like see if you can diagnose like something. Err can't remember what it's called but I got diagnosed with something*". Bagatell (2007) states that 'authoritative voices label and marginalise individuals who look or act in "undesirable" ways' (Bagatell, 2007, p. 418).

Nathan had become problematized by others but from his perspective, he felt no different as he stated, '*it's just how I am'*. Whilst he says he was unsure what it was what it was, just '*something*', he did state that he did not want this something

to be shared with his friends at that time. The power of making such judgements is significant, having implications not just upon the individual's self-image but also how they are perceived by others (Fellner, et al., 2017). He did not want to take the risk of being seen as different. He had some agency in managing the situation, he already had strategies to fit in which in the event of disclosing any suggestion of difference could be jeopardised. This reflects the inclusionist's view of the labelling process as stigmatising (Hornby, 2011) and mirror's Wearmouth's (1999) experiences of "maladjusted Jack", who as mentioned in section 4.2, had a burning desire to be seen as "normal" and in his opinion (as in Nathan's) the label was meaningless. Despite the investigations and disciplinary strategies Nathan did not feel he was different from others.

However, the label was subsequently used to segregate him from the mainstream, reflecting Hodge's (2016) assertion that 'labels are one of the tools' (p. 194) enabling expulsion. Nathan was to be filtered out, firstly to an AP and then due to having a Statement of SEN, into a special school. Whilst Cefai and Cooper (2009) discussed the potential devastating impact of labelling, for Nathan the subsequent move to a special school following his diagnosis provided a fresh start, the consequences of which were far from devastating. In contrast to the findings of Cefai and Cooper (2010) in their Maltese study, Nathan became engaged, grew in self-confidence and achieved his dream of a college place. Decisions about educational placement clearly do have a significant impact on a child's life.

Before

I was trying to learn

I didn't know

I learned differently

Or difficulty socially

I thought I had a strategy

One of the most telling points of Nathan's final speech was an acknowledgement of the teachers who had helped him. It was these relationships that were significant and made the difference, not the label. However, without the label his post mainstream experience would have been significantly different as he would not have been able to access a special school.

Nathan's exclusion from mainstream is what I consider a point of rupture, in which there is a physical separation from the past and subsequently a new beginning, out of the mainstream. In this new environment the real Nathan was able to emerge, he was eventually able to rid himself of the mask.

It's calm here

More relaxed

I can learn here

I realised I had a talent

Thank you … you're great

In contrast to mainstream school, Nathan describes the special school environment as a place where "*you can actually learn… I actually learn things*". The factors that create this space in which he can "*actually learn*" are significant in informing educationalists about real strategies that work. The factors can be broadly grouped as pertaining to the educational environmental, relationships with others and having a sense of belonging. In the context of the environment, this can be subdivided into two sections the physical and social. Nathan mentions the actual size of the school being important, much smaller and the size of the classes as much smaller. One of the issues he previously had was being in large groups, "*there's a lot of people, probably too much to cope with' and 'you have classes of like 30...32'*. Regarding the social aspects of schooling, the "*calm environment*" is important to Nathan. This contrasts with the accounts of a more hectic environment exemplified through comments about the pushing and shoving in inter-house sports, the discomfort of the massive atrium where pupils crowded at social times which made him feel "weird" at break times, confrontations with teachers escalating out of control. He identifies being able to develop trusting relationships with teachers as further significant factor. The fact that he played alongside school staff in the band during school concerts and represented the MAT in sports events shows a real sense of belonging. These all contribute to a positive self-image and positivity to school and school life, contrasting with the "*negativity*" he had previously felt.

The final part of the poem is very positive reflecting his happiness and gratitude. The start was a positive outlook for the future and the end a positive end to his

story. The middle reflects the uncertainties he had faced in mainstream, his coping strategies, and his "*attitude*". His attitude and failure to cope resulted in being labelled, and in Nathan's words, "*I just got kicked out of school*".

Returning to 'from attitude to gratitude', the title of the poem, the "*attitude*" evolved as a response to the situation he was experiencing at mainstream. Nathan's story and resultant self-perception of having "*attitude*", a negative attribute in his opinion could be explained as coping strategies.

Unfortunately, the disciplinary powers within the mainstream setting and supported by CAMHs had differentiated and selected Nathan as a problem who no longer could be included within mainstream education and consequently excluded to the carceral archipelago of alternative educational provisions, outside the mainstream. The pressures and demands of the mainstream environment resulted in the forces of Foucault's disciplinary gaze, detention and exclusion. However, many positives arose from this. Once in a different setting he was able to fit in, achieve and be happy, go to college, unafraid and follow his dream of being a drummer. Here his individual needs were being met.

7.3. Summary

This analysis of Beth and Nathan's accounts of their mainstream experiences has led to a questioning of the belief inherent in the education system that some children 'are unable to meet the demands of the typical educational setting' (Garner, et al., 2014, p. xxi). Perhaps the narrative should be flipped. In both accounts, their stories reveal two students who are keen to engage in learning and the crucial problem should be that some typical educational setting are unable to meet the needs of some children because for some reason 'they and their schools do not get along' (Thomson & Pennacchia, 2016, p. 623). The evidence from Beth and Nathan suggests that the problem goes deeper into the balance of rights and imbalances of relationships of power.

The first key point is how a system can lead to pupils feeling they have something wrong with themselves, as highlighted in Beth's case. Evidence drawn from Beth and Nathan's stories reveals the significance of the language used to denote

someone as needing “special attention”’ in a system which situates the problem within the child rather than within the educational system. The term “special” with reference to education has been in use since the 1890s (Tomlinson, 1982) and continues to reflect underlying beliefs and assumptions in society (Arduin, 2015). An analysis of the language used by Beth and Nathan revealed self-perceptions and perceptions of others in terms of deficit, as summarised in Table 4.

Special means …	Phrases used
Needing help	‘I just couldn’t cope’ –Nathan ‘I always struggle at maths’ –Nathan ‘I can’t do this’ –Nathan ‘I did not understand’ - Beth
Being judged	‘like see if you can diagnose like something. Err can’t remember what it’s called but I got diagnosed with something’ -Nathan ‘I was under investigation’ – Nathan ‘Something was wrong with me’ -Beth
Being excluded	‘this place … It’s like a thing …. I don’t really know what it is. It’s just an alternative to school’. – Nathan on being sent to an AP ‘They sent me to ‘The Green *Room” -Beth*
Being a victim	‘I cried’ – Beth ‘They called me horrid names’ – Beth ‘They pushed me out’ - Beth
Being categorised	‘a bit inappropriate like’ – Nathan in describing some other pupils at the MAT the room for additional needs -Beth ‘the EAL’- Beth ‘the Dyslexics’ - Beth

Table 4: What it means to be special.

Fellner et al (2017) in their study with two sisters of their school experiences, in which one was in a regular class, the other in a special class, found during their discussions that the sisters 'embody the language of deficiency to describe special education' (p. 333). Extending from Fellner et al.'s (2017) idea that definitions of 'what it is to be special' are 'embedded in the extemporaneous language of students' (p. 335), it can be deduced that to be special in Beth and Nathan's accounts is to need help, be judged, be excluded, be victimised and to be categorised. This reflects that 'labelling individuals with SEN … operates to pathologise the individual' (Sheffield & Morgan, 2017, p. 51), the effects of which can be stigmatising and damaging (Ho, 2014; Thomas, 2014) which appears contrary to the aim of the UNCRC (United Nations, 1989) of acting in the best interests of the child. This leads on to the second key point concerning children's rights, or rather lack of rights in the application of school policies. The disciplinary strategies experienced by Beth (being shouted at; being on report; confiscation of personal property; social exclusion), and by Nathan (detention; referral to CAMHs; and exclusion) exemplify how the rules and punishment regimes in schools act as a 'set of arcane official and semi-official procedures … in which their rights are unclear' (Thomas, 2014, p. 32). The disciplining strategies experienced by Nathan and Beth's appear to be contrary to UNCRC Article 28 (United Nations, 1989) as they cause distress rather than being 'consistent with the child's human dignity'.

On three separate occasions, Nathan's recollections point to a lack of information, choices and rights in matters affecting him. He was not included in discussions concerning: 1) the process involving referral to the psychological services provided by CAMHs for investigation, 'to diagnose something'; 2) an explanation leading to an understanding of the findings of the investigation by CAMHs; and 3) in the placement decisions taken about him prior to his being moved to an AP. This highlights a lack of adherence throughout his secondary education to the basic principles of the UNCRC (United Nations, 1989), in particular children's right to express their views freely in matters affecting them (Article 12), the right of being heard in any judicial and administrative procedures affecting them (Article 12): and elements of Section 19 of the Children and Families Act 2014 in which LAs 'must have regard to the views, wishes and feelings of the child or young person, and the child's parents" (DFE, 2014, page 19). In adhering to policy guidelines in the

SEN Code of Practice there is no mention of consultation when commissioning placements for children with SEN.

Nathan and Beth's experiences reflect the ways that 'ad hoc collections of people, such as governors in exclusion panels decide about their rights to attend school, and decisions are made by teachers, psychologists and administrators about their lives' (Thomas, 2014, p. 32). Furthermore, whilst this lack of information and rights for pupils such as Nathan facing exclusion creates 'an obstacle to social justice and educational ladder of opportunity' (House of Commons Education Committee, 2017, p. 3), it raises the bigger issue around the use of APs by schools. Following the Education Act, 2002, the governing body of a school can 'require any registered pupil to attend at any place outside the school premises for the purposes of receiving education which is intended to improve the behaviour of pupils' (para 29A), the child has no right to influence the type of education provided or appeal the decision (Ogg & Kaill, 2010). This in effect does not deny the right to education but the lack of information Nathan received before attending an AP did violate his right to have access to information about the placement (Article 28 of the UNCRC) and his right to be included in decisions concerning himself (Article 12 of the UNCRC).

The third key point is the significance of the impact of the school environment. Thomas (2014) points out the distraction caused by searching for the cause of difficulties through referral to psychological services serves to divert attention away from the significance 'of the school environment in itself constructing the difficulties' (p. 30). Such concerns are similarly expressed by Ho (2014) in that 'other possible causes for the child's academic performance are considered before medical officials infer that neurological dysfunction is the probable culprit for the child's difficulties' (p. 89), including factors within the educational institution itself.

The school environment, 'is an intrinsic part of a pupil's participation experience' (Egilson, 2014), and the very physical, social and communicative environments within schools can present considerable sources of difficulties and anxiety for pupils (Humphrey & Lewis, 2008). Nathan's account of spaces used at break and lunch times reflect the significance of the manipulation and organisation of spaces upon his feelings. The atrium, where over-crowding at lunch time evoked strong negative emotions for Nathan, for whom it was an uncomfortable, threatening space. He sought solace in the quieter space provided by the library. Similarly,

Beth's account of spaces reflects how they invoked feelings of fear, isolation and oppression. The 'pastoral office', where Beth was interrogated after being bullied, was oppressive and frightening. Both their individual experiences exemplify Stenglin's (2009) theory of binding and bonding. In the 'pastoral office', Beth described how she felt enclosed, or in Stenglin's theory 'too bound', whereas the open atrium for Nathan was 'too unbound'. The organisation of spaces within schools is therefore highly significant.

The description of The Green Room on Beth's school website as being 'safe and supportive', may try to be reassuring to parents, but also serves to reflect a view of those who need this room are vulnerable, such as the victims of bullying in need of somewhere "safe". The idea that schools need places which are 'safe and supportive' reveals a bigger issue which appears not to be addressed as to how safe the school is for those who are vulnerable or perceived as different.

The use of rooms, such as The Green Room, is a common experience for children with SEND (Hodge, 2016; Sheffield & Morgan, 2017). Whilst physically included within the school itself, these spaces separate and reinforce perceptions of deficit of those within. The intensity of feeling evoked by being sent to the Green Room in Beth's account is also expressed by Eleanor in the National Autistic Society's study of school experiences in 'there's something so intimidating when you are sitting on your own at a table, everyone else is in groups' (Reid & Batten, 2006, p. 13).

Beth's school refusal following isolation in The Green Room reveals the devastating impact such policies have. Indeed, Beth's decision mirrors the report of a victim of bullying by the House of Commons Education Committee, (2017) who was isolated from the bullies by being educated out of the mainstream classroom, 'with that kind of support, I gave up with the school system – I chose not to go' (p. 26).

The most indicative statement around the impact of the educational environment is from Nathan when explaining that working in a calm environment, *"I can actually learn here*". The comments made by Beth and Nathan can be surmised to account for the impact of inter-twining elements of the school culture and environment exemplifying Greenhalgh's (1994) assertion that, 'human conditions are never

static, but change in relation to factors in the outer environment and in our inner worlds' (p.12).

Starting from the point where Nathan stated he had found a place where he "*could actually learn*", the perceptions from Beth and Nathan in their unique experiences of vital elements and systems operating in educational settings which do/do not meet the needs for some pupils are summarised in Table 5.

A school in which ….			
I can learn	Evidence	I can't learn	Evidence
Small class sizes	'*there is not a lot of people'* *'The classes here aren't that big'* – both Nathan	Large class sizes	*'we were a really big class, too many, like over thirty' – Beth in year 6* '*there's a lot of people, probably too much to cope with' and 'you have classes of like 30...32'* – Nathan Secondary School
Positive relationships	Support from teachers - Nathan '*Yerr I made a few friends'* - Nathan	Negative relationships	Teachers shouting – Beth '*Acute Angle' shouted the teacher* Confrontation and arguments with teachers - Nathan Attitudes of peers – bullying – Beth *'The older girls, they pushed me out'*

			'Called me horrid names'
Sense of belonging	Drumming in the school performances – Nathan '*Yerr last last year we did loads of stuff here'* - Representing sports teams - Nathan	Alienation	School lateness – School refusal – Alone in The Green Room – all Beth Not wanting to participate in inter-house sports – Nathan "*I used to be like I hate sport and I don't want to do it … I would do like sport badly*"
Calm environment	The library where he spent lunch times- Nathan The environment is relaxing, laid-back, calm, *'its not really like a rush around'* – all Nathan	Hectic environment	The atrium where other pupils went at break, Rushing around, Pushing and shoving, - all Nathan

Table 5: The impact of features of school's environment.

In line with findings from the literature review, both Nathan and Beth identified significant aspects of their school's environment to be class sizes, relationships with adults and relationships with peers (Michael & Frederickson, 2013; Polat & Farrell, 2002; Dwyfor Davies & Ryan, 2014). These aspects combine to impact upon feelings around both physical and emotional safety (Morrison, 2007) and a

sense of belonging (Stevenson & Ellsworth, 1991). Furthermore, the characteristics of effective learning environments they described encompass elements of Article 29 of the UNCRC, in that the education environment enables the development of their 'personality, talents and mental and physical abilities' (United Nations, 1989).

Foucault considers (1996) that 'power is born out of a plurality of relationships' (p.260). Schools are full of relationships: those between staff with their cliques and hierarchies; those between teachers and pupils; and those between the pupils. In any classroom, 'to be open to learning and to be able to learn effectively we need to feel safe and accepted' (Greenhalgh, 1994, p. 42) and this 'requires a measure of relative dependency upon the teacher or other key adult' (ibid). Hence through creating a trusting relationship, the classroom becomes a safe space in which the teacher enables the student to take risks (Angier & Povey, 1999), with the knowledge that support is available when required.

Both Beth and Nathan mentioned confrontational relationships resulting from difficulties in maths. This may reflect that in the context of developing effective practices in mathematics teaching, the teacher pupil relationship is a significant factor as the student needs to feel comfortable in articulating their thinking (Steinberg, et al., 2004), which is an essential pre-requisite for conceptual growth (Lobato, et al., 2005). Furthermore, across all areas of the curriculum, whilst feelings of security that enable improved focus on tasks and obstacles are perceived as challenges rather than threats, conversely feelings of anxiety can invoke fear of failure, rejection, poor performance and abandonment.

School is a place full of cliques and groups, but also outsiders. There are those who choose to be alone and others who desire to be part of a group or at least have just one good friend. Being part of a group may just serve a purpose in school and solely function within the school itself, whilst at other levels of friendship a social network may extend beyond the school gates. Nathan's desire was to make friends and he had a strategy to achieve this. Unlike Beth this was possibly because he had moved around different parts of the country and never had the opportunity to settle in one school until his secondary education. He had worked out how to be liked by his peers. Wherever he went he was the class clown, the entertainer. Peer support was far more important than teacher relationships. He often was not there for long so these would not be permanent friendships. He had

employed strategies to find friends and felt they worked for him. Perhaps the labelling process had created and vocalised hypothetical problems that did not exist in his world.

Both Beth and Nathan adopted various coping strategies in response to the various disciplinary practices they encountered. However, the consequences of Beth's strategies appear to have accentuated her difficulties. Beth's report card for lateness, caused initially by her anxiety of being bullied, created a new anxiety, being late, which in turn developed into a greater anxiety around attending school. Being sent to The Green Room resulted in feelings of isolation and social exclusion, again fuelling Beth's anxieties around school resulting in subsequent disengagement. This reflects Cooper's (2011) view that disciplinary strategies are primarily concerned with the surface behaviours and therefore never actually addressed the root problem. This highlights the need to evaluate traditional disciplinary techniques that are accepted practices in the education system yet are resisted by pupils, to question their effectiveness, and to seek ways of doing things differently. As Foucault (1989), suggested, 'we always have possibilities, there are always possibilities of changing the situation' (p. 386).

The exclusion rather than the labelling process made Nathan feel that he was different. He did not feel intrinsically that something was wrong or different. He had been referred to CAMHS but he stated being labelled had made no difference as he was who he was. Others might have given him labels, but potentially he could look at others through the labelling gaze and label them, as Beth had done to those in The Green Room. Labelling and the norm and the other are purely subjective and dependent upon who wields the power to determine what the norm is.

The above key points concerning: the impact of actions and policies on pupils' self-perceptions and mental health; respect for the rights of the child in the decision-making processes; and an understanding of how the school environment impacts upon an individual, all highlight how structures inherent in the education system perpetuate the divisions between "special" and the "ordinary". The "norm" is arbitrarily defined, but who and what is this "norm" and why is a "norm" needed? After all, in an inclusive society, 'being different should not be imbued with a negative value' (Björne & Björne, 2008, p. 14). But as this study has illustrated Beth and Nathan's experiences portray an education system which does place a negative value on diversity. Firstly, in the nature of language of special educational

needs used in schools which imply there is something wrong; secondly in the application of policies which deny the rights of the child; and thirdly the exclusionary practices experienced by those with SEN.

In the following chapter I apply the knowledge derived from this analysis to discuss the research questions.

Chapter 8: Discussion

8.1 Introduction

In this thesis I have adopted a Foucauldian lens to analyse the unique perceptions and experiences presented by the students, Beth and Nathan, of an education system that served to label and exclude them. Their individually unique cases highlight aspects of the disciplinary techniques and practices operating within the English education system that serve to exclude vulnerable pupils from mainstream schools and in so doing perpetuate a segregated education system. Key points from the analysis of Beth and Nathan's accounts of their experiences presented in the previous chapter highlight: firstly, how the education system can lead to pupils feeling they have something wrong with them; secondly, how the two students' experiences of the diagnostic processes of SEN identification raise questions and concerns about how their rights, as stated in the SEN Code of Practice and the UNCRC, are upheld in the application of policy; thirdly, how both Beth and Nathan's experiences of different school environments illustrate the significance of aspects of the school environment such as class size, relationships with adults and relationships with peers upon their subsequent educational experiences. The picture that emerges from the analysis draws stark attention to how structures inherent in the English education system can serve to perpetuate the divisions between "special" and the "ordinary" and place a negative value on diversity.

To recap, the research questions are:

> What are the perspectives of pupils with SEN, excluded from mainstream schools, of their educational experiences?
>
> a) What are the two students' experiences and perceptions of labelling?
> b) To what extent do the experiences voiced by the two students resonate with the aspirations of the SEND Code of Practice 2015?

This thesis is about giving voice. In asking the subsidiary research questions I am seeking to give voice to two students whose educational experiences have been impacted upon by the SEND Code of Practice, the aim of which is to offer statutory

guidance on responsibilities, policies and procedures relating to Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014, including guidance on identifying and labelling special educational needs and providing aspirations for those labelled. In addressing the first subsidiary question I draw upon Beth and Nathan's experiences of the processes and consequences of labelling and being labelled as being 'SEN'. In addressing the second sub-question the focus is on gaining an understanding, from the perspectives of the two case study students, of the strategies and conditions within schools which aided or hindered the achievement of the aspirations of the SEND Code of Practice (DfE, 2015). Their unique experiences reveal both barriers and enablers in different educational settings which may be considered pivotal in the development of an understanding of the creation of more inclusive schools. Combining evidence from both subsidiary questions, I conclude this chapter by addressing the main research question.

Drawing from the accounts of Beth and Nathan's unique school experiences, Figures 12 and 13 summarise diagrammatically the significance of each student's individual responses and coping mechanisms in their responses to their respective school environments, and supportive and disciplinary strategies. Both Figures illustrate how power relationships were exercised within Beth and Nathan's respective schools and the consequences of these power relationships. The two students describe their coping/survival strategies, which this thesis argues may be considered as strategies of resistance adopted by each student in response to the ways in which power was exercised over them. As Foucault suggests:

> 'Power is exercised only over free subjects … subjects who are faced with a field of possibilities in which several kinds of conduct, several ways of reacting and modes of behaviour are available' (Foucault, 2003, p. 139).

Figure 12, representing Beth's account, is entitled "the destruction of the good student", reflecting the title of her poem, 'I just wanted to be a good student', derived from the phrase repeated throughout her interview. The specific anxieties she described are shown in the blue boxes, her actions and behaviours are shown in the white boxes and the actions in the form of supportive or disciplinary strategies employed by the school which impacted upon her anxieties and actions are show in the green boxes.

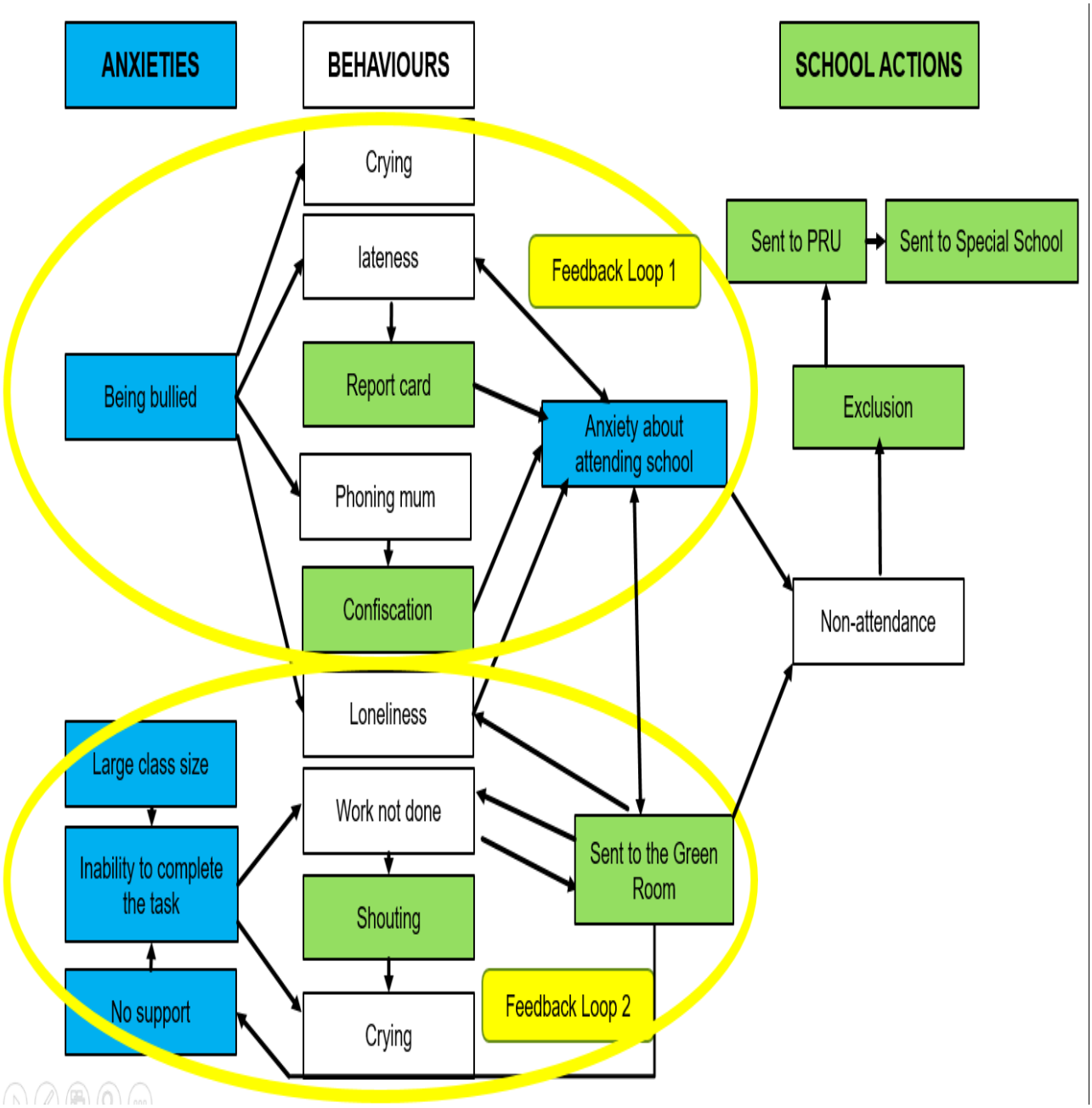


Figure 12: Beth: The destruction of the 'good student'.

Figure 13, presents Nathan's coping strategies, or behaviours (shown in the white boxes), as a response to uncertainties (shown in blue) within an education system. The green boxes highlight the supportive and disciplinary strategies Nathan recalled being used by the school.

Within the school system the individual student is 'placed in power relations which are very complex' (Foucault, 1982, p. 209). In both diagrams the black arrows

linking anxieties or uncertainties, behaviours and school actions indicate these complexities and how 'faced with a relationship of power a whole field of responses, reactions, results and possible inventions may open up' (Foucault, 1982, p. 220).

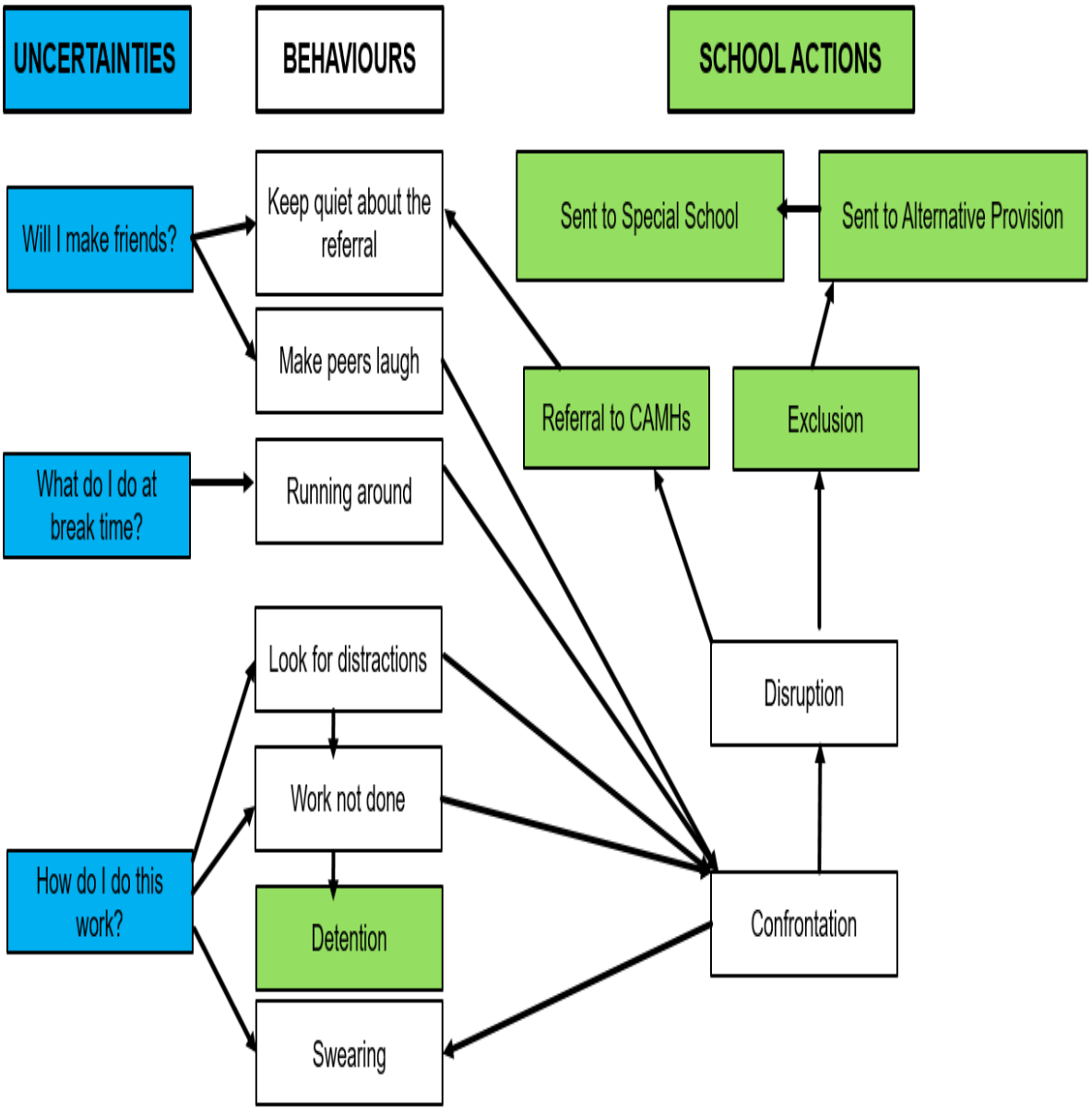


Figure 13: Nathan's coping strategies with uncertainty

The interconnections between the different elements within the two Figures portray a network of forces 'which circulates' (Foucault, 1980, p. 98) within the institution, thus illustrating how in power relationships, 'not only do individuals

circulate between its threads, they are always in a position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising power' (ibid, p. 98). The key elements illustrated in the two Figures provide a scaffold for the discussion addressing the research questions.

8.2 What are the two students' experiences and perceptions of labelling?

This section focuses on the experiences and perceptions of Beth and Nathan of the processes and consequences of how their individual needs were pathologised within the mainstream schools they attended. Building upon the analysis of the poetic transcription of Beth and Nathan's accounts in the previous chapter, the following discussion lends insight into understanding the range of differing responses to labelling in respect of perceptions of the processes and consequences, including concerns raised around potential ramifications.

In chapter 4 I explored research and policy evidence reporting on how the investigation and diagnosis of SEND unfolds in a melting pot of relationships of knowledge, truth and power between schools, parents, external professionals and the student. The teachers and schools decide who should be assessed, the parents demand or resist assessments, the professional(s) with the power to diagnose a category of SEND are those with the power to trigger the release of resources and support services, dependent on funds available at national and local levels. Indeed, as discussed in 4.3.1, the review of literature found consistent evidence that for a school, labels can provide the key to access additional resources and support (see Hodge, 2016; Holland et. al., 1998; and Lauchlan and Boyle, 2007). This creates a powerful matrix through which a pupil is managed. However, there is less literature on the effects of the labelling process as perceived by individuals. Focussing on Beth and Nathan's perceptions of the diagnostic process and consequences of labelling, this section reflects on the possibilities presented by the different actions and reactions of the individuals involved in the students' education, and raises questions around the purpose of pathologising individuals as well as concerns about a system that appears to focus on the attachment of labels rather than on meeting students' specific needs.

8.2.1 Students' perceptions of the diagnostic process

Nathan's recollections of the diagnostic process revolve around his perceptions of being referred to CAMHs. Nathan's description of the cyclical pattern of his own challenging behaviours, as presented in Figure 13, suggests his behaviours were due at least in part to his uncertainty about how to complete some set tasks. This resulted in a cycle of repeated detentions, which in turn served as a rationale for the school to make a referral to CAMHs – actions which Nathan explained as being "*under investigation*" to "*diagnose something*". When considering Nathan's experience in light of Foucault's concept of bio-power in the organisation and management of the individual, the referral to CAMHs suggests the school felt a need to identify and label his behaviours in ways that could lead to subsequent targeted support and interventions.

As discussed in the literature (section 4.2), the pathologising process potentially acts as a tool to justify decisions based on others' reactions to an individual's perceived deviance from the norm. In Nathan's case, this was realised in a reaction to his behaviours and disruption to the smooth running of the school. Research literature confirms that challenging behaviour can be highly problematic in maintaining institutional order, and indicates that the pathologisation of difference and the labelling of individuals as having SEN, as experienced by Beth and Nathan, are potential tools for maintaining institutional order (Wearmouth, 1999; Thomas, 2014; Hodge, 2016). This could be through their potential for receiving additional support in the form of financial, technical and human resources or even pharmaceutical recommendations.

Nathan's recollection of his response to being sent to CAMHs suggests a certain degree of acceptance of the situation, but also his concern around knowledge of the process impacting on aspects of school life that he valued, such as his wish "*to fit in*" and to have friends. In choosing not to share knowledge of the process and outcomes of his diagnosis with his peers, he is attempting to exert some element of control over the situation. Nathan's account of his reaction to the outcome of the labelling process, "*It's just how I am*" contrasts with some findings in research literature suggesting that students feel devastated (Walker, 1981;

Gillman et. al., 2001), victimised, resulting in misbehaviour and non-attendance (Cefai and Cooper, 2009; 2010), and stigmatised (Hornby, 2011; Sheffield and Morgan, 2017). Buckingham (2019) explained how her own self-perception changed post initial diagnosis from disbelief to a pathway of self-understanding. Nathan's account, relates a more passive acceptance. This may connect with his reluctance to share his diagnosis with his friends because at that time he did not want to be perceived as different.

8.2.2 Students' experiences of the consequences of labelling

Nathan's experiences and perceptions reflect Foucault's (1996) assertion that, 'between each point of a social body … between a teacher and his student, between the one who knows and the one who does not know, power relations come into play' (p. 210). Nathan's experience exemplifies the fluidity of power relationships, between Nathan and those carrying out the investigation, and between Nathan and his peers, with whom he chose not to share his diagnosis or its outcomes and of which he assumed they had no knowledge. Nathan's perceptions mirror concerns highlighted in the literature review that the impact of labelling does not have implications purely upon an individual's self-image but also how they are perceived by others (Wearmouth, 1999; Fellner et al. 2017).

Beth's perceptions of being labelled as having SEN similarly supports this view. Beth, for example, expressed how prior to her diagnosis she felt '*nobody knew something was wrong with me*', but then attributed her being bullied to her perception that '*they must have known something was wrong with me*'. This points to the significance of peer responses to behaviours rather than peer knowledge of a specific label or SEN in influencing attitudes towards students who have been labelled (Frederickson, 2010; Hornby, 2011; Lander and Perepa, 2017). A further issue exemplified by Beth is the use of terms, appropriated from adults, to differentiate between individuals (Davis & Watson, 2001) which also serve to homogenise students into specific groupings based on one shared characteristic. Whilst this demonstrates the ways in which schools use divisive terminology, it also highlights concerns not just around labelling, but wider

concerns of how diversity is respected by and within schools and how bullying behaviours are addressed, such as isolating the victim.

The above examples of Beth and Nathan's experiences confirm extant findings in the literature that identification and labelling processes underpin the English education system, in ways that resonate with Foucauldian concepts of bio-power and binaries (1977). They also contribute further to this by adding how such processes have a complex impact upon an individual.

Whilst schools may be motivated by the aim to identify and address pupils' learning needs, they do so in ways that create binary divisions and lead to the branding of individuals in ways that perpetuate a subjective and discriminatory education system and exert psychological pressure on students who may feel they been 'othered'. Furthermore, the students' experiences of the consequences of being labelled as having SEN raise concerns around the creation of social justice barriers for those who have been or are in the process of being labelled. Beckett and Lawson (2021), for example, from a survey amongst disabled people, identify a number of barriers 'to achieving social justice for disabled people' (p. 12). These include 'negative attitudes … stigma and 'othering' … segregation … loss of community' (p.13). Equating these to Beth and Nathan's experiences, as summarised in Table 4 (section 7.3), feelings of being judged and categorised exemplify 'othering'; feeling victimised reflects experiencing negative attitudes both from teachers and peers; and exclusion from mainstream classrooms includes experiencing segregation.

8.3 To what extent do the experiences voiced by the two students resonate with the aspirations of the SEND Code of Practice 2015?

In addressing the first subsidiary question, Beth and Nathan's experiences and perceptions of the labelling process and its consequences were discussed. In this section the focus shifts to reflect on sub-question 2, that is, how Beth and Nathan's experiences of the strategies and conditions within schools acted as barriers or

enablers to the aspirations of the SEND Code of Practice (DfE, 2015). These aspirations as outlined in paragraph 6.1 of the Code of Practice are that:

> All children and young people are entitled to an appropriate education, one that is appropriate to their needs, promotes high standards and the fulfilment of potential. This should enable them to:
>
> • achieve their best
>
> • become confident individuals living fulfilling lives, and
>
> • make a successful transition into adulthood, whether into employment, further or higher education or training. (DfE, 2015, p. 92).

8.3.1 Barriers and enablers to achieving their best

"I just wanted to be a good student", the phrase which Beth repeated during the research interview mirrors the first aspiration "achieve their best". Her experiences, and those of Nathan as illustrated by Figures 12 and 13, help provide an understanding of how some processes and policies operating in schools may create barriers to achieving this first aspiration. Beth and Nathan's perceptions of their mainstream educational experiences indicate five differing but inter-linked factors which acted as barriers to them achieving their best. Figures 12 and 13 highlight how Beth and Nathan responded to curriculum tasks which were challenging for them; the significance of interpersonal relationships, including the impact of supportive strategies provided when, using Nathan's terminology, he was "*struggling*"; the effectiveness of the disciplinary strategies they faced; and specific environmental elements within the schools and classrooms where they were educated.

8.3.1.1 The curriculum and the nature of tasks given

Issues arising from elements of the curriculum as experienced by both students, both in primary and secondary mainstream classrooms, indicate the pivotal role of not just the curriculum, but also its delivery in creating inclusive classrooms

within which pupils can (or feel they cannot) achieve their best. Both Beth and Nathan shared experiences of being unable to complete tasks, especially in mathematics. They both described how not understanding the work they had been set evoked feelings of stress and anxiety. Beth made specific reference to crying at primary school as a response to the teacher shouting "*Acute Angle*" at her. Nathan in contrast explained how his being accused of "*not trying*" and "*being lazy*" when unable to complete tasks culminated in angry outbursts and confrontation which would spiral out of control into arguments with his teachers.

Within the research literature links have been made between challenging behaviours and the curriculum offered, either due to boredom or inappropriate levels of work (Sheffield & Morgan, 2017; Hodge, 2016; O'Brien, 2016). In this respect, this study's findings resonate in part with previous research, as whilst neither Beth nor Nathan described being bored, they did discuss issues arising from being given work they did not understand. Feedback Loop 2 in Figure 12 for example represents the pattern of Beth's behaviours when faced with work she was unable to complete, resulting in shouting by the teacher followed by Beth crying. In Figure 13, we can see that Nathan's behaviour followed a different pattern of looking for distractions when he was struggling with a set task, resulting in subsequent confrontations, swearing and detentions.

8.3.1.2 The significance of interpersonal relationships

Whilst reacting in differing ways to work they were unable to complete, the two students' experiences suggest that their behaviours were rooted in the nature of their interactions and relationships with their teachers when faced with challenges. The significance of relationships with teachers was summarised in Table 5 (section 7.3) and points to supportive relationships as creating an enabling environment in which Nathan describes he "*could actually learn*". Negative relationships conversely created barriers to learning. What appears significant from the experiences of the two students in this study is the nature of relationships in mediating the curriculum, highlighting the value of supportive, positive relationships in the learning process and the need for respectful dialogue in discussing challenging behaviours.

8.3.1.3 The impact of supportive strategies

Beth and Nathan's experiences also provoke thoughts as to the rationality of some existing practices and policies operating within mainstream schools and classrooms and in particular the potential misalignment between student and teacher perceptions of supposedly supportive strategies. If the purpose of labelling is intended as a route to a student receiving appropriate support, then actions following the pathologising process appear significant, reflecting the assertion that within the exercise of power relations, there exists 'a total structure of actions brought to bear upon possible actions' (Foucault, 1982, p. 220).

The experiences of different supposedly supportive strategies experienced by both Beth and Nathan suggest the nature of these actions is a crucial factor in creating either barriers or enablers to realising students' potential. This is particularly pertinent in Beth's experience of the Green Room. Most schools have specific spaces in which targeted interventions are delivered and as previously noted, it is common practice for students with SEND to work in such spaces (Hodge, 2016; Sheffield and Morgan, 2017). In my experience such spaces are often known by euphemisms, such as 'the inclusion room' (Slee, 2011, p. 156), 'the Hub', the 'Gold Room' or 'Aspire'. In Beth's case it was known as the 'Green Room'. In Figure 12, Beth's account of the rationale for and consequences of working in the Green Room are briefly summarised. Beth's account relates her experiences of being sent to the Green Room as having provoked two overlapping fields of emotion: her feelings and perceptions around being sent to work in the room, and her feelings and perceptions about the room itself.

Beth's recollections of the Green Room exemplify contrasting perspectives on the use of such segregated spaces through her perceptions both of others using the Green Room as well as how she felt she was perceived by those others. Firstly, her perceptions of the impact of the Green Room on other students reflect a perspective that aligns with the official rhetoric of the room being a supportive space. From the school's perspective, the Green Room offers a 'safe and supportive space' (source: school website). Beth also expressed the view that some students who found themselves in the Green Room had a common purpose,

such as being multilingual and sitting together to develop skills in English. In these instances, the shared space might evoke a sense of belonging for certain groups, but not for everyone. Beth's account of her personal experiences suggests that for her, the Green Room was an isolating, exclusionary space. As illustrated in Figure 12, Beth's perspective illustrates how the space led to her experiencing feelings of loneliness and heightened anxieties – feelings that were seemingly exacerbated by her perception that others in the group had a shared sense of belonging (to a group learning English) from which, as a native and confident speaker of English, she felt excluded.

Beth's account of the Green Room aligns with Warnock's (2010) view that including all children within the same building does not necessarily equate with inclusive practice and can result in exclusionary practices. It also reflects evidence in research literature (see 4.3.2) regarding stigmatisation (Sheffield and Morgan, 2017) when a child is physically included within a school, but experiences emotional exclusion from their peers, which adds to the trauma of the child's physical exclusion from mainstream classrooms. The example provided from Beth's experiences of the Green Room, a space specifically designated for those individuals identified to be targeted and receive special treatment, reflects how the existence of such spaces enable 'division and branding' (Foucault, 1977, p. 199). Beth's experiences therefore contribute to an understanding of the negative psychological impact of schools' intervention practices, illustrating how elements of supposedly supportive systems in schools can exacerbate pupils' feelings of isolation and perception that they have something wrong with them. Her experiences reflect the impact of the 'silent curriculum' (McAllister & Sloan, 2017) within a school environment which can have a profound impact on a pupil (see 5.3.2), but of which teachers and other professionals within a school may be unaware.

In their accounts, Beth and Nathan both voiced experiences of "support" as segregation and exclusion. Their experiences demonstrate how interpretations and understandings of supportive strategies vary between teachers and pupils. Whilst intended as supportive, strategies that segregate, and in so doing evoke feelings of isolation as in Beth's experience, can result in deleterious mental health outcomes such as anxiety and loneliness. This finding appears in line with some research evidence in the literature where school systems have been

critiqued for making some pupils with SEND feel unsupported (Cefai & Cooper, 2010) and isolated (Hick et al., 2009; Hallett and Hallett, 2015). Of significance therefore is not that the students are not being supported, as supposedly supportive strategies are evident, but rather these strategies evoke feelings of being unsupported, segregated and isolated.

Within the literature different perceptions are presented of the use of segregated learning spaces. On the one hand there is, as discussed above, the potential stigma of being identified as needing "support" and the loss of sense of belonging when sent to off-site or out-of-class provision (see Toynbee, 2009; Sheffield & Morgan, 2017). However, some studies have identified positive student experiences of attending separate provision, particularly in the context of high quality inter-personal relationships created between staff and peers (see Toynbee, 2009). Essential to Beth's experience is her account of working alone, going alone to the classroom to collect her work then sitting alone. In sitting alone, the potential to develop positive interpersonal relationships appears lost. Beth's experience suggests that it is not just being sent to the Green Room that is significant, but also the experiences within the room, in particular the need for positive interpersonal relationships and a sense of belonging – as she identifies for others in the room but not for herself.

Whilst Foucault (1977) discusses the need to consider 'a whole series of possible positive effects' (p. 23) of punitive mechanisms, the experiences described by Beth of being sent to the Green Room highlight the need to consider the possible negative effects of supposedly supportive interventions and mechanisms used in schools. Beth's account demonstrates the need for an awareness of how segregated spaces are used in ways that may be intended to be supportive but may be perceived by individuals as unsettling and discriminatory. These contrasting perceptions of the Green Room itself reflect the significance of 'the relations of space and power' (Foucault, 1996, p. 338) in the context of the 'resistances … transformations…or changes in behaviour' (ibid) of those sent to use that space. For Beth, the space provoked resistance, rather than acquiescence as she chose to stay away from the school. But in describing the activities of the others in the Green Room she does suggest the possibility of it being a transformative space, in which specific skills are acquired for groups of students who share particular learning requirements.

8.3.1.4 The effectiveness of the disciplinary strategies

The disciplinary strategies encountered by Beth and Nathan within their mainstream schools, as illustrated in Figures 12 and 13, reflect how embedded within each school's system is 'a small penal mechanism' (Foucault (1977 p. 177). Their responses to such mechanisms contribute to an awareness of a range of possible outcomes arising from disciplinary power (Foucault, 1996).

One of the limitations of Foucault's concept of Panopticism, as expressed by Rafalovich (2001), concerns individual agency when under surveillance (discussed in 2.6.1). Beth's reaction to the report card for monitoring lateness serves to support this limitation. Her case illustrates possible reactions to being placed on the report card. Firstly, upon her self-perception- having stated she *"just wanted to be a good student",* she felt she was perceived as a *"rebellious student".* Whilst in Chapter 4 the impact of the use of deficit terms pertaining to labels of SEN upon self-perception was discussed, from Beth's perspective being the recipient of a disciplinary strategy also impacted negatively on her self-perception and well-being. Rather than having a self-regulatory impact leading to an improvement in punctuality, the emotional impact of the strategy evoked greater anxiety, which led to continuing lateness and culminated in non-attendance.

Nathan's response to the disciplinary strategy of the detention provides a sharp contrast. For Nathan it represented an inconsequential strategy. Of commonality for Beth and Nathan was the ineffectiveness of the respective strategies in addressing the perceived problem (lateness and incomplete work). For both the students, the 'problems' continued and escalated further. Neither of their accounts refers to any constructive dialogue concerning their issues. Beth's account of the traumatic meeting in the pastoral office and the impact of the confiscation of her phone points to disciplinary strategies hampering the potential for productive dialogue and the development of positive relationships.

The experiences of the two students in this study reveal the blurred boundaries between supportive and disciplinary strategies, which, rather than creating positive outcomes, can provoke and exacerbate negative outcomes. They reveal the

ambiguities inherent in the spaces used. For Beth and Nathan, the referrals to the Green Room, the PRU and the AP were alienating and exclusionary rather than supportive and inclusive experiences. The use of mainstream school exclusion as a supportive strategy appears contradictory to the aim of helping a child "achieve their best".

These divides between the intent and outcomes of disciplinary strategies are highlighted through the use of poetic transcription to understand Beth and Nathan's experiences. The poems enable their perspectives to resonate strongly, especially in respect of the emotional impact of the processes they endured from being labelled with SEN, through experiencing supposedly supportive and disciplinary strategies within mainstream settings and ultimately exclusion to another school. However, Nathan's account also highlights how he found the smaller class sizes enabled the development of trusting relationships with others, hence creating an environment in which Nathan stated, "*I can actually learn here*". But the processes that led to him being in an environment conducive to learning were traumatic. Through hearing the emotional impact and the trauma of exclusionary practices, this study adds valuable insight into the perspectives of those affected and the nuances of their emotionally traumatic journeys along the road from inclusion to exclusion from mainstream education.

8.3.1.5 Specific environmental elements within the schools and classrooms

Beth and Nathan's experiences provide some insight into how aspects of differing school environments can impact upon the nature of inter-personal relationships with adults within a school. Evident in Figure 12 is the impact of class size on the capacity to learn. Beth attributes her inability to complete tasks to the large class size as well as a lack of support. Indeed, there seems a logical link between class size and individual support, if there is just one class teacher and no additional classroom support. In stating "*there's a lot of people, probably too much to cope with"* Nathan similarly linked large class sizes to his reduced capacity to cope. Drawing from section 5.3.1 in the literature review, class size and staff-pupil ratios are two aspects which have been identified as having an influential impact upon the nature of teacher-pupil relationships. PRUs and special schools, for example,

benefit from having smaller class sizes and higher staff-pupil ratios, enabling potentially a more humane environment in which relaxed conversations are possible (Thomson & Pennacchia, 2016) leading to a deeper understanding of individuals and their personal circumstances (Dwyfor Davies & Ryan, 2014, p. 352). In contrast, due to the larger class sizes in mainstream schools, teachers and pupils often work in more impersonal, crowded environments that are less conducive to nurturing opportunities for teachers to understand an individual's specific needs.

A second concern expressed by Nathan was around the hectic nature of the school and the over-crowded atrium which made him feel "*weird*". Such concerns substantiate issues identified widely within the literature around the impact of noisy and crowded spaces within buildings upon the affective dimension and the capacity to learn. (Dwyfor Davies & Ryan, 2014; McAllister and Sloan, 2017).

Nathan's experiences of non-mainstream placements provided a stark and much-needed contrast. The smaller class sizes, as described in Nathan's account "*there is not a lot of people*" and "*the classes here aren't that big*", offered an environment that was more conducive for learning where he could develop positive relationships with peers and staff which helped him feel he was a "*decent*" person. He commented on the environment being calm and relaxing and, significantly, as a place where he could learn, a place where he felt accepted and included, evidenced by his equal footing while playing the drums with the staff in the school productions.

The opening sentence of paragraph 6.1 of the SEND Code of Practice states that pupils are entitled to an appropriate education. But what constitutes an appropriate education? Experiences as reflected in Figures 12 and 13 which indicate being trapped in a cycle of ineffective practices evoking feelings and behaviours which are not conducive to learning are not indicative of an appropriate education. It reflects an inappropriate system. In contrast, Nathan stating "*I can actually learn here*" reflects the operation of a system creating conditions for an appropriate education, in which he can achieve. Factors he mentions, as previously summarised in Table 5 (in 7.3), may be considered enablers to creating conditions conducive to achieving one's best. These factors consisted of small class sizes; positive relationships; sense of belonging; and a calm environment.

Nathan's perceptions provide vital evidence for educators of the significance of factors within an educational placement, rather than purely the nature of the provision. As discussed throughout this section there are a myriad of significant inter-dependent factors pivotal to creating an environment conducive to learning. Of significance is the need for effective dialogue and supportive interpersonal relationships to address potential misalignments in perceptions of: challenging behaviour arising from issues around the accessibility of aspects of the curriculum; the psychological impact of schools' intervention practices; and the ineffectiveness of the disciplinary strategies in addressing perceived problematic behaviours. Nathan and Beth's experiences also suggest the need to rethink existing accepted conditions within schools and classrooms, in particular the significance of class size and availability of quiet spaces which do not have a stigma attached to them for their users.

8.3.2 Barriers and enablers to becoming confident individuals living fulfilling lives

In discussing the second SEND Code of Practice aspiration "become confident individuals living fulfilling lives" (DfE, 2015, p. 92), I draw upon Nathan's account of his changing attitude from being "*so negative about things*" to enjoying wider aspects of school life such as performing in the band during the school play and looking forward to going on to college to study music. He had transformed from deliberately doing sport badly to avoiding being selected for his house team, to representing his school in inter-site and national competitions and even stated that he had "*gained confidence in my sport a lot*". His growth in self-belief had led to his growing confidence in participating as part of a team. This growing sense of self-belief and self-confidence is further evidenced in Nathan standing up to deliver his leaver's speech and describing himself as "*quite decent*".

The inter-twining elements of school cultures and environments identified as potential enabling factors for creating an environment conducive to learning (see Table 5 in 7.3) also appear pertinent in the capacity to support an individual both to feel valued and have a sense of belonging and in so doing help promote a degree of self-confidence. Whilst at his previous school, for example, Nathan

described being forced to participate in competitive inter-house competitions, "*you had to do them*". He didn't want to do it, so he developed a survival strategy of doing it deliberately badly. He also raised concerns around the pushing and shoving in competitions. His perceptions of the competitions and not wanting to participate suggest feelings of alienation rather than belonging. His recall of the pushing and shoving also appear to portray a hectic environment that he found unpleasant. More significant is his description of his former school experience as "*terrible*". In contrast, at his current school he had become someone who was involved in "*loads of stuff*". This involvement suggests he had become not just a valued member of the school community, but he was confident in being involved, was feeling valued and was developing a sense of belonging.

Nathan's having an EHC plan may have made possible his placement in a special school which provided a smaller, calmer environment. But drawing from the evidence from his speech, he attributes much of his change to the attitudes and relationships with staff in the school. This appears consistent with findings identified in the literature (e.g. Dwyfor Davies & Ryan, 2014; Harris, et al., 2008; Hart, 2013) that pupils attending specialist provision benefit from trusting and supportive relationships with teachers to help them learn to cope with difficult feelings, develop coping strategies and in time manage to control their own constructive and positive behaviour. These experiences highlight the profound significance of developing relational pedagogies in schools.

Relational pedagogy is a conception of education in which relationships are considered fundamental in the learning process, as explored in section 5.3.1 (Dwyfor Davies & Ryan, 2014; Hickey & Riddle, 2021). Central to this concept is 'the systematic construction of appropriate relationships … within the schooling process' involving 'deliberate instructional methods' and 'social interactions' (Crownover & Jones, 2018, p. 17).

Evident within Figures 12 and 13 are what Hickey and Riddle (2021) consider as 'three fundamental vectors [that] are implied in pedagogical relations' (p.4). These are 'relations between students; relations between students and teachers, and relations between students, teachers and spaces of learning' (ibid). The interconnecting lines in both Figures illustrate the impact of different relationships upon Beth and Nathan. Firstly, the impact of relationships with other students as shown in Beth's case by the significance of bullying, and in Nathan's case

through the significance in maintaining friendships. Secondly, the nature of relationships with teachers, which in both Figures identifies the impact of negative relationships. Thirdly, particularly evident in Figure 12 is the impact of the interaction between Beth and her teachers when working alone the Green Room. This study highlights that relational pedagogy is not just one aspect of effective provision, but it is fundamentally important. Indeed, as seen in Nathan's case it provides a crucial key with the potential to unlock barriers and open up the potential to grow in self-confidence, self-belief, to feel valued and also develop a sense of belonging.

8.3.3 Making a successful transition into adulthood, whether into employment, further or higher education or training

Whilst the literature identifies the potentially detrimental impact of exclusion (Centre for Social Justice, 2011) and attending a special school upon future employment prospects (Michael & Frederickson, 2013; Polat & Farrell, 2002), for both Beth and Nathan, their experiences of attending the special school appeared to help equip them to be on the way to achieving the third aspiration to, "make a successful transition into adulthood, whether into employment, further or higher education or training" (DfE, 2015, p. 92). Both were studying for formal qualifications, namely for their GCSEs. In Nathan's case he needed six GCSEs at grades A to C to go to the college of his choice. He achieved this and gained a place at college. When I met Nathan during his subsequent visits to play music in school productions, he mentioned that he was enjoying college and had begun to play in a band with friends. Beth, at the time of writing this thesis, had also taken her GCSEs and was accessing a supported work scheme at one of the MAT's tertiary colleges. Both appeared to be transitioning successfully to adulthood, Nathan through a mainstream college setting and Beth through a specialist work sheme setting.

8.4 What are the Perspectives of Pupils with SEN, Excluded from Mainstream Schools, of their Educational Experiences?

In addressing the two subsidiary questions, the complexity and multifaceted nature of the impact of being labelled as having SEN was explored. In considering evidence from Beth and Nathan's experiences of being diagnosed with SEN, issues identified from their experiences included an uncertainty about the outcomes of the diagnostic process, fears of stigmatisation and potential ramifications in the form of peer rejection.

A key issue in the inclusion/exclusion of pupils labelled as having SEND within mainstream schools appears to revolve around how schools respond to the various difficulties experienced by their pupils. Beth and Nathan's experiences suggest an important element is not just the extent to which schools embrace the concept of inclusion but also schools' perception of inclusion as a concept. Given the diverse definitions (discussed in section 3.3), inclusion may be interpreted as a school system that respects as well as responds to human difference in ways that include rather than exclude learners (Florian & Black Hawkins, 2011). This definition incorporates alternative educational provision and special schools in a system where schools work in partnership. This is the system that Beth and Nathan experienced, yet their personal accounts clearly describe elements of exclusion brought about by policies and guidelines embedded in the education system. Their experiences expose a tension within the system of pathologising one or more aspects of a child's behaviour, then labelling the child and responding to the label through exclusion, rather than attending to the child behind the label. This reflects an embedded problem within the education system which is based on sorting and dividing pupils into homogenised groups that share some particular characteristic, rather than viewing all pupils as labelled with certain categories of SEND as individuals who may have very different needs and 'little in common' (Messiou, 2017, p. 153). For the gaze to shift to the individual there needs to be a shift in thinking away from the current model of support focused on diagnosis and categorisation of difference to one that values diversity and individuality.

An alternative definition views inclusion as a process of increasing student participation and reducing student exclusion from cultures, curricula and communities of local schools (Rustemier, 2002). A crucial point in this interpretation is the idea that the very existence of non-mainstream schools and provision perpetuates the problem of exclusion as their presence facilitates the exclusion of children from mainstream schools (Slee, 2011). Within this study, through an analysis of Beth and Nathan's educational experiences, conditions and practices have been highlighted which could be implemented within mainstream schools to facilitate a move towards this concept of inclusion.

Through sharing their perceptions of their educational experiences, Beth and Nathan's accounts provide insights into factors which may be considered as either barriers or enablers in achieving the aspirations of the SEN Code of Practice (Department for Education, 2015). Their experiences point to the significance of actions that follow the pathologising process. The quality of individual support and communication following diagnosis is one important aspect but also as discussed earlier of significance are also: the curriculum and the nature of tasks; the nature of interpersonal relationships in successfully completing these tasks; the impact of supportive strategies provided when as using Nathan's terminology, he was "*struggling*"; the effectiveness of the disciplinary strategies they faced; as well as specific environmental elements within the schools and classrooms where they were educated.

What appears pivotal for both students is the quality of inter-personal relationships and meaningful dialogue. Their experiences also expose how embedded in the language of schools is the use of terminology to classify and divide individuals into homogenous groupings and how some of the terminology carries negative connotations. Beth and Nathan's reflections also highlight the significance of school environment, and the operation of disciplinary strategies upon the achievement of the aspirations of the SEND Code of Practice. These significant factors clearly influence pupils' perspectives of their own educational experience.

8.4.1 The significance of the quality of communication and dialogue

Nathan's experience of being aware he was under investigation for something but also being unsure of exactly what and not knowing or understanding the outcomes of the CAMHs referral appears consistent with the findings of Sheffield and Morgan's (2017) study which highlighted a group of pupils who were unaware of being labelled as having BESD. These findings raise two issues. Firstly, the need to ensure clarity in explaining the outcomes of a referral. Secondly, the need to involve individuals in discussions and decisions about their education and how their specific needs might be met. This is essential to realise UNCRC Article 12. The historic issue of parents and children not being involved in decision-making processes and not being aware of their right to be involved in matters concerning them was discussed in section 4.3.2. Nathan's experience and that reported by Sheffield and Morgan (2017) suggest that in some cases effective communication with students and their families still remains an issue. Pertinent to this study is how the level of involvement changes as Nathan becomes older. From being unaware of the nature of the diagnosis by CAMHs and unsure what the AP was as a young teenager he becomes involved and clear at the end of his secondary education about his next steps, college. This is reflected in the first stanza of Nathan's poem

Thank you … you're great

I'm going to college now

So I'll get there on the tram

I used to hate it for some reason.

I just want to go to college, get good job

In his interview he expressed clearly his intention of leaving school and going to college. When asked about staying on at school he repeated "*I can't do that*". Nathan's case suggests that despite the policy rhetoric of pupil and family consultation, there is still a profound mismatch between policy and the extent to which, in practice, individuals are involved in decisions about their own education. The change in Nathan's level of involvement could be linked to a number of factors,

such as his growing self-confidence, finding his ‘voice’, and his ‘voice’ and opinions being listened to and respected.

The issue from Nathan’s young teenage years around the diagnostic process does however lead to questions about who, if anyone, benefits from the labelling process if those assigned a label of SEND are unaware of the nature of the label being assigned to them and the issues which lead to the referral for diagnosis persist post labelling. Indeed, Beth and Nathan’s educational experiences suggest that the labelling process does not necessarily lead to a school meeting an individual’s need. On the one hand, labelling individuals helps schools either to access more resources or to move students to alternative provision, but neither of these necessarily improves students’ educational experiences. In some cases of ineffective strategies, as identified in this study, it may worsen students’ educational experiences.

The cyclical nature of behaviour and disciplinary techniques highlighted in Figures 12 and 13 suggests that some strategies served to perpetuate and aggravate the individual issues faced by Beth and Nathan. Beth’s account of her experiences suggest she felt, and indeed was, stuck in an algorithmic infinite cycle. For example, in Figure 12, Feedback Loop 1, the Report Card for lateness fuelled her anxiety about being late for school, resulting in further lateness and school absence. Feedback Loop 2 also identified the consequences of the educational context in which Beth was trying to do her best and be a good student. She was set inappropriate work; she was not receiving support and was isolated from her peers by being sent to work alone in The Green Room. Here, not only did Beth continue to feel unsupported, but she became increasingly isolated from her peers and remained unable to complete her work, which in turn fuelled her anxieties around not being able to do her work. Beth created a break in this vortex through her non-attendance. This raises the question, if Beth had continued to attend school, could the cycles be repeated ad infinitum? One strategy which may have provided the key to breaking the cycle is engaging in dialogue with Beth to hear her perceptions of the problems. But the effectiveness of any such dialogue would depend upon mutual trust and respect. So a precursor to this, as mentioned previously, is the need for the development of supportive, trusting relationships. Rather than do this, the school sought external support from the PRU, but only

after Beth had been driven to non-attendance. Again, Beth's experience highlights the significance of developing relational pedagogies within schools.

If, as in the cases of Beth and Nathan, behaviours appear to continue as they had been prior to the pathologising process, then there appears to be a need for an alternative possibility to be built into the system, addressing the root of the issues. For a different approach, an analysis of the impact of specific policies would provide a useful tool. In Figure 14 I have designed a simple impact analysis diagram based upon the issue within Beth's case of the ineffective use of a report card system to address lateness. The top part of Figure 14 shows the infinite cycle of constantly being on report for lateness when the issue is not resolved. The bottom section of Figure 14 illustrates a potential alternative to ineffective policy through employing a relational approach and entering into dialogue with pupils to discuss issues that affect their own lives and education experiences. In Beth's case through starting the process with dialogue before issuing a report card, such dialogue could have offered the school opportunity to understand the reasons behind her lateness, and could potentially have avoided the use of the report card system. Only through dialogue with Beth could the impact of the policy implementation be assessed and issues addressed. But without the existence of trusting relationships, then Beth might not have said anything.

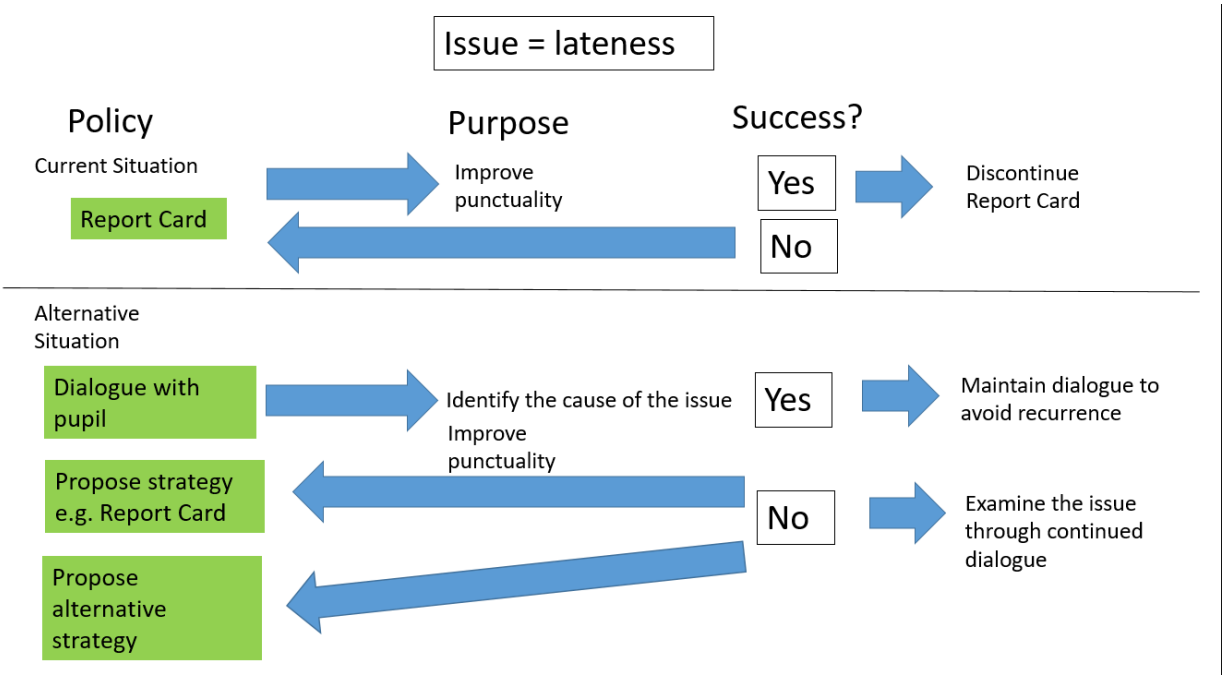


Figure 14: Impact of policy review

Care also needs to be taken as to how the nature of the dialogue addresses the issues causing concern. The case of Eleanor in Reid and Batten's (2006) study illustrates how openly asking a child 'what is wrong with you' rather than why they behaved in a particular way does not address the root of the problem. Furthermore, as Burt (1917) pointed out, being made to feel there is something wrong with you has damaging effects on the individual.

Nathan's example also serves to highlight how the roots of challenging behaviours can be perceived differently by teachers and the need for effective dialogue with pupils rather than repeatedly issuing punishments. This mirrors a problem identified in the literature of repeated punishments being inconsequential as they result neither in changes in social behaviour nor in academic progress (O'Brien, 2016; Sheffield and Morgan, 2017).

Nathan's challenging behaviour made him visible as a problem, whilst the factors contributing to this visibility remained invisible. He was misunderstood and deemed lazy and as not trying when struggling with his learning, for example with maths. The reality for Nathan was that his 'challenging behaviour' had a purpose, a reaction to his difficulty in coping with the pressures of school life. As illustrated previously in Figures 12 and 13, Beth's and Nathan's "problematic behaviours" highlight how unmet needs can result in pupils' adoption of "survival strategies" to cope with the challenges of mainstream settings. During their education journeys, Beth and Nathan repeatedly displayed "survival strategies" in the form of challenging behaviour, such as lateness, disrupting lessons, confrontation with teachers and running around school. Being visible as a problem within the classroom, McDermott (1993) similarly linked to the demands of the set tasks, and identified a 'continuum' of the level of visibility 'in the face of increasing demands' (p.280). In Nathan's case, negative behaviours such as being confrontational and aggressive, were attributed by Nathan as a response to academic difficulties and accusations of being lazy and of not trying. The punitive strategy, detention, employed by the school to effect change in these behaviours did not seem, unsurprisingly, to change his subsequent reactions. Nathan's confrontations with teachers seemed to be indicative of an unmet need. Similarly, Beth's experiences highlighted the impact of conflict with teachers and through her emotional response of crying also communicating 'an unsupported need' (Parker, et al., 2015, p. 238). Negative perceptions of teachers and resentment towards

mainstream schools by pupils both labelled as having SEND and excluded is also evident in the literature (Cooper et al., 1991; Cefai and Cooper, 2010), with such attitudes attributed to beliefs that schools and teachers had been unwilling and/or unable to understand them and failed to meet their needs (Cefai and Cooper, 2010; Cosma and Soni, 2019).

In addressing the second subsidiary question a further example of a mismatch between adult and pupil perceptions of school policies and strategies was discussed in the context of using segregated spaces for delivery support and interventions to individuals and specific groups of pupils. From one perspective, removal from the communal learning space is deemed to be supportive, but from an alternative perspective being identified as needing "support" was viewed as stigmatising, especially when support was provided out of the classroom (Sheffield & Morgan, 2017; Fellner, et al., 2017). In Beth's case, this pedagogic strategy neither helped her to develop strategies for dealing with behavioural expectations, nor helped her peers to better understand her difficulties.

Nathan's experiences, as discussed in addressing the second subsidiary question, exemplify how positive relationships are shown to alter the tone of social interactions and help to raise self-esteem and confidence. In contrast, Beth's experiences highlight the impact of negative relationships both with teachers and peers. The pivotal nature of these interactions in promoting both confidence and feelings of belonging or low self-esteem and alienation have similarly been identified in the literature (Cefai and Cooper 2009; 2010; Cosma and Soni 2019).

Despite the uniqueness of each of the participants' individual stories there appears commonality in the significance of the affective dimension of schooling for Beth and Nathan, which resonates with the research literature that, 'to be open to learning and to be able to learn effectively we need to feel safe and accepted' (Greenhalgh, 1994, p. 42). Evoking feelings of safety and acceptance are a myriad of factors, relating to the relationships with the adults within the school (as already discussed), to the nature of relationships with one's peers, as well as the impact of different spaces.

To feel safe and accepted means going to school without fear of being bullied or humiliated by peers or adults or both. The humiliating impact, for example, of being shouted at by teachers and being made to feel inadequate in front of their peers

was identified in Cefai and Cooper's (2009) research amongst pupils with SEMH in Malta. Nathan and Beth's accounts reflect other students' accounts as reported in the literature of the communicative, social and physical environments within schools presenting considerable sources of difficulties and anxiety for pupils (Humphrey & Lewis, 2008; Dwyfor Davies & Ryan, 2014; McAllister and Sloan 2017). Beth's experiences of the impact of both the teacher repeatedly shouting and being bullied by other girls who "*called me horrid names*" illustrate how experiences of mainstream schools can become stressful, intimidating and psychologically unsafe places. Within this study Beth and Nathan's accounts also contribute to an understanding of the affective dimension of such experiences. Nathan explained how in certain areas of the school he felt "*weird*" and "*ran around the building*", but also the inner rage and the build-up of anger when he perceived being accused of 'not trying' and being lazy. Beth explained how the humiliation and bullying resulted in crying, feelings of loneliness, and not wanting to go to school.

8.4.2 The significance of peer relationships

Peer approval is important for most pupils, as illustrated in this study as both Beth and Nathan identify the significance of peer approval and friendship. Indeed, Porter (2011) considers that social goals are often more salient in the day-to-day negotiation of school than academic goals. The quest for peer approval is reflected particularly in Nathan's account as he sought to make friends by making others laugh, stating that, "*I'd get into trouble but I just didn't care*". Being with friends was the only factor Nathan described as not being "*terrible*" in his mainstream school experiences.

Nathan also expressed awareness of how the dividing practices which attempted to label him as different could have impacted upon his capacity to fit into school and to make and maintain friendships – something which he prized. Consequently, following his referral to CAMHS, Nathan kept his diagnosis to himself for fear of being seen as different and also as a way to exercise control over his situation.

Whilst fears of stigma from peers were reflected in Nathan's account, within the literature some studies also allude to specific diagnoses impacting negatively upon

teachers' perceptions, attitudes and consequential relationships (Hodge, 2016). In his study, Hodge (2016) cites the instance of how following an autism diagnosis, the teacher suddenly stopped spending time with a pupil she had previously engaged with effectively. Hodge attributed this change in attitude and relationship following diagnosis to a belief that 'behaviours associated with autism in textbooks superseded the teacher's expert knowledge of the child that had been established through her own relationship with him' (p. 190). Whilst neither Beth nor Nathan perceived they were being treated differently following diagnosis, Beth's experience of being sent to work independently in the Green Room suggests some decision was made that she should work outside the classroom. This, as previously discussed, proved to have a deleterious impact on her mental well-being. The experiences recounted in this study and in the literature again point to the importance of viewing each student as an individual, rather than reacting to a perception around a specific diagnosis. Indeed, as discussed in 4.2 the terminology used in labels of SEND is problematic as it is 'rife with contradictions' (Carlson, 2015, p. 135), ambiguity (Norwich and Jones, 2012) and subjectivity (Frederickson and Cline, 2009: Norwich and Eaton, 2015). Such inherent problems with specific diagnostic labels emphasize the significance of not making 'certain assumptions about groups seen to share certain characteristics, and, in so doing, possibly forget to look at individuals' (Messiou, 2017 p. 153).

8.4.3 The significance of embedded language of difference

Whilst the original concept of SEN may have been intended as a move away from the use of deficit categories in labelling individuals, the tabular summary of the terms used in the third Code of Practice (Department for Education, 2015) as summarised in Table 3 (in section 4.3), illustrates the continued use of deficit categories within current policy. The filtering down and embedding of such terminology is illustrated in this study by terms used by both Beth and Nathan. The terms used by Beth to group others accessing the additional support offered within the Green Room reflects the appropriation of divisive terminology used within schools and classrooms.

In Chapter 4,the findings of studies on pupil perspectives of being labelled as having SEN were shown to vary from feelings of relief and the start of a process of self-understanding (Buckingham, 2019) to devastation (Cefai and Cooper, 2009). This study contributes to this as whilst neither Beth nor Nathan expressed these extremes, their accounts align with the literature which points to the impact of being labelled as evoking feelings of being judged, categorised and victimised (Wearmouth, 1999; Cefai and Cooper, 2009; 2010). A further possible reaction is seen through Nathan's acceptance of the process and outcomes, which illustrates the possibility of taking refuge in a diagnosis. He might have been judged and categorised but it was not his fault he had 'something'. In contrast to Hodge's (2016) concern of individuals constructing an identity around a label, he did not identify with this 'something', he did not recall what this 'something' was actually called. This may be because he had not been involved in the process or because he just needed to feel better about himself. For him, it was not his fault, as he stated, "*it's just how I am*". From an alternative perspective this could also be perceived as a way to deny responsibility for his behaviour.

8.4.4 Beth and Nathan's perceptions and experiences of exclusionary practices

Beth and Nathan's behavioural responses to the educational challenges they encountered in mainstream settings provide further illustration of the extremes that students go to just to survive in our mainstream schools, in which they as individuals are considered "the problem". The two students' experiences of exclusion from mainstream on a number of different levels also exemplify the application of exclusionary policies and guidelines operating within the English education system. The participants in this study experienced exclusion by being placed in separate spaces within a school (such as the Green Room), by being removed to off-site provisions commissioned by the school (such as the PRU or AP), and by being placed in a special school.

In Chapter 3, concerns raised in the literature were discussed around the extent to which schools strategically use categories to exclude or off-roll pupils (Hodge, 2016; Slee, 2011) 'to alternative provision, to home education or other schools'

(House of Commons Education Committee, 2017, p. 12). The literature search revealed that there is no official account of the numbers of pupils registered at a school but actually educated by an AP, and the DfE register of providers is incomplete (House of Commons Education Committee, 2017). This raises the issue of the hidden nature of some exclusionary practices and the concealed extent to which pupils are currently excluded from mainstream classrooms.

Beth's and Nathan's accounts indicate how through commissioning alternative placements, pupils can be relocated away from their mainstream school. These experiences reflect the application of the guidelines in the SEND Code of Practice (Department for Education, 2015):

> 'Local authorities, schools and post-16 education providers may commission alternative provision for other children and young people who face barriers to participation in mainstream education or training' (p. 216)

Hence 'support' was provided through exclusion. Applying this aspect of the policy enabled the mainstream school to move Beth to the PRU, which had a specialist unit for school refusers. Whether this was officially recorded as an exclusion or dual registration is unknown by Beth. From Nathan's perspective, he was not helped to find strategies to cope with break time or to understand his maths work. Rather, the solution found by the school was to exclude Nathan to an AP. In section 2.3 I adopted Foucault's (1977) concept of the carceral archipelago to describe the continuum of establishments to which schools exclude pupils. This continuum I termed an educational exclusionary archipelago. Beth's movement along the exclusionary pathway, from the mainstream classroom to the Green Room, then the PRU and finally a special school provides one example of travelling across an educational exclusionary archipelago. Nathan's journey to an AP and then to a special school provides another.

Beth and Nathan's perspectives on their ultimate exclusion from school appear to corroborate extant research findings that diagnosis does not necessarily lead to appropriate support or even to services that might provide the support needed (Russell, 2016; Runswick-Cole et. al., 2016). Rather than looking to address the causes of problematic behaviour, the SEND Code of Practice guidelines (Department for Education, 2015) result in the pathologising of individuals' needs.

These processes of pathology can in turn be deployed as tools for exclusion, either officially or unofficially.

The experiences of Beth and Nathan raise questions about the purposes of pathologising difference. Both experienced labelling by being diagnosed with SEND and both were excluded from mainstream settings. However, considering their exclusion as a direct and inevitable consequence of labelling is too simplistic and there is no evidence from their accounts of there being a direct link. Nonetheless, as illustrated in Table 2 in the introduction to this study, there is a disproportionate over-representation of SEN pupils in the exclusion data, so Beth and Nathan's experiences reflect the complexity of how many schools manage pupils' challenging behaviour.

In 2018/19 persistent disruptive behaviour was cited as the most common reason for school exclusion (Gov.uk, 2020). At a simplistic level, there are two sides to challenging behaviour, the action and the cause. However, as there are multiple dimensions to challenging behaviours, both action and cause are open to a multitude of interpretations. The behaviours described by Beth and Nathan, as highlighted in Figures 12 and 13, appear to support the literature that suggests that challenging behaviours communicate an unmet or 'unsupported need' (O'Brien, 2016; Parker, et al., 2015). For example, as in Beth's experience, a response to being bullied (Reid & Batten, 2006), for Nathan, task avoidance, boredom, inappropriate levels of work (Sheffield and Morgan 2017), and for both students a response to past negative relationships with members of staff (Cosma and Soni, 2019) as well as resistant behaviours in response to disciplinary strategies (Brown, et al., 2006; Cefai & Cooper, 2010). Beth and Nathan's experiences support the findings of Ofsted's review of SEN (2010) which draws attention to the importance of looking 'beyond presenting behaviours to identify each student's needs' (p. 19) and raise the need to question whether some exclusions of children with SEND could have been avoided if their difficulties had been supported effectively within mainstream settings. This raises further questions about the impact of education policy, which in England, appears driven by principles of exclusion. The efficiency debate, promoting school exclusion to facilitate the efficient education of others and the efficient use of resources (Norwich 2014; Hallett and Hallett, 2021), appears to be at the forefront of this line of thinking.

Foucault's concept of bio-power to theorise how governments seek to control society and individuals under the auspices of the good of society facilitates an understanding of how mechanisms of bio-power filter through institutional education systems, and manifest in schools and classrooms. Since the recommendation of the Royal Commission (1889) for the different treatment and separation of the "feeble-minded child", subsequent education policy and legislation have consistently embedded the concept of exclusion into the English education system. Despite shifts in attitudes and a move towards discourses of inclusion, educational policy over a century later still upholds exclusion, either through refusal of a mainstream placement or through exclusion from mainstream settings, the latter being the experience of both Beth and Nathan. Underpinning decisions which enable the exclusion of pupils with SEN are guidelines embedded in the SEND Code of Practice (Department for Education, 2015) concerning the 'efficient education of others' (p. 172), and the commissioning of places in Alternative Provisions (p. 174).

A commonality in the experiences of Beth and Nathan reflects how unmet needs can culminate in exclusion from mainstream classrooms and schools, but also the trauma students can experience when their needs are unmet, an experience so traumatic to lead to school refusal in Beth's case. Exclusion is a life changing event and Nathan's descriptive comment, "*they just kicked me out*" reflects how such actions can evoke profound and enduring feelings of rejection.

8.5 Concluding Comments

This doctoral research arose through a combination of listening to the voices of excluded pupils identified as having SEN of their perceptions of their experiences in mainstream classrooms, and my own professional concerns around the exclusion from mainstream schools of pupils with SEN. The stark headlines of the Ofsted SEND review (Ofsted, 2017), as cited below, resonated with my experiences. The aim of this thesis was to listen to the often-marginalised voices of those with SEN, and to hear the voices behind these headlines, to understand the realities they had faced in mainstream classrooms. To reiterate, the Ofsted SEND headlines are:

> Children and young people who have SEND were found to be excluded, absent or missing from school much more frequently than other pupils nationally (Ofsted, 2017, p. 5)

and

> School leaders had used unofficial exclusions too readily to cope with children and young people who have SEND (Ofsted, 2017, p. 5)

In this thesis I have argued that the roots of exclusion originated with the introduction of mass compulsory education and dividing practices at the end of the nineteenth century. Since then, attitudes and circumstances have changed. All children now have a right to education, but within the English education system, discussions and disagreements around the definition of inclusion continue to fuel debate as to whether all children should be educated together in mainstream classes or in separated provision. In this study, the two participating students' perceptions of school systems and policies suggest that an ideology based on educational segregation still thrives in practice.

During the past 150 years, the balances of power might have shifted between professionals, parents and pupils regarding the dominant voices in the labelling process, however the exclusion strategy has helped fuel the maintenance of a segregated system. In former times, professionals determined who was to be scrutinised as eligible for mainstream education or not, and parents were forced to comply with these decisions or face a fine. Since the birth of the Code of Practice (DFE, 1994), parental power has seemingly grown with parents able to instigate an assessment and the labelling process as well as appeal against LEA decisions (Strand & Lindsay, 2009). The potential gains of having access to greater resources, mitigating blame for a child's behaviour and accessing support networks have fuelled this demand (Ho, 2014; Hodge, 2016; Lauchlan & Boyle, 2007), but Beth and Nathan's experiences have highlighted how reality may not always match expectations. Similarly, whilst an acknowledgement of the involvement of the child in decisions about their own education has grown, this study has highlighted how the level of involvement still remains contingent upon the dominant voices, with students continuing to feel excluded from decisions that shape their own lives.

With behaviour in itself no longer determined as SEND and the rhetoric around looking for underlying needs, the experiences of Beth and Nathan highlight the continuing difficulties pupils identified with SEND are experiencing with respect to meeting individual need, in particular the significance of misaligned perceptions of problematic behaviours and supposedly supportive strategies.

Giving voice to Beth and Nathan has uncovered the impact of actions and policies on pupils' self-perceptions and mental health; the need for clarity in explanations of processes involving the child thus enabling the potential for greater involvement in decision-making processes; and a need to understand how various elements of the school environment impact upon an individual and their capacity to be a good student.

In the next chapter, I reflect on the implications of this study in addressing the issues raised.

Chapter 9: Conclusions

9.1 Contribution to Knowledge

The aim of this thesis was to generate new knowledge by creating a space to listen to and hear the experiences and perceptions of two pupils' accounts of their journeys out of the mainstream system. A major contribution made by this study is to generate knowledge from a minority perspective, from students labelled with SEN who have been excluded from school. Through the combination of poetic transcription and a case study approach, it contributes to an awareness of the personal impact of institutional procedures operating within schools which serve to label and exclude vulnerable pupils from mainstream schools. Due to growing concern around the disproportionate over-representation of individuals labelled with having SEN within exclusion data (as discussed in the introduction) this study provides a timely insight into the issues faced by such students in mediating mainstream settings. It also provides a practical response to the exclusionary processes that the two case study students encountered during their school years.

This study also pushes methodological boundaries by using poetic transcription to portray the perspectives of two school students who have been labelled as having SEN and have experienced exclusion from mainstream education. The use of poetic transcription in this context fills a significant gap within current educational research. Whilst the use of poetic transcription has begun to emerge during the past twenty years in the context of educational research, its application has mainly been within higher education and teacher training settings, with the participants all adults. Through showcasing the potential to portray a more vicarious representation of the data, this study shows the value of this methodology for studies focusing on the experiences, feelings and perceptions of marginalised groups within the school system. Given there is little guidance around the creation of research poems, the approach I used (as outlined in Chapter 6) also provides a contribution to the limited literature concerning the processes of poetic transcription.

Through using a case study approach, this study has enabled two students, Beth and Nathan, to articulate how they have been personally affected by specific practices within their schools, in particular the impact upon their feelings and emotions and upon their mental health. Firstly, in the process of diagnosis of SEN, this study contributes an awareness of individual concerns around potential ramifications and stigma from peers. Secondly, this study adds to an understanding of the differing impacts of the use of segregated spaces for supportive interventions within schools. Beth's experiences exemplify negative impacts of labelling and exclusion, and how supposedly supportive strategies can evoke feelings of alienation, isolation, loneliness and school refusal. Thirdly, Beth and Nathan's reflections enhance understanding of how disciplinary strategies can escalate difficulties. Of significance throughout this study is the voicing of the emotional impact on students of labelling, disciplinary and exclusion strategies and practices used within schools.

In line with concerns identified within the literature, as discussed in Chapters 1 and 4, this study has also argued that the exclusions of pupils identified and labelled as having SEN often result from schools' inability to meet student need combined with schools' need to maintain institutional order. The consequences of this, as experienced by Beth and Nathan, are that schools opt to commission placements student elsewhere.

Furthermore, this study highlights how the option to exclude may obviate the need for schools to understand the underlying causes of students' behaviours and can lead to these behaviours being misunderstood. From the uniqueness of each case study, it is possible to gain insight into each student's feelings about how their challenging behaviours were perceived by others. In Nathan's case, the angry and confrontational outburst at being accused of being lazy and not concentrating resulted in his self-perception, as well as others' perception of him as a person with "*attitude*", hence not "*a decent person*" – constituting a double erosion of self-esteem. The importance of the opinions of others is further evident in Nathan's account, using the phrase repeatedly "*they thought*", which emphasizes the importance to him of what others thought of him and his mannerisms. His behaviour had a purpose, a reaction to a difficulty in coping with the pressures of school life, but he also cared about the perceptions of others. In Beth's case, her perception of the opinion of others in the school is significant as she is striving to

be seen as a good student. Her perception of being on the Report Card for lateness is of being considered rebellious, not a desirable attribute. The expression of these experiences aids understanding of how the impact of students' unmet need goes beyond challenging behaviour and confrontation with teachers to impact on pupils' self-perception, self-esteem and mental health.

As suggested in the literature and borne out by my professional experiences as a teacher, Beth and Nathan's accounts reflect the voices of many excluded pupils who want to learn and succeed but find themselves labelled, stigmatised and excluded. In Chapter 8 I discussed how aspects of Beth and Nathan's experiences out of mainstream education fulfilled the aspirations of the SEND Code of Practice as outlined in paragraph 6.1, that:

> All children and young people are entitled to an appropriate education, one that is appropriate to their needs, promotes high standards and the fulfilment of potential. This should enable them to:
>
> • achieve their best
>
> • become confident individuals living fulfilling lives, and
>
> • make a successful transition into adulthood, whether into employment, further or higher education or training. (DfE, 2015, p. 92).

Both Beth and Nathan had become successful students despite experiencing adversity in mainstream settings. Their eventual success challenges the validity of the views presented in Chapters 1 and 5 that through exclusion students are joining 'a near-hidden group of children and young people in our education system which is being failed' (Centre for Social Justice, 2011), and that attending segregated provisions could impact negatively upon their life chances (O'Riordan, 2011; Michael & Frederickson, 2013). But what this study also reveals is the emotional trauma endured by the participants who despite being identified as having SEN had not been supported successfully within their local mainstream school and consequently had been subjected to the disciplinary processes within a system which is geared towards exclusion. The trauma and despair felt by Beth and Nathan as they experienced the education system's exclusionary practices are evident through the accounts in this study and should not be under-estimated.

Inclusive cultures value difference and diversity. Crucial factors identified in this study are the responses to diversity and challenging behaviours both in terms of the supportive strategies and disciplinary strategies employed and the response to the impact of these strategies upon the individual. The articulation by Beth and Nathan of resisting the strategies employed by their mainstream schools contributes to an understanding of how pupils' behaviours, whatever those behaviours may be, have purpose and meaning, and that schools' disciplinary or supportive strategies may not only be ineffective but at times counter-productive. Beth and Nathan's accounts of their unique experiences have provided further insight into pupils' different strategies of resistance to institutional practices and policies which failed to address their respective needs.

This study has shown that in the case of Beth and Nathan, disciplinary strategies at best provided temporary responses to their behaviours, and at worst, set in motion the cyclical reproduction of the very behaviours the strategies were intended to quell. In this respect, the powerful implementation of school policies such as the confiscation of items schools deemed inappropriate or the use of report cards, highlights the systemic justification for discipline and punishment rather than the higher goals of the 2015 Code (Department for Education, 2015) and of the UNCRC (United Nations, 1989). Discourses of punishment and othering still pervade and as this study has found, they continue to trump children's democratic human rights.

9.2 Implications and Recommendations for Practice and Policy

Through giving voice to the experiences of Beth and Nathan, I have highlighted the significance of the impact that SEN policies and school actions have on pupils' self-perceptions, behaviour and mental health. In their case, and in my professional experience in the cases of many other students, their accounts illustrate how the, despite policy rhetoric, the actions taken by mainstream schools still do not foreground respect for the rights of the child in the decision-making processes. Furthermore, Beth and Nathan's experiences have pointed to issues around the need for effective support that enables pupils to access the curriculum

and the pivotal nature of trusting relationships and relational pedagogy in addressing individual needs whether academic, social or emotional.

To achieve inclusive schools, this study has highlighted the need to challenge the inherent 'architecture of exclusion' (Slee, 2011, p. 108) within practices and policy. The study has shown how the response by schools to difficulties encountered by pupils appears critical. In the following section, I propose recommendations for practice and policy on how the nature of supportive strategies might be modified to ameliorate the challenges that pupils identified with SEN continue to face in educational settings.

9.2.1 Recommendations for practice

At a school level, evidence from this study suggests a need for schools to monitor and evaluate the impact and effectiveness of both supportive and disciplinary strategies. The rationale for this is that for children who find school challenging, as exemplified by this study, some strategies may have little value other than inconvenience, or they may exacerbate the difficulties that students experience. This study has highlighted different perspectives of supportive strategies between the school and those identified as requiring them, such as the perception of the use of designated rooms for specific interventions. Such segregated areas might be perceived by teaching staff as places of safety, but for pupils, as in Beth's case, they might be perceived as discriminatory spaces that signify difference, and as isolating spaces away from friends. A re-evaluation of supportive strategies and making them more inclusive could provide a solution to the problem illustrated in Beth's case of the exclusionary aspects of attending special segregated areas. Alternative models could be provided for spaces that offer additional support for all pupils, not just pupils who have been labelled as having a particular need such as 'SEN' or 'EAL'. For example, spaces that are modelled on inclusive practices of homework clubs and extra-curricular after-school clubs (Florian & Rouse, 2001), could be less stigmatising and more generative of pupil inclusion.

In considering disciplinary strategies, if the same pupil is receiving the same punishment repeatedly, as in the case of Nathan and detention, then the strategy is clearly ineffective. Similarly, the disciplinary strategies Beth was exposed to,

such as the report card, internal exclusion, and the confiscation of her phone, did not address her difficulties. Rather, these disciplinary strategies compounded her struggle with mental health by heightening her anxieties, resulting in her refusal to attend school. When faced with pupil behaviours that are perceived as problematic, schools need to evaluate whether the strategies they adopt change the way individuals behave or exacerbate the situation. This reflects Greene's (2014) suggestion that 'we cannot keep doing things the way we always have and continue losing kids' (p. xii). As this study has shown, the rigid strategies used in the mainstream schools attended by Beth and Nathan served to reinforce and perpetuate negative behaviours rather than address and resolve the issues. Alternative approaches which look to understand the cause of the problematic behaviour are required and as I have argued within this thesis underpinning such approaches is the need for dialogue in the context of trusting relationships established within a framework of relational pedagogy.

The need to address the root causes of pupils' challenging behaviours is evident in this study. In the discussion chapter, I presented a diagrammatic approach to identifying underlying issues that provoke problematic behaviours and inhibit social and academic progress as well as pupils' emotional well-being. In using a simple diagrammatic system of analysis, as illustrated in Figures 12 and 13 in section 8.1, I have provided a system for visualising and breaking down the self-perpetuating cycles of school actions and pupil behaviour that are perceived as problematic by mainstream educators. These diagrams can be replicated or adapted to facilitate educators' identification of the underlying causes of pupil behaviours. Significant factors in breaking these cycles of action are: 1) developing trusting relationships which enable engagement with pupils in dialogue about their behaviour; and 2) professional reflection on the impact of schools' decisions on pupils' behaviours and well-being. The feedback loops in the diagrams illustrate how problematic behaviours tend to have patterns and are in response or anticipation of certain events and circumstances.

Furthermore, the impact analysis diagram presented in Figure 14 (chapter 8.4) offers one approach that could facilitate professional reflection and could be adapted for different scenarios. One crucial element in evaluating the impact of strategies is engaging in dialogue with the pupil. Trusting relationships take time to develop. Beth and Nathan's experiences showed the damaging impact of

negative relationships and how they can be barriers to meaningful dialogue. Nathan's experiences also point to the importance of developing positive trusting relationships that include taking an interest, gaining and showing mutual respect, acknowledging strengths and active listening.

A second important implication at the school and classroom level is the need for schools to address the subtle practices which sow the seeds of notions of difference. Beth's account when describing those being taught in the Green Room as "*the EAL*" and "*the dyslexics*" supports research evidence discussed in Chapter 4, which identified how children appropriate the language used by adults (Maybin, 2013), including terms of difference, to describe each other as well as themselves (Davis & Watson, 2001). In the context of impact upon self-image, consideration is needed regarding the impact of being labelled as having SEN. The explicit analysis of language used by Beth and Nathan summarised in Table 4 (see 7.3) reflects how embedded the language of deficit is within schools and its impact upon the labelled individual. This provides further evidence of the impact of the language used in schools, adopted from official policy, to signify not just difference but also that difference is constructed within the school environment as a negative attribute. This suggests that consideration needs to be given to how the language used in policy is adopted in practice. The use of the negative and devaluing language which defines children in terms of disorder, difficulties or impairments serves to pathologise the difficulties faced by a child, and this rhetoric needs to be addressed and rectified. The challenge to schools is how awareness of diversity can be raised without labelling and stigmatisation. The first step is to discourage the use of labels in the classroom and refer to each child as an individual who has specific and unique strengths and needs.

Beth and Nathan's experiences have provided accounts of exclusionary practices operating in both mainstream and non-mainstream settings. Drawing on these two pupils' experiences and building on extant literature concerning effective strategies to re-engage learners who have been excluded from school, in Figure 15 below, I suggest a range of strategies that could enable schools to acknowledge and address pupils' unmet needs. In Nathan's words, to create school environments where, "*you can actually learn*". These strategies can be broadly grouped as: pertaining to the educational environment; relationships with others; pupils having

a sense of belonging. In Figure 15 these are articulated in the form of guiding principles.

Guiding principles:

To create trusting, supportive relationships:

- Engage in dialogue with pupils
- Practice active listening

To ensure pupils are supported effectively:

- Engage in dialogue with a pupil about the challenges they are experiencing
- Engage in dialogue with a pupil about feelings about supportive strategies
- Evaluate the impact of supportive strategies
- Engage in dialogue with a pupil repeatedly receiving the same disciplinary strategy
- Evaluate the effectiveness of disciplinary strategies

To embrace diversity rather than stigmatise:

- Refer to individuals as individuals, not as part of a homogenised group

To create educational spaces where pupils can learn:

- Create calm spaces
- Create smaller classes
- Develop relational pedagogies within classroom

Figure 15: Guiding principles for practice

9.2.2 Recommendations for policy

Widespread changes in practice are unlikely to occur without changes in policy. Drawing from the literature review and the empirical evidence from this study

there are three main areas where policy change could be most effective. These concern changing the ways in which resources are tied to diagnostic processes; changing the deficit language used in policy; and changing the ways in which placement decisions are taken to ensure that parent and pupil perspectives are genuinely included in all decisions rather than in name only.

As evidenced in 4.3.1, I am not alone in arguing for a continuing need for a review of the technical implementation of policy and a change to a more flexible system that provides teachers with the resources they need and provides parents and students with the timely support they require. There needs to be a move away from the current situation in which diagnostic processes and labelling are linked with resources. The historical problem, discussed in 4.3.1, is still apparent that some parents do not want a diagnosis for their child but need one to obtain additional support for their child. This suggests the need for a re-evaluation of policies which withhold access to support and resources. The dilemma of tying policy to resource allocation highlights the uneven relationship of power between parents and professionals, creating a layer of gatekeepers who determine access or denial of resources, with the basis of the decision contingent upon parental consent to pathologise their child's difference. An alternative approach where 'defining student eligibility for support is not based on specialised assessment or diagnosis' (Graham & Jahnukainen, 2011, p. 277), as evident in Finland, would not only address this issue but potentially enable more timely interventions as the release of resources and support would occur without the need to wait for the outcomes of time consuming referrals (as evident in Nathan's case) and documentation of evidence of the need for interventions. Such an approach may also address a further issue in the current English system as highlighted by the recent SEND Review (Ofsted 2017) that support is often still unavailable even after diagnosis.

If there can be a shift in policy which unties support and resources from diagnosis and labelling, then this creates the potential for challenging the terminology used in SEN policy. As illustrated in Appendix 1 changing attitudes have been inter-twined with changes to terminology. Despite these changes labelling and defining different categories of SEN remains problematic and perpetuates the concept of 'othering'. This study has highlighted the negative impact of the pejorative and deficit language that is embedded within current SEN policy. Drawing from this is a need to challenge the terms used in policy as well as a wider debate about

whether there is ever justification for using and perpetuating terms which use pejorative or deficit language.

A concern throughout this study is the limited extent to which children's voices and rights are respected, heard and enabled. This study has shown the need for dialogue and consultation with pupils, so they understand what is happening to them in decisions about their own education, are part of the decision-making process and have a say in what strategies might be implemented to support their transition to new settings. The application of policy without due regard to the individual is evident when LAs and schools utilise the power from the Education Act, 2002 and the guidelines from the SEND Code of Practice (Department for Education, 2015) to place pupils in provisions beyond mainstream school premises, yet do not support transitions between schools. In these circumstances, the child does not have the occasion to influence the type of education provided or appeal the decision (Ogg & Kaill, 2010). The child's lack of involvement in the decision-making process violates child rights to access information about their own education (UNCRC Article 28, United Nations, 1989), as exemplified in Nathan's case by the lack of information he received before his placement in alternative provision.

The educational experiences discussed by Beth and Nathan further serve to exemplify the 'paradox of growing exclusion in societies that profess to be inclusive' (Graham and Jahnukainen, 2011 p. 282). As evidenced in this study, schools' often subtle practices, such as the use of specific designated spaces for delivering interventions, as well as the more overtly in the use of APs and special schools, demonstrates how exclusionary rather than inclusionary practices underpin current the educational policy and practice in England. There needs to be a shift in SEN policy away from a focus on deficits and dysfunctions, pre-determined rates of progress and the efficient education of others. A more inclusive approach could be more securely embedded in education policy, such as advocating the need for training and resources that promotes a range of social and technical approaches to enabling all learners' autonomy and participation. As part of this shift, there needs to be an acceptance that 'children learn and progress at different rates' (McDermott, 1993, p. 272). This would mean valuing and promoting diversity and equality of opportunity for all learners and supporting access to learning in ways that are responsive to individual need.

9.2.3 What might a brighter future look like?

To achieve what I term the utopian ideal of inclusion, that is, that all are included in mainstream settings, this study has shown there is a need to refocus the principles embedded in the English education system. This requires a move away from the 'efficient education' debate, a move away from exclusion being an accepted as integral to policy and a move towards dialogue emphasising inclusive approaches within schools, as seen in Scotland and Finland. To move away from the 'efficient education' debate a radical shift in philosophy is required. This could entail a refocus away from the neoliberal, market driven, competitive school system, as exemplified successfully by the Finnish education system which in 'eschewing neoliberal policy orthodoxy, … has avoided applying the blow-torch of school markets, league tables and high stakes accountability to the smouldering tinder-box that is push-down curriculum and increasing student diversity' (Graham and Jahnukainen, 2011, p. 279) and as a consequence 'appears to have built a more inclusive system' (ibid). Changes within practice and policy towards the promotion of a system which accepts diversity and accepts the unique learning pathways of individual students could lead to a system which no longer relies upon a safety net of APs, PRUs and special schools, as local mainstream schools would be able to meet the educational, emotional and social needs of all their students.

9.3 Study Limitations

This is a small-scale research project in which there were only two participants who both came from the same special school but had arrived from different mainstream and AP provisions. Hence their stories reflect the unique nature of the pupils' experiences as well as overlapping factors.

I have deliberately decided not to label the two case study students with a specific category of SEN, because I believe diagnostic labels are reductive and counter to the spirit of this thesis. Furthermore, the case study pupils' experiences resonated

with other stories from different special schools I had worked at where different labels had been applied to children. Attaching a label would have detracted from them as unique individuals. They would be two pupils with ‘xxx’. This I felt would be a betrayal of my approach to teaching, which based on getting to know the child first then working out how I am going to support that child’s learning. It is my problem as a teacher to be able to teach. If I am unsuccessful, it is still my problem, but an enigma to be solved through dialogue with pupils. In some ways, my personal belief in non-labelling caused dilemmas in my engagement with research literature.

In using poetic transcription there was little guidance in the literature. This is still an emergent method of data analysis that embodies few conventions (Kennedy, 2009) so my use of poetic transcription is based on my interpretation of the method. Using poetic transcription is open to critique for being a highly subjective interpretation of the data, in that the poems reflect particular interpretations of the mood presented by the accounts. On reflection, I stand by the potential of this methodology in maintaining the affective dimension of Beth and Nathan’s experiences. Whilst I had shared my poetic transcription with both participants and both had been moved and pleased with the poems, I had constructed them with their words. A future research possibility would be greater involvement of the participants in the creation of the poems from their interviews.

The use of poetic transcription aimed to capture the voices of Beth and Nathan ‘in a way that would impact on the reader’ (Kennedy p. 1430). My experimentation with poetic analysis adds an additional filter through which the voices of pupils was processed, creating an intertwining of voices. One limitation of the poetic form that I found was that once I had completed the poems, I found that in certain circumstances to fully explore the stanza and develop the argument I had to refer back to and quote in prose form. So for research purposes, diverse approaches were needed to understand the complexity of the views expressed by participants during interview.

In terms of participant recruitment, one of the major issues I encountered was in gaining access to participants who met the research criteria. Firstly, the need to gain ethical approval from the university and ethical reviewer recommendations led to a restriction to Key Stage 4 pupils, who were deemed as having greater capacity to give voluntary informed consent. The second issue arose from not

wanting to disrupt students' education unnecessarily by removing them from their lessons as they were studying for GCSEs, resulting in restricted time available for the interviews. Another practical issue was spatial. At the start of the research process, I worked across four different schools at the MAT, however by the time ethical approval had been granted I was working at two sites. For practical reasons, this influenced which site I could base my study at. During the earlier assignments for the EdD, my participants had been at the SEMH school, however as my schedule no longer included this site, it became impractical to engage with participants from that setting.

Finally, this study is somewhat limited by my inexperience as a researcher. In listening through the recordings of the pupils speaking during interview, I realised that some of my questions reflected my Insider knowledge of the systems of exclusions. My main concern during the interview process was not to be insensitive and cause distress. For any future research I may conduct, this doctoral study has been an invaluable learning journey.

9.4 Recommendations for Further Study

The more I read literature in this field, the more I think and want to better understand my own participation in the education system in which I have worked for over thirty years. Clearly, whilst completing this research many questions arose. In this study my problematic was very specific in that I focused on the experiences of pupils designated as SEN and who had been excluded from mainstream. Not every child in special education has been previously excluded but someone, or some sequence of people, has decided that special education outside the mainstream would be the best placement for them. Research around placement decisions from parental perspectives would provide clearer insights into understanding the reasons for the growth in numbers attending special schools and academies.

There is concern, reflected in the literature, around future life chances for excluded pupils. Whilst Beth and Nathan both progressed to key stage 5 provisions, and if their lives continue to follow this positive trajectory, then support should be

available until they reach age 25. A further area for research would be how typical such outcomes are, how secure pupil trajectories are, with analysis of the complexity of intersecting factors that are needed to guide pupils towards attaining goals to which they themselves are committed.

A particular concern arising from this research is the extent of hidden exclusions, as there is no official record of, and the impact of those experiencing this type of exclusion. To gain a greater understanding of the trajectories towards exclusion, a further recommendation could be systematic analysis of the processes and procedures leading to exclusion, tracing how decisions have been taken, by whom, and the outcomes.

As this thesis identifies, two fundamentally important and disturbing areas which need to be the focus of further research include 1) the extent of hidden exclusions, and the impact of these on pupil' social emotional and academic development, and 2) the extent to which the rights of the child are upheld in schools, especially for pupils who find themselves categorised as being at the margins of the education system.

9.5 Final Reflections

In taking the less trodden professional track into non-mainstream education I became passionate about listening to the stories of pupils out of mainstream. The destination of my EdD journey is my contribution to knowledge in creating a space in academia for the voices of the excluded child with SEN to be heard, and to be heard through poetry as processed through the perspective of a practitioner exploring how education policies and professional pathways lead to particular choices of action.

The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of the impact of labelling and exclusion on students, from students' perspectives, in light of the disproportionate exclusion from mainstream education of schools pupils identified as having SEN. At the heart of this problem is an institutional system of policies and practices that are fuelled by ambiguities and open to different interpretations. The legacy, I have argued, is a system which impacts disproportionality on the

vulnerable, through over-representation in the diagnosis of SEN and once labelled, as having SEN further over-represented in the statistics of exclusion. In this study, engaging with and hearing the voices of students with SEN who had been excluded from mainstream schools has not only highlighted the impact of such practices but has also afforded insights into how a more inclusive culture could be created in schools. The pupils' accounts provide insight into the damaging effects of ineffective disciplinary and supportive strategies in response to their behaviours in school that are labelled as challenging. Rather than looking to address the root of stress and anxiety experienced by some pupils in mainstream school environments or to understand the detrimental impact of confrontational inter-personal relationships, there is still a marked tendency in the English education system to pathologise the individual. The evidence generated in this study point to a need to challenge the current exclusionary practices and policies that are embedded in a system that is reliant on divisive practices to filter out those who potentially could disrupt the smooth running of the mainstream education system.

In July 2020, the government in England announced proposals for thousands of places in new special Free Schools, in response to the boom in demand for special school places, as discussed in section 3.4. Whilst any investment in high quality provision is welcome, this acceptance of a continuingly disproportionate levels of exclusions of pupils with SEN, (as evidenced in Table 2, chapter 4 and section 5.2 is a major concern and moves the English education system further from my utopian ideal of inclusion, that of all pupils educated within their local mainstream school. It is the very existence of such provisions which perpetuate a system underpinned by exclusion (Slee 2011). Through building awareness of governmental policy, research findings and empirical study, this study has identified many issues that contribute to this problem. For Beth and Nathan, being in mainstream education had been a traumatic experience because they had experienced "othering" which in turn had diminished their self-esteem. By sharing this work with those who remain on the more trodden path inside mainstream, as well as policy makers, it is my aspiration, through the development of publications for academia, practice and policy that the pupils' voices are attended to. My particular aim is for practitioners to evaluate existing practices and act to effect change from within. In a time when schools and teachers are under considerable pressure, this study offers opportunity for reflection by teachers of the power a

teacher has within existing systems upon the individuals they work with in terms of academic, social and emotional outcomes.

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Appendix 1: Summary of Changing Labels and Categories

1889 Royal Commission on the Blind Deaf and Dumb (Egerton Report)		1913 Chief Medical Officer of the Board of Education	1929 Wood Committee	1944 Education Act		Education (Handicapped Children) Act 1970	Education Act (1981)		SEN Code of Practice 2001	SEN Code of Practice 2014
1889	1899	1913	1929	1945	1962	1970	1981	1981	2001	2014
Exceptional children		Mentally deficient children	Mentally defective children	Educationally handicapped children			Children with learning difficulties	Children with learning difficulties		
								SpLD (specific learning difficulties)		4 broad areas of need
Idiot	Idiot	Idiot	Ineducable child	Educationally sub-normal - severe	Severely sub-normal (SSN)	Educationally sub-normal	S p e c i a l E d u c a t i o n a l N e e d s	SLD (severe learning		Cognition and Learning
Imbecile	Imbecile	Imbecile	Retarded children							
Feeble Minded		Moral Imbecile			Psychopathic					
Blind	Blind	Blind		Blind		Blind				Sensory and or physical
				Partially sighted		Partially sighted				
Deaf and Dumb	Deaf	Deaf		Deaf		Deaf				
				Partially deaf	Partial hearing	Partial hearing				
	Epileptic	Epileptic		Epileptic		Epileptic		MLD (moderate Learning difficultes)		
		Mental defective (feeble-minded)		Educationally subnormal - moderate		Educationally subnormal (mild or moderate)				
Defective				Maladjusted						
		Physical defective		Physically handicapped		Physically handicapped				
				Speech defect		Speech defect				Communication and interatcion
				Delicate	Delicate	Delicate				Social, emotional and mental health difficulties
				Diabetic						
								PMLD (profound and multiple learning difficulties)		

Appendix 2: Pre-planned Interview Schedule

What are the perceptions of pupils who have moved from mainstream schools of their educational experiences?

How many mainstream schools have you attended?

How many non-mainstream schools did you attend?

In what year did you come here?

Why did you change from your last school?

What was life like in primary school?

What was it like in secondary school?

What was the best experience?

Did you have a time when you weren't in school?

How is it different here? Or is it the same?

What was the best experiences since you've been here?

An important issue is having your voice heard. Have you attended any Annual Reviews?

Do you remember being told you had special educational needs?

At the MAT you can stay on in one of the key stage 5 provisions. What do you want to do?

So what's your plans for the future?

Appendix 3: Risk Assessment

RISK ASSESSMENT

FACULTY/DEPARTMENT	BUILDING
Education	n/a

1) ACTIVITY

Researching the educational experiences of students within a special school setting. Use of voice recorder and paper to record experiences.

2) PERSONS AT RISK

Participants

3A) HAZARDS

Emotional well-being

3B) Hazard Rating **Low** ☒ **Med** ☐ **High** ☐

4A) RISK CONTROL METHODS

At the start of the research session check how the student is feeling.
If student appears anxious, unsettled or angry prior to the session reschedule.
If during the session their become anxious or unsettled seek the support of the interventions team at the school who regularly work with the students.
Contact parents if distressed.

Appendix 4: Information Sheet and Consent Form

Participant Information Sheet

Jane Dickson

EdD

Brooks Building

Education Department

Manchester Metropolitan University

I would like to invite you to take part in a research study. Before you decide you need to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Ask questions if anything you read is not clear or would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not to take part.

You have been invited to be part of my university project about the educational experiences of pupils who have been to mainstream schools, but are now attending special schools. I am very interested in your experiences and reflections about different types of educational settings you have been to.

The title of the project is: The views and experiences of pupils in a 'special' multi-academy trust.

What it will involve:

You will be asked to share your experiences of the different educational settings you have been in, what you enjoyed and didn't enjoy. This will be carried out at your school. In the project your name will not be used. You can come up with an imaginative name for yourself or your initial can be used. All information you give during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential, and any information about you which leaves the university will have your name and the names of the schools attended removed

Participation in this research project is unpaid. You are free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

Jane Dickson **Research Ethics and Governance Managers Alison Lloyd**+44 (0)161 247 2836 **Ramona Statache**+44 (0)161 247 2853 ethics@mmu.ac.

Appendix 5: Pupil Consent Form

13/11/17

Jane Dickson

EdD

Brooks Building

Manchester Metropolitan University

Consent Form

Title of Project: The views and experiences of pupils in a 'special' multi-academy trust.

Name of Researcher: Jane Dickson

Participant Identification Code for this project:

	Please initial box
1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the above project and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the procedure.	☐
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason to the named researcher.	☐
3. I understand that my discussion will be sound recorded and used for analysis In this research project.	☐
4. I understand that my responses will remain anonymous.	☐
5. I agree to take part in the above research project.	☐
6. I understand that at my request a transcript of my discussions can be made available to me.	☐

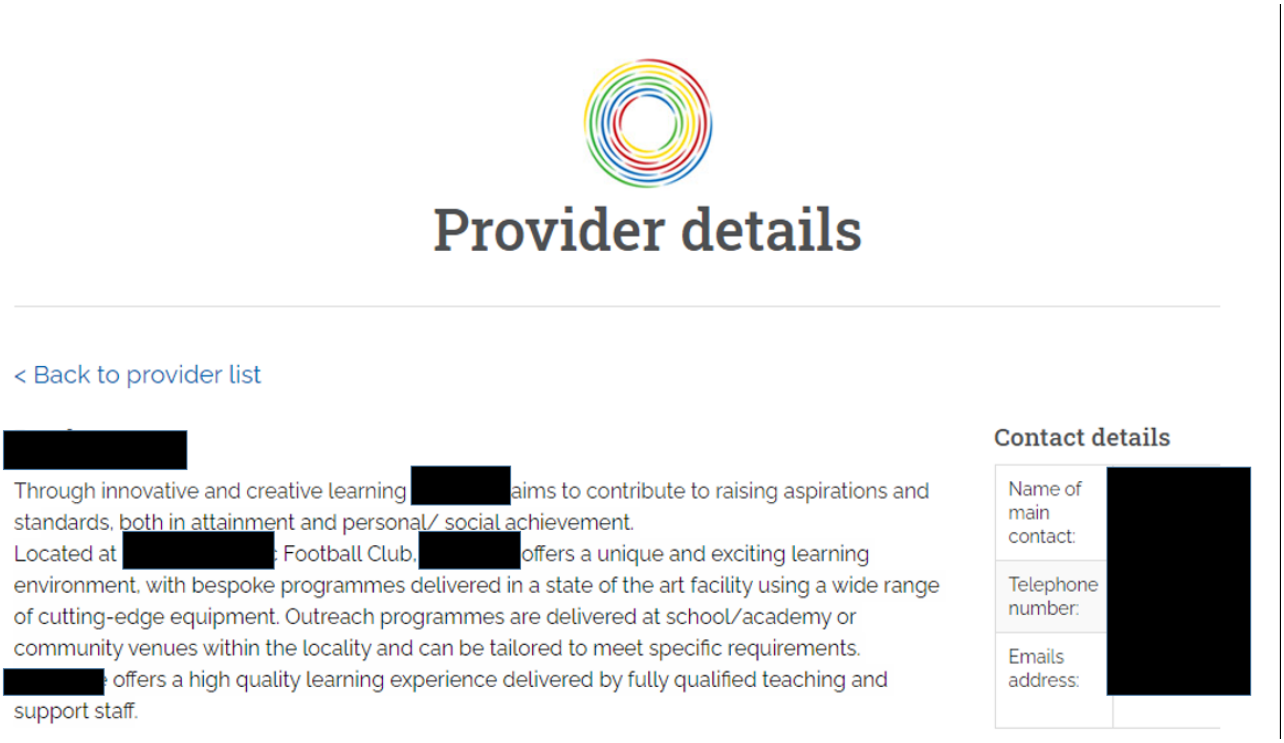
_____	_____	_____
Name of Participant	Date	Signature
_____	_____	_____
Researcher	Date	Signature

To be signed and dated in presence of the participant

Research Ethics and Governance Managers:

Alison Lloyd+44 (0)161 247 2836 **Ramona Statache**+44 (0)161 247 2853 ethics@mmu.ac.

Appendix 6: Web search results for Nathan's AP



Provider details

< Back to provider list

[redacted]

Through innovative and creative learning [redacted] aims to contribute to raising aspirations and standards, both in attainment and personal/ social achievement.
Located at [redacted] Football Club, [redacted] offers a unique and exciting learning environment, with bespoke programmes delivered in a state of the art facility using a wide range of cutting-edge equipment. Outreach programmes are delivered at school/academy or community venues within the locality and can be tailored to meet specific requirements.
[redacted] offers a high quality learning experience delivered by fully qualified teaching and support staff.

Contact details

Name of main contact:	[redacted]
Telephone number:	
Emails address:	