

**The Experiences of Secondary School Transition for Deaf Children in Mainstream
Education: A Participatory Research Approach**

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Abstract

Background: Primary to secondary school transition is a distinct moment in a child's education which often evokes feelings of anxiety, stress, and excitement. Most children adapt quickly and successfully to this transition following an initial decrease in wellbeing and attainment. However, for some children including those with special educational needs, the transition process is more challenging resulting in long-lasting negative consequences. The challenge of secondary school transition may be accentuated for deaf young people who often experience communication difficulties and barriers due to a lack of deaf awareness within society. Research has suggested the wellbeing of deaf young people in early secondary school is poor, yet a systematic literature review revealed no research investigating the experiences of transition to secondary school for this group of young people.

Current research: This small-scale qualitative study aimed to empower deaf young people, investigating their experiences of transition from a mainstream primary school to a mainstream secondary school. Two deaf college-aged students were involved in designing the research and selecting the data collection techniques. Four deaf Key Stage Three students completed semi-structured interviews and 'The Ideal School' activity (a personal construct psychology technique). An adapted version of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis to incorporate the analysis of drawings was used to analyse the data.

Key findings: An idiographic approach is used to present the findings to represent the participant's unique experiences of secondary school transition. A cross-case analysis was also completed which revealed five key themes: 'Attachment', 'Challenges', 'Support', 'New Beginnings' and 'Equal Opportunities'. This study provides important implications for school

staff supporting the transition of deaf young people, highlighting the significance of person-centred approaches. Support from a variety of individuals is seen as crucial in addition to familiarity and a nurturing and acoustically supportive school environment. Implications for Educational Psychologists and future research are considered.

Keywords: deaf, secondary school transition, pupil voice, participatory, person-centred practice

Declaration



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Table Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Declaration.....	iv
Acknowledgements	v
List of Figures.....	xix
List of Tables	xx
List of Appendices.....	xxii
List of Abbreviations	xxiii
Chapter 1 – Introduction	1
1.1 Chapter Overview	1
1.2 Background and Context.....	1
1.2.1 Educational Transitions	1
1.2.1.1 The Primary to Secondary School Transition.....	1
1.2.1.1.1 Pupils’ Experience of Primary to Secondary School Transition.	2
1.2.1.1.2 Vulnerable Groups at Secondary Transition.	2
1.2.1.1.3 Support During Secondary Transition.....	3
1.2.1.1.4 Transition in Educational Policy.	3
1.2.2 Deaf CYP	4

1.2.2.1	Defining the Term ‘deaf’.....	4
1.2.2.2	Prevalence of deaf CYP in Education in the United Kingdom.	5
1.2.2.2.1	Academic Outcomes for deaf CYP.	6
1.2.2.2.2	Teacher of the Deaf (ToD).	8
1.2.2.3	Educational Policy.....	8
1.2.2.4	Importance of Research Investigating the Transition to Secondary School for deaf Students.	8
1.2.2.5	Theory Related to the Transition to Secondary School for deaf CYP.....	10
1.2.2.5.1	Attachment Theory.	11
1.2.2.5.3	Self-Determination Theory.....	11
1.2.3	Local Context.....	12
1.3	Research Rationale.....	12
1.4	Researcher’s Position	13
Chapter 2 - Literature Review.....		15
2.1	Chapter Overview	15
2.2	Details of Systematic Search.....	16
2.2.1	Literature Search: Transition from Primary to Secondary School for deaf CYP	16
2.2.1.1	Quality Assessment.	18

2.3	Critical Review of the Literature: Critical Appraisal and Communication	20
2.3.1	What do we Know About the Experiences of Transition to Secondary School for deaf CYP?	20
2.3.1.1	Topic 1: The Experience of Secondary Transition for CYP with SEN.....	21
2.3.1.1.5	Scanlon et al. (2016).....	22
2.3.1.1.6	Maras and Aveling (2006).....	24
2.3.1.1.7	Dockrell and Lindsay (2007).....	26
2.3.1.1.8	Foley et al. (2016).....	27
2.3.1.2	Topic 2: Influencing Factors on Secondary Transition Outcomes for CYP with SEN.....	29
2.3.1.2.1	McCoy et al (2020).....	30
2.3.1.2.2	Vaz et al. (2014).	32
2.3.1.3	Topic 3: Supporting the Primary to Secondary School Transition for CYP with SEN.....	34
2.3.1.3.1	Bunn et al. (2017).	35
2.3.1.3.2	Neal et al. (2016).	36
2.3.1.3.3	White & Rae (2016).	38
2.3.1.4	Topic 4: Wellbeing and Relationships for deaf CYP in Early Secondary School.....	39

2.3.1.4.1	Wolters et al. (2012).	40
2.3.1.4.2	Wolters et al., (2014).	43
2.4	Summary and Conclusions	44
2.5	Aims of the Current Research	45
2.6	Research Questions (RQs)	45
2.6.1	Primary Question:	46
2.6.2	Secondary Questions:	46
Chapter 3	Methodology	47
3.1	Chapter Overview	47
3.2	Purpose of Research and Research Aims	47
3.3	Participatory Research	48
3.4	Conceptual Framework	50
3.4.1	Ontology	51
3.4.2	Epistemology	52
3.4.3	Researcher's Theoretical Position: Critical Realism	53
3.5	Research Design	53
3.6	Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)	55
3.6.1	Phenomenology	55

3.6.2	Hermeneutics	56
3.6.3	Idiography	56
3.7	Rationale for Using IPA.....	57
3.8	Co-researchers and Recruitment Procedure	58
3.9	Research Participants and Recruitment Procedure.....	59
3.10	Data Collection Techniques	62
3.10.1	‘The Ideal School’ (Williams & Hanke, 2007).....	63
3.10.2	Semi-Structured Interview	64
3.11	Research Procedure	65
3.12	Transcription	67
3.13	Data Analysis	67
3.14	Ethical Considerations.....	69
3.14.1	Respect.....	69
3.14.1.1	Informed Consent: Co-Researchers.....	70
3.14.1.2	Informed Consent: Participants.	70
3.14.1.3	Anonymity.....	71
3.14.1.4	Power.....	72
3.14.2	Competence.....	72

3.14.3	Responsibility	72
3.14.4	Integrity.....	73
3.15	Reflexivity.....	73
3.16	Trustworthiness	74
3.16.1	Sensitivity to Context.....	75
3.16.2	Commitment and Rigour.....	75
3.16.3	Coherence and Transparency	76
3.16.4	Impact and Importance	76
3.17	Summary	77
Chapter 4 – Findings		78
4.1	Chapter Overview	78
4.2	Individual Interview Findings	78
4.2.1	Ruth.....	78
4.2.1.1	Superordinate Theme 1: Relationships.....	79
4.2.1.1.1	Subordinate Theme 1: Friendship.....	79
4.2.1.1.2	Subordinate Theme 2: Belonging.	80
4.2.1.1.3	Subordinate Theme 3: Value of Support from Others.....	81
4.2.1.3	Superordinate Theme 2: Growing up.	82

4.2.1.3.1	Subordinate Theme 1: Difference Between Primary School and Secondary School.....	82
4.2.1.3.4	Subordinate Theme 2: Mixed Emotions.....	83
4.2.1.4	Superordinate Theme 3: Deafness Does Not Define Me.	84
4.2.1.4.1	Subordinate Theme 1: Treat me Like Everyone Else.....	84
4.2.1.4.2	Subordinate Theme 2: Hearing Loss Rarely Noticed.....	85
4.2.1.5	Superordinate Theme 4: Challenges.....	85
4.2.1.5.1	Subordinate Theme 1: Practical Challenges.....	85
4.2.1.5.2	Subordinate Theme 2: Social Situations.....	86
4.2.1.6	Superordinate Theme 5. Supporting Factors.....	86
4.2.1.6.1	Subordinate Theme 1: Value of Consistency and Continuity.	86
4.2.1.6.2	Subordinate Theme 2: Familiarity.....	86
4.2.2	Lottie.....	87
4.2.2.1	Superordinate Theme 1: Inclusion.....	88
4.2.2.1.1	Subordinate Theme 1: Equal Opportunities.	88
4.2.2.1.2	Subordinate Theme 2: Feeling Different.	89
4.2.2.2	Superordinate Theme 2: Challenges.....	89
4.2.2.2.1	Subordinate Theme 1: Social Situations.....	89
4.2.2.2.2	Subordinate Theme 2: ‘Settling in’ Period.....	90

4.2.2.2.3	Subordinate Theme 3: Practical Challenges	91
4.2.2.2.4	Subordinate Theme 4: Loss of Safety of Primary School.	91
4.2.2.2.5	Subordinate Theme 5: Expectations.	92
4.2.2.3	Superordinate Theme 3: Fresh Start.	92
4.2.2.3.1	Subordinate Theme 1: New Opportunities.	92
4.2.2.3.2	Subordinate Theme 2: Negative Experiences at Primary School.....	93
4.2.2.4	Superordinate Theme 4: Supporting Factors.	93
4.2.2.4.1	Subordinate Theme 1: Adult Support.....	93
4.2.2.4.2	Subordinate Theme 2: The Environment.....	94
4.2.3	Daniel.....	94
4.2.3.1	Superordinate Theme 1: Deafness Does not Define me.....	95
4.2.3.1.1	Subordinate Theme 1: Deaf CYP are no Different to Anyone Else.....	95
4.2.3.1.2	Subordinate Theme 2: Treat me Like Everyone Else.....	96
4.2.3.2	Superordinate Theme 2: Supporting Factors.	97
4.2.3.2.1	Subordinate Theme 1: Processes.	97
4.2.3.2.2	Subordinate Theme 2: Talking to Other Deaf CYP.	97
4.2.3.2.3	Subordinate Theme 3: Access to Teaching Materials.	98
4.2.3.2.4	Subordinate Theme 4: Familiarity.....	98

4.2.3.3	Superordinate Theme 3: Contrast Between Primary School and Secondary School.....	100
4.2.3.3.1	Subordinate Theme 1: Support.....	100
4.2.3.3.2	Subordinate Theme 2: Differences.....	101
4.2.3.4	Superordinate Theme 4: Challenges.....	102
4.2.3.4.1	Subordinate Theme 1: Self-Advocacy.....	102
4.2.3.4.2	Subordinate Theme 2: Practical Challenges.....	103
4.2.3.4.3	Subordinate Theme 3: Own Expectations.....	103
4.2.3.5	Superordinate Theme 5: Safety and Belonging.....	104
4.2.3.5.1	Subordinate Theme 1: Value of Friendship.....	104
4.2.3.5.2	Subordinate Theme 2: Consistent Support.....	104
4.2.4	Michael	106
4.2.4.1	Superordinate Theme 1: Anxiety.....	106
4.2.4.2.1	Subordinate Theme 1: Vulnerability.....	106
4.2.4.2.2	Subordinate Theme 2: Others.....	107
4.2.4.2.3	Subordinate Theme 3: School Environment.....	108
4.2.4.3	Superordinate Theme 2: Change and Loss.....	108
4.2.4.3.1	Subordinate Theme 1: Contrast Between Primary School and Secondary School.....	108

4.2.4.3.2	Subordinate Theme 2: Relationships.....	109
4.2.4.3.5	Superordinate Theme 3: Supporting Factors.....	110
4.2.4.3.6	Subordinate Theme 1: Others.....	110
4.2.4.3.7	Subordinate Theme 2: Processes.....	111
4.2.4.4	Superordinate Theme 1: Reflections.....	112
4.2.4.4.1	Subordinate Theme 1: Resilience.....	112
4.2.4.4.2	Subordinate Theme 2: Advice.....	113
4.3	Findings Across Participants.....	114
4.3.1	Attachment.....	115
4.3.1.1	Friendship.....	115
4.3.1.2	Belonging.....	116
4.3.2	Challenges.....	116
4.3.2.1	Difference Between Primary School and Secondary School.....	116
4.3.2.2	Communicating with Others.....	117
4.3.2.3	New Environment.....	117
4.3.3	Support.....	117
4.3.3.1	Consistency and Continuity.....	117
4.3.3.2	Familiarity.....	118

4.3.3.3	Processes.....	118
4.3.3.4	Others.....	119
4.3.4	New Beginnings.....	120
4.3.4.1	Feelings and Expectations.	120
4.3.4.2	New Opportunities.....	120
4.3.5	Equal Opportunities	121
4.3.5.1	“I’m Just Like Everyone Else”.	121
4.3.5.2	Inclusion.	121
4.4	Summary	122
Chapter 5 – Discussion		123
5.1	Chapter Overview	123
5.2	Theoretical Links.....	123
5.2.1	Self-Determination Theory	123
5.2.1.1	Autonomy.	124
5.2.1.2	Relatedness.	124
5.2.1.3	Competence.	125
5.3	Discussion of the Findings	125
5.3.1	Secondary RQ1: What are the Most Significant Impacts on Wellbeing that deaf Pupils Experience During Transition?.....	125

5.3.1.1	Attachment.....	125
5.3.1.2	Support.....	127
5.3.1.2.1	New Environment.....	129
5.3.1.3	Difference Between Primary and Secondary School.	130
5.3.2	Secondary RQ2: What are deaf CYP's Perceptions of the Support Mechanisms Provided by Schools to Support the Transition from Primary School to Secondary School?	131
5.3.3	Secondary RQ3 - What Support Mechanisms do deaf Pupils Find Most Useful During the Transition from Primary to Secondary Education?	132
5.3.3.1	Processes.....	132
5.3.3.2	Consistency and Continuity.....	135
5.3.3.3	Support from Others.	136
5.3.3.3.1	Peer Support.	136
5.3.3.3.2	Adult Support.	137
5.3.3.4	Equal Opportunities.....	138
5.3.4	Primary RQ: What are the Experiences of deaf Children, Within a Mainstream Education Setting, During the Transition from Primary to Secondary School?	138
5.4	Critical Review of the Research.....	139
5.4.1	Strengths	139

5.4.2	Limitations	140
5.4.3	Recommendations for Further Research.....	142
5.5	Dissemination of the Findings	143
5.6	Implications of the Findings for External and Internal Support.....	144
5.6.1	Implications for EP Practice	147
5.7	Ethics Revisited.....	148
5.8	Researcher Reflections	148
5.8.1	Covid-19 Pandemic.....	149
5.8.2	Power and Positioning	150
5.8.3	Personal Learning	151
5.9	Final Conclusions.....	152
References.....		154
Appendices.....		177

List of Figures

Figure 2.1: Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria for Systematic Literature Review Search	18
Figure 3.1: Pathways to Participation	48
Figure 4.1: Themes Identified for Ruth's Interview	79
Figure 4.2: Themes Identified for Lottie's Interview	88
Figure 4.3: Themes Identified for Daniel's Interview	95
Figure 4.4: Themes Identified for Michael's Interview	106
Figure 4.5: Superordinate and Subordinate Themes Identified for the Collective Group of Participants.....	115

List of Tables

Table 1.1: Audiometric Descriptors	5
Table 3.1: Overview of Participants	61

List of Appendices

Appendix A: Gough's (2007) Systematic Map of Research Activity and Systematic Synthesis of Research Evidence.....	177
Appendix B: Table Outlining Systematic Search	178
Appendix C: Summary of the Articles Included in the Systematic Literature Review	180
Appendix D: Standard Quality Assessment Criteria for Evaluating Primary Research from a Variety of Fields	200
Appendix E: Standard Quality Assessment Ratings for the 11 Studies Relevant to Literature Review Question.....	201
Appendix F: Table of WoE Judgements for the Studies Identified for the Literature Review Question	204
Appendix G: Detailed WoE Judgments for the Studies Identified for the Literature Review Question	205
Appendix H: Co-Researcher Information Sheet and Consent Form	227
Appendix I: Parent/Guardian Information Sheet and Consent Form.....	232
Appendix J: Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form	239
Appendix K: Ideal School Task Instructions	245
Appendix L: Initial Themes, Ideas and Questions Generated with Co-Researchers	248
Appendix M: Final Interview Schedule	249

Appendix N: Visual Image to Support Ideal School Task.....	254
Appendix O: Examples of Ideal and Non-Ideal School Drawings	255
Appendix P: Examples of Worked Transcripts	259
Appendix Q: Data Analysis Process	262
Appendix R: University Ethical Approval and Updated Approval Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic.....	264
Appendix S: Ethical Approval from Placement LA	270
Appendix T: Debrief Forms.....	271
Appendix U: Superordinate and Subordinate Themes Generated for Each Participant	274
Appendix V: Photographs to Illustrate Stage Six of the IPA Process	286
Appendix W: Examples of Initial Noting on Ruth’s Transcript and Non-Ideal School Drawings	287
Appendix X: Photographs to Illustrate Stage Four of the IPA Process	289

List of Abbreviations

AC	Academic Competence
BPS	British Psychological Society
CRIDE	The Consortium for Research in Deaf Education
CYP	Children and Young People
DfE	Department for Education
EHCP	Education Health and Care Plan
EP	Educational Psychologist
HCPC	The Health and Care Professions Council
HI	Hearing Impairment
IPA	Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis
LA	Local Authority
LD	Learning Disability
MHF	Mental Health Functioning
NDCS	The National Deaf Children's Society
OfSTED	The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Service and Skills
PCR	Person-Centred Review
PCP	Person-Centred Planning
RQ	Research Question
SEMH	Social, Emotional and Mental Health
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENCo	Special Educational Needs Coordinator
SES	Socioeconomic Status
SSI	Semi-Structured Interview

SSLD	Specific Speech and Language Difficulties
TD	Typically Developing
TEP	Trainee Educational Psychologist
ToD	Teacher of the Deaf
VoC	Voice of the Child
WoE	Weight of Evidence

Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter outlines the rationale for the current research. It starts by introducing the background and context for this study. This includes definitions of key terminology and consideration of the national and local context of educational and transition experiences of deaf children and young people (CYP). The chapter provides an insight into the researcher's position within the study and concludes by summarising the rationale for the current research.

1.2 Background and Context

1.2.1 Educational Transitions

Transition is a period of change where an individual moves from the familiar to the unknown (Perry & Allard, 2003). CYP experience multiple transitions during their education. Significant educational transitions within the United Kingdom include starting school, moving from primary school to secondary school and transitioning from secondary school to higher education. It is generally agreed that transition includes the period prior to transition through to when the child is deemed established within the new setting. Due to the discontinuities experienced during transition, transitions can be unsettling, impacting on wellbeing (Niesel & Griebel, 2005).

1.2.1.1 The Primary to Secondary School Transition. Zeedyk et al. (2003) described the transition to secondary school as “one of the most difficult in pupils’ educational careers” (p.67). Within the United Kingdom, this transition occurs at approximately 11 years of age (West et al., 2010) and involves pupils moving from one educational provision to another. This move from the smaller, more personal primary school environment to the larger, more demanding secondary school environment is complex and requires individuals to negotiate several changes (Tobbell, 2003; West et al., 2010). These

changes include differences in school culture, size, expectations, social interactions and teaching experiences (Neal et al., 2016; Virtanen et al., 2020). Secondary transition may be more challenging for young people (YP) because it coincides with the onset of puberty (Reddy et al., 2003).

1.2.1.1.1 Pupils' Experience of Primary to Secondary School Transition.

Research has illustrated that transition to secondary school evokes stress and anxiety (West et al., 2010). These feelings are usually short-lived and replaced by optimism and excitement (West et al., 2010). Typically, CYP's anxieties centre around peer relationships, bullying, changing academic demands and getting lost (Bunn et al., 2017; Zeedyk et al., 2003). Excitement is generally related to the new opportunities and increased freedom associated with secondary school (Cantali, 2019; van Rens et al., 2018).

Secondary school transition can negatively impact upon academic attainment and wellbeing (Lester & Cross, 2015; Rice et al., 2011). Many pupils overcome these initial difficulties quickly and successfully, but for some this transition can have longstanding implications (Chedzoy & Burden, 2005; Galton & Willcocks, 1983). Potential difficulties include academic disengagement (Cohen & Smerdon, 2009), reduced self-esteem (Jindal-Snape & Miller, 2008) and decreased psychological wellbeing (Gutman & Eccles, 2007).

Owing to research highlighting the significance of transition to secondary school for CYP, studies have considered factors which facilitate and hinder adjustment to secondary school. Critical factors include: student belonging, peer relationships, familiarity, and teacher and parent support (Coffey, 2013; Green, 1997; Hanewald, 2013; Pratt & George, 2005; Sirsch, 2003).

1.2.1.1.2 Vulnerable Groups at Secondary Transition.

Not all CYP make a successful transition to secondary school. Risk factors associated with poorer transition

include low academic attainment, low socioeconomic status (SES), low self-esteem and previous behavioural difficulties (Anderson et al., 2000; van Rens et al., 2018).

One group of children who may be more vulnerable at transition are CYP with special educational needs (SEN) (Hughes et al., 2013; Lightfoot & Bond, 2013). This group are already more likely to experience difficulties at school in comparison to their peers, for example poor peer relations (Scanlon et al., 2016). During transition, they may experience additional challenges, including changes to support (Doyle et al., 2017). It is difficult to understand the impact of transition on different groups described as having SEN, as most research groups CYP with SEN together in one homogenous group (e.g. Neal et al., 2016).

1.2.1.1.3 *Support During Secondary Transition.* Preparation has been linked to the successful transition to secondary school for CYP (van Rens et al., 2018). This preparation should focus on academic competence, independence and resilience (Anderson et al., 2000). It should be comprehensive, involving all stakeholders (Anderson et al., 2000). Various interventions have been proposed including cognitive, behavioural, and systemic approaches (Neal et al., 2016).

The relationship between schools is an important supporting factor for children during transition (Coffey, 2013), yet research suggests communication between primary and secondary schools is often poor and generic (Topping, 2011). The transition period spans both primary and secondary school, which raises the question of who is responsible for providing transition support. It is possible primary and secondary school staff have different expectations of the support each will provide, resulting in CYP not always receiving appropriate support.

1.2.1.1.4 *Transition in Educational Policy.* The Department for Education (DfE) endorses the significance of educational transitions. This is evidenced by the inclusion

of transition information in statutory and non-statutory guidance, such as the SEN Code of Practice (DfE & Department for Health [DfH], 2015) and the DfE's document of research interests (DfE, 2018). In relation to secondary school transition, the DfE has previously commissioned research to improve outcomes for CYP in this area (e.g. Evangelou et al., 2008). The importance of transition to secondary school is highlighted within the SEN Code of Practice (DfE & DfH, 2015). This states "[primary] schools should engage with secondary schools (...) as necessary to help plan for (...) transition" (DfE & DfH, 2015, p.100) enabling secondary schools to effectively prepare and support CYP. Parents and CYP should be included within this process (DfE & DfH, 2015).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (OfSTED, 2015) reported "the importance of a good start to a pupil's secondary school education cannot be overemphasised" (p.4). They highlighted that improvements have been made to support outcomes for CYP during this transition, but additional work is required. OfSTED (2015) reports schools must "ensure that the transition from Key Stage 2 to 3 focuses as much on academic needs as it does on pastoral needs" (p.8). They highlight the need for better partnerships between primary and secondary schools to ensure CYP continue to be challenged.

This inclusion of transition information within government policy is significant in ensuring transition remains a priority for educational professionals.

1.2.2 Deaf CYP

1.2.2.1 Defining the Term 'deaf'. From a medical perspective, the term 'deaf' describes individuals with various degrees of hearing impairment (HI) (Edmondson & Howe, 2019). This is categorised as mild, moderate, severe, or profound depending on the individual's response to sound (see Table 1.1). There are two main types of deafness.

Sensorineural deafness occurs from damage to the inner ear and is generally permanent. Conductive deafness is when sound has difficulty passing effectively through parts of the ear. This is often related to a blockage and is generally temporary.

Culturally, there is a distinction between the terms ‘deaf’ and ‘Deaf’. Deaf with a capital ‘D’ refers to individuals who are engaged within the Deaf community (Padden & Humphries, 1988). Often these individuals use sign language as their preferred language. The term ‘deaf’ with a lower case ‘d’ refers to individuals who have a HI and typically communicate through spoken language. The terminology was discussed with the co-researchers in this study, who preferred to use the term ‘deaf’. Thus, throughout this thesis, ‘deaf’ will be used as an all-encompassing term to define individuals with any degree of permanent HI from mild to profound. This is in line with the terminology used by The Consortium for Research in Deaf Education (CRIDE) (2020).

Table 1.1

Audiometric descriptors (British Society of Audiology, 1988)

Degree of HI	Audiometric descriptor dB HL
Mild HI	21 - 40 dB
Moderate HI	41 - 70 dB
Severe HI	71 - 95 dB
Profound HI	95 dB +

1.2.2.2 Prevalence of deaf CYP in Education in the United Kingdom. The 2018/2019 survey on educational provision for deaf CYP (CRIDE, 2019) suggested there are at least 53,954 deaf CYP in the United Kingdom. Approximately, 78% of deaf school-aged CYP attend mainstream schools; 6% are supported at a mainstream school with a resource base; 3% attend a specialist provision for deaf CYP and 12% attend an alternative specialist

provision (CRIDE, 2019). Generally, an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) is required to access a resource base or specialist provision. Thus, deaf CYP can attend a mainstream school with a resource base, but not access the resource base itself. Within the 2019/20 academic year, government statistics revealed 6027 CYP had an EHCP listing HI as their primary need (DfE, 2020). Since deafness is a low incidence disability, most deaf CYP in mainstream education are the only deaf pupil within a class of hearing peers (Antia et al., 2010).

There are multiple arguments regarding the type of education provision deaf CYP should attend (Marschark et al., 2012). The degree of a child's HI does not determine whether they attend a mainstream school or specialist provision. Instead, parental preference is usually the determining factor. It is likely this decision relates to parents' hearing status, their school experiences, engagement with the Deaf community and the local schools available. The number of schools for the deaf and resource bases within the United Kingdom has decreased in recent years, limiting the educational options available (CRIDE, 2020)

1.2.2.2.1 Academic Outcomes for deaf CYP. Since “deafness is not a learning disability [LD] (...) deaf pupils have the potential to attain and achieve the same as any other pupil” (National Deaf Children's Society [NDCS] & National Sensory Impairment Partnership, 2015, p.13). Generally deaf CYP are outperformed by hearing students (Marschark et al., 2015) and this educational attainment gap continues to widen in the United Kingdom. In 2019, 44% of deaf children achieved the expected key stage two academic standards compared to 74% of hearing children (NDCS, 2020). At secondary level, deaf students received one GCSE grade lower than their hearing peers (NDCS, 2020). These findings have been identified across the curriculum (Gregory et al., 1995; Harris & Terlektsi, 2011; Marschark & Hauser, 2012). However, research suggests deaf CYP perform better in practical subjects as they can use compensatory senses (Iline, 2013).

Even CYP with mild or moderate HIs experience barriers at school (Archbold et al., 2015). Often the classroom environment is characterised by poor acoustic conditions resulting in deaf CYP mishearing information and experiencing greater difficulties hearing over background noise (Antia et al., 2009; Marschark et al., 2015). Deaf CYP have to exert greater effort than their peers to listen in mainstream classrooms, resulting in fatigue (Archbold et al., 2015) and reduced energy for other academic tasks (Tharpe, 2008). Teachers do not always understand the needs of deaf CYP which impacts on their attainment and wellbeing (Eriks-Brophy et al., 2006; Jarvis, 2003). Sometimes educators mistakenly assume assistive listening devices such as hearing aids cure HI meaning additional support is no longer required (Dalton, 2013).

Deaf CYP may also experience decreased wellbeing (van Eldik, 2005), reduced self-confidence (Keilmann et al., 2007) and increased social difficulties (Marschark et al., 2012; Xie et al., 2014) in comparison to hearing peers. This can lead to isolation within the school environment (Israelite, 2002). Often hearing pupils are unsure how to communicate effectively with deaf CYP exacerbating their social isolation (Nunes et al., 2001).

Inclusion is vital to the achievement and happiness of deaf CYP at school (Edmondson & Howe, 2019; Gascon-Ramos, 2008). Deaf awareness (Hadjikakou et al., 2008) and support from others including peers, parents and teachers is fundamental (Eriks-Brophy et al., 2006). Increased language and communication skills (Hadjikakou et al., 2008) and self-advocacy (Eriks-Brophy et al., 2006; Hendrix, 2015) have been linked to successful inclusion and improved school outcomes. Deaf CYP also benefit from relationships with other deaf CYP (Iantaffi et al., 2003).

1.2.2.2.2 Teacher of the Deaf (ToD). ToDs offer important support for deaf CYP, their families and teachers (Berry, 2017). They monitor and assess a child's HI; support with assistive listening devices; provide advice; and support school staff to improve the acoustic environment for deaf CYP.

1.2.2.3 Educational Policy. The SEN Code of Practice (DfE & DfH, 2015) promotes inclusion, stating:

“These duties [towards disabled CYP] are anticipatory – they require thought to be given in advance to what disabled CYP might require and what adjustments might need to be made to prevent that disadvantage. Schools also have wider duties to prevent discrimination, to promote equality of opportunity and to foster good relations” (p.93).

As part of their commitment to inclusion, the DfE has commissioned research to investigate good practice in supporting CYP with SEN. For example ‘SEN support: A rapid evidence assessment’ (Carroll et al., 2017). This report highlighted the significance of high-quality teaching and a supportive acoustic environment including adaptations for deaf CYP. ‘Communication is the key’ (OfSTED, 2012) also considers good practice for supporting deaf CYP, highlighting the significance of multi-agency working and involvement of specialist staff. Research suggests support for deaf CYP is decreasing due to fewer ToDs, resulting in higher caseloads (CRIDE, 2019).

1.2.2.4 Importance of Research Investigating the Transition to Secondary School for deaf Students. Transition to secondary school is challenging for most CYP (West et al., 2010). These challenges may be accentuated for CYP with SEN (Hughes et al., 2013). It is possible they are further increased for deaf CYP.

For most CYP, the primary school environment is characterised by familiar individuals. Generally, CYP remain in the same class throughout primary school, leading to a long-established social hierarchy and relationships. Transition to secondary school requires CYP to move to a new context with unfamiliar peers. New relationships and a new social hierarchy must be formed. For deaf CYP who often experience communication difficulties this can be challenging (Xie et al., 2014). This is made harder due to a general lack of understanding of HI amongst hearing peers (Holman et al., 2019) potentially causing negative attitudes towards deaf CYP. This may hinder deaf CYPs ability to form friendships and develop a sense of belonging. This causes issues, as friendships are especially important during adolescence (Buhrmester, 1990) and relationships are fundamental to successful transition (Coffey, 2013; Jose et al., 2012). This lack of understanding about HI has been further highlighted during the Covid-19 Pandemic. For example, research suggests that deaf individuals have experienced discrimination through a lack of suitable transparent masks or reasonable adjustments (Grote et al., 2021). This has resulted in increased communication challenges for deaf individuals (Grote et al., 2021).

Research suggests deaf CYP may experience lower wellbeing during early secondary school than their hearing peers (Moeller et al., 2007; Wolters et al., 2012). They may experience lower self-esteem (Keilmann et al., 2007) and increased mental health problems (Brown & Cornes, 2015). Children who display higher levels of wellbeing upon entry to secondary school perform better academically (Riglin et al., 2013) which is associated with improved life outcomes (Howieson & Iannelli, 2008). These findings point to the importance of research investigating the experience of transition to secondary school for deaf CYP. This is likely to lead to recommendations and interventions to support their wellbeing and academic attainment.

There's currently limited research about secondary school transition for deaf CYP, but there is research regarding primary school and post-secondary school transition. Curle et al. (2017) argued transition to school is challenging for all children, but especially deaf children due to the additional difficulties they experience. In relation to post-secondary transition, deaf CYP are underrepresented in higher education (Bell & Swart, 2018). Of those who begin postsecondary studies many do not graduate. Only around 30% of deaf CYP who begin higher education programmes successfully graduate from four-year programmes, compared to 70% of hearing students (Marschark et al., 2002). Deaf CYP also experience several barriers during postsecondary transition, including attitudes towards deafness and difficulties with group work (Spurrell, 2012). These findings highlight the importance of appropriate transition planning to support the successful transition of deaf CYP. For this to occur, researchers must investigate the experiences of deaf CYP at various transition points.

There are mixed findings regarding the impact of academic attainment on stress during transition to secondary school. Some research has suggested transition to secondary school is more stressful for lower attaining pupils (Rice et al., 2011; West et al., 2010). However, Perfitt (2013) noted that CYP who achieved higher attainment scores reported increased levels of stress during transition. She suggested this may be due to their increased awareness of their difficulties. Since deafness is not a LD, this group of CYP may experience increased stress and anxiety during transition. This highlights the significance of research to investigate the transition to secondary school for deaf CYP. This has been noted by other researchers (e.g. Edmondson & Howe, 2019).

1.2.2.5 Theory Related to the Transition to Secondary School for deaf CYP. Two prominent theories that may help explain the primary to secondary school transition experiences for deaf CYP are Attachment Theory and Self-Determination Theory.

1.2.2.5.1 Attachment Theory. Attachment Theory was first proposed by Bowlby who defined attachment as a “lasting psychological connectedness between human beings” (Bowlby, 1969, p.194). He argued the attachments children form have a significant impact on their development and wellbeing, for example affecting their emotional regulation and social competence. Research suggests attachment influences school success (Geddes, 2006). Even at secondary school, attachment remains crucial. The teacher-student relationship affects behaviour, academic motivation and wellbeing (Bergin & Bergin, 2009). This suggests relationships and belonging are likely to be fundamental in ensuring the successful transition to secondary school for deaf CYP.

1.2.2.5.3 Self-Determination Theory. Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) is a theory of motivation based upon the premise that humans have an inherent tendency towards growth. Ryan & Deci argue humans have three basic psychological needs which must be nurtured:

- Autonomy: need to feel in control
- Relatedness: desire to feel connected to others
- Competence: need to experience success

Self-Determination Theory has frequently been applied to education, with research suggesting it enhances academic outcomes (Goldman et al., 2017; Niemiec & Ryan, 2009). It has been related to positive outcomes for CYP with SEN, for example Wehmeyer and Palmer (2003) reported a positive correlation between levels of self-determination and employment in individuals with SEN. Research has highlighted students adjust more successfully to secondary school when their needs for autonomy, relatedness and competence are met (Ratelle & Duchesne, 2014). This suggests Self-Determination Theory is an important theory related to transition.

1.2.3 Local Context

This research was conducted within the researcher's placement Local Authority (LA) in the South of England, where children transition to secondary school at 11 years of age. The LA operates a selective schooling system. Children can attend a grammar school if they pass the relevant examination. The LA has two resource provisions for deaf CYP. One for primary-aged CYP and the other for secondary-aged CYP. There are limited spaces within these provisions and so most deaf CYP attend other primary and secondary schools within the LA. The LA has two ToDs.

Conversations with special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCOs) and ToDs within the LA revealed deaf CYP typically do not receive additional support during secondary transition. Where it is deemed beneficial, ToDs may conduct additional visits during the first term at secondary school. Transition support varies between schools. A transition support programme is run by the LA for Year Six children considered vulnerable. This operates on a referral basis.

1.3 Research Rationale

The information presented above highlights the significance of transition to secondary school for long-term academic and wellbeing outcomes (West et al., 2010). Research has suggested the challenge of this transition may be accentuated for CYP with SEN (Hughes et al., 2013; Lightfoot & Bond, 2013). Literature investigating the educational experiences of deaf CYP has indicated they may experience a reduction in wellbeing during early secondary school (van Eldik, 2005). Therefore encountering additional challenges during transition, for example difficulty forming friendships (Ridsdale & Thompson, 2002). Despite these findings, research is yet to investigate the experiences of transition to secondary school for deaf CYP. Therefore, the current research sought to bridge this gap by empowering deaf CYP to share their transition experiences. It was hoped a detailed understanding would be gained

which would inform practice and support future deaf CYP to transition successfully to secondary school.

1.4 Researcher's Position

(This subsection is written in the first person). This research has evolved from my personal interest in supporting the education of deaf CYP. I have a moderate bilateral HI. Despite my academic attainments, my schooling was not always easy. I often felt isolated and experienced a lack of deaf awareness. Sometimes my teachers and peers were reluctant to repeat information and I was told off for not listening. At times I was singled out due to my HI and at other times it was forgotten. For me, a significant frustration was that I was rarely given the opportunity to share my views and adults frequently assumed they knew what was best for me. This led to my passion for providing deaf CYP with a voice, which was central to this research.

Prior to the doctorate, I qualified as a primary school teacher and taught in a mainstream primary school and specialist provision for CYP with physical and/or social, emotional, and mental health needs (SEMH). Whilst working at the specialist provision, I noticed several referrals for CYP experiencing SEMH concerns at the end of Year Seven. This led me to consider the impact of secondary school transition on CYP's educational attainment and wellbeing.

Throughout my time as a trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP), my passion for listening to the voice of the child (VoC) and actively involving CYP in decisions has continued to grow. This is in line with the SEN Code of Practice (DfE & DfH, 2015) and is central to Educational Psychologist (EP) work. However, the active involvement of CYP within research is less common. This prompted me to select a participatory research design

for the current research. This empowered CYP to be involved in designing the research, enhancing its relevance (Mertens, 2015).

Undoubtably my personal experiences, values, and skills have influenced the design of this research. Participatory research aims to reduce power imbalances between the researcher and the participants. My position as a TEP may have afforded me a position of power which could have influenced participants' responses and thus the findings. I recognised at the start of this research that my own transition experiences as a deaf individual could influence the design of this study and subsequent results. The recruitment of two co-researchers to support the design of this study helped minimise this. I was interested in finding out about the unique transition experiences of each participant and thus did not have any explicit preconceptions about the data.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

2.1 Chapter Overview

The aim of this chapter is to critically review the relevant literature relating to the current research, identify gaps within the information and thus outline the rationale for this study. This chapter has two sections. The first section outlines the systematic literature search, providing information about the search strategy, inclusion and exclusion criteria, the articles selected, and the tools used to assess the quality and relevance of the research. The second section critically appraises and describes the identified articles with the aim of answering the literature review question.

Fink (2020, p.6) stated “a research literature review is a systematic, explicit and reproducible method for identifying, evaluating, and synthesising the existing body of completed and recorded work produced by researchers, scholars and practitioners”. The researcher aimed to present a comprehensive, methodical, and transparent review of the literature to ensure an understanding of the breadth, purpose, and extent of research activity within the area. Therefore, a systematic literature review was completed. This followed Gough's (2007) systematic map of research activity (see Appendix A). Gough highlighted the significance of outlining a review question prior to reviewing the literature. For this research, the following review question was formulated:

- 1) What do we know about the experiences of transition to secondary school for deaf CYP?

As highlighted in the Introduction, ‘deaf’ is used to describe any individual who has a HI to any degree. Due to limited research in this area and parts of England operating a three-tier middle school education system (Symonds & Galton, 2014), studies were included which focussed on transition for CYP between the ages of nine and 14 years old. This ensured

research conducted in all parts of England and other countries such as the USA could be included in the literature review.

2.2 Details of Systematic Search

A systematic literature search was conducted in May 2020. The search engine EBSCO Host was used to complete the systematic search within the following databases:

- Academic Search Complete
- Child Development and Adolescent Studies
- Education Research Complete
- Education Resource Information Centre (ERIC)
- APA PsycARTICLES
- APA PsycINFO

The thesaurus function was used to identify synonyms for each of the main search terms, for example, deaf, hard of hearing, hearing loss, hearing disorder, hearing impairment, d/hh. This aimed to ensure all relevant articles were located. Boolean logic was used to ensure all relevant search terms were included in each search. Due to the limited research focused on the transition experiences of deaf CYP, the researcher widened the search parameters to incorporate research relating to communication difficulties and general SEN in addition to HI. A table outlining the details of this search can be viewed in Appendix B. This search was rerun in March 2021 to check for new research.

2.2.1 Literature Search: Transition from Primary to Secondary School for deaf CYP

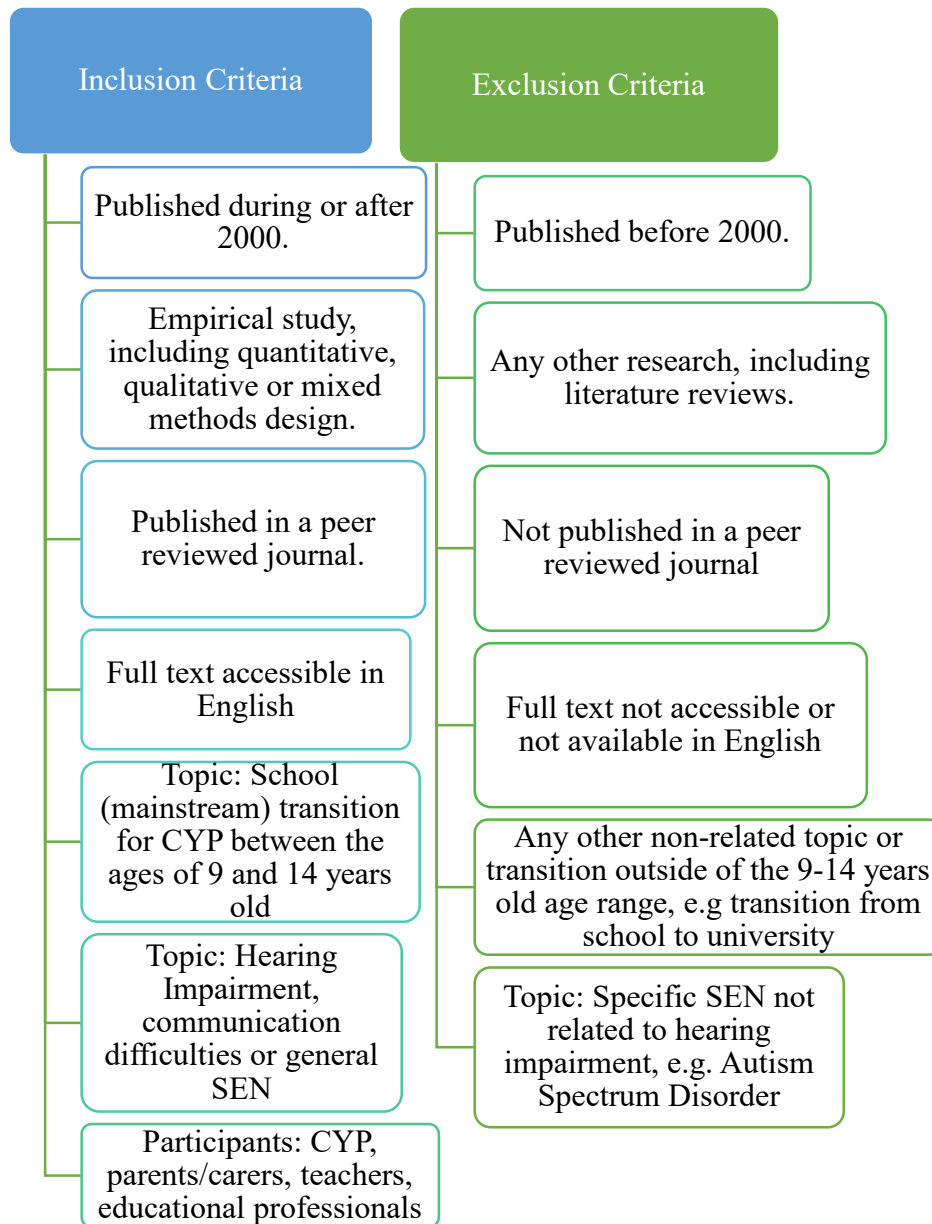
The purpose of this systematic literature search was to identify papers relevant to the transition to secondary school for deaf CYP. To be included, the articles had to have been published between 2000 and 2020 in a peer-reviewed journal and be written in English. The full text needed to be accessible. In total 285 articles were located. The decision to only

include articles from peer-reviewed journals in the systematic literature review was taken to ensure the studies included had a high degree of rigour, increasing the validity of the review findings. Due to sensitivity to Deaf culture, much that is written comes from a strong and emotional position. Therefore, to ensure rigour the researcher veered towards articles that were written from a professional stance and had been peer-reviewed. Time constraints and the accessibility of grey literature were also factored into this decision. Nevertheless, the exclusion of grey literature could have resulted in publication bias, as much research is not disseminated through peer-reviewed journals (Pappas & Williams, 2011).

The titles and abstracts of these papers were viewed to assess their relevance. Only those deemed relevant to the research topic were included in the critical analysis (N = 7), thus exclusion criteria were created (see Figure 2.1). The references of the articles were checked which did not identify any additional papers. Three further papers were identified using the database 'Scopus' (McCoy et al., 2019; Scanlon et al., 2016; Wolters et al., 2014). One additional paper (Dockrell & Lindsay, 2007) was identified during a hand search of relevant journals including 'Educational and Child Psychology' and 'Educational Psychology in Practice'. In total 11 key papers were included in the in-depth critical analysis below. An overview of these articles is provided in Appendix C.

Figure 2.1

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria for Systematic Literature Review Search.



2.2.1.1 Quality Assessment. An important part of a systematic literature review is an in-depth quality assessment of the included studies (Booth et al., 2016). This enables the researcher to assess and interpret evidence, considering its relevance, validity, and results (Horsley et al., 2011). For this literature review two methods of quality assessment were used. The ‘Standard Quality Assessment Criteria for Evaluating Primary Research Papers from a Variety of Fields’ (Kmet et al., 2004) (Appendix D) was used as an initial quality

evaluation for the 11 papers. The ratings for each paper are presented in Appendix E. To provide a more in-depth assessment of the quality of the papers selected and to determine their relevance to the review question, Gough's (2007) 'Weight of Evidence' (WoE) framework was used. This enabled the researcher to share decisions on the quality, execution, and appropriateness of each selected study. The WoE framework includes three separate judgements which are combined to produce an overall WoE judgement for the paper. These judgements are recorded as low, medium or high. Gough advocates the usage of the TAPUPAS framework (Pawson et al., 2003) to decide WoE judgements. The TAPUPAS framework specifies judgements should be made according to transparency, accuracy, specificity, purposivity, utility and propriety. Gough's (2007) WoE framework is outlined below:

- 1) WoE A: This refers to the coherence and integrity of the research paper. Researchers should consider the transparency, accuracy, accessibility, and specificity of the study. This is a generic judgement of the paper.
- 2) WoE B: This is a review-specific judgement which considers how appropriate the form of evidence is to the review question, for example it considers the relevance of the research design. Researchers should consider purposivity in this judgement.
- 3) WoE C: This is another review-specific judgement, focussing on the relevance of the research focus to the review question. Utility and propriety are considered.
- 4) WoE D: This is the overall judgement of the WoE for the paper. It is determined by combining the previous three ratings (WoE A, B and C).

Appendix F presents the WoE judgements for each of the 11 papers included in this literature review. Further information about the judgements for each paper is illustrated in Appendix G.

The quality assurance process increased the validity of the findings from the systematic literature review. It provided a transparent measure of the quality of the papers included and ensured the researcher was confident in the studies reported and their relevance to the review question. The quality assurance of each paper was a strength of this literature review. The possibility of a synthesis across papers was considered, but not followed through due to a lack of similarities and the lack of deaf perspectives across papers. However, it can be argued that this limits the findings of the review.

2.3 Critical Review of the Literature: Critical Appraisal and Communication

2.3.1 What do we Know About the Experiences of Transition to Secondary School for deaf CYP?

As acknowledged previously, 11 papers were identified as relevant to answering the review question. These papers were read and critically analysed. The articles were grouped by topic and four key topics were apparent. As highlighted in section 2.1, limited research was discovered focussing on the secondary school transition experiences of deaf CYP. Instead research typically grouped CYP with SEN as a homogenous group. Owing to this, three of the topics identified focus on CYP with SEN as a homogenous group and one focuses exclusively on deaf CYP. The four topics identified were:

- 1) The experience of secondary transition for CYP with SEN
- 2) Influencing factors on secondary transition outcomes for CYP with SEN
- 3) Supporting the primary to secondary school transition for CYP with SEN
- 4) Wellbeing and relationships for deaf CYP in early secondary school

These topics are presented sequentially, and each relevant paper is critically appraised and described below:

2.3.1.1 Topic 1: The Experience of Secondary Transition for CYP with SEN.

The research discussed under this topic unanimously highlights that CYP with SEN are vulnerable during transition to secondary school. They experience greater levels of stress and anxiety prior to transition and increased obstacles during transition. The four papers considered used research designs which elicited the VoC in addition to other key stakeholders. This enabled detailed analyses of CYP's concerns and experiences. Salient themes across the studies included social concerns; concerns related to managing the academic demands and expectations of secondary school; and concerns related to organisational and orientational challenges. Two of the studies suggested that CYP with SEN are vulnerable to psychosocial difficulties after transition (Dockrell & Lindsay, 2007; Foley et al., 2016).

The studies emphasised the importance of researchers eliciting the VoC to understand CYP's experiences and enable effective interventions to be developed. Both Maras and Aveling (2006) and Foley et al. (2016) reported schools differed in the quality of transition support. This suggests schools should work collaboratively to share best practice ensuring all CYP receive effective transition support. Apart from Dockrell and Lindsay (2007), the studies grouped CYP with SEN as a homogenous group, yet there are multiple interindividual differences between children with SEN. It cannot be assumed all CYP with SEN have the same transition experiences. This highlights a clear gap in the research literature and the need for further research.

The following papers focused on the experience of secondary transition for CYP with SEN are described and critically appraised below:

- The experiences of pupils with SEN and their parents at the stage of pre-transition from primary to post-primary school (Scanlon et al., 2016)

- Students with SEN: Transition from primary to secondary school (Maras & Aveling 2006)
- Identifying the educational and social needs of children with specific speech and language difficulties on entry to secondary school (Dockrell & Lindsay, 2007)
- Primary to post-primary transition for students with SEN from an Irish context (Foley et al., 2006)

2.3.1.1.5 Scanlon et al. (2016). Scanlon et al. (2016) used a mixed methods approach to investigate the experiences of pupils with SEN and their parents prior to secondary school transition. This study evolved due to limited research within this area and evidence to suggest CYP with SEN not only experience similar transition concerns to their peers, but also face unique challenges.

Thirty-two pupils with SEN and 42 parents participated in the research. CYP with various SEN were represented, including deaf CYP. Pupils attended focus groups where they discussed transition expectations, information about their new school and anxieties. Parents either attended a focus group or had an individual interview. They discussed the support they had received; their involvement in and satisfaction with transition planning; and transition concerns. Focus groups were formatted as semi-structured interviews (SSI). Themes were predetermined, but the researcher had flexibility to explore participants' ideas further and follow new lines of inquiry. Parents also completed questionnaires.

The results indicated multiple issues for both pupils and parents prior to transition. Pupils expressed concerns about the loss of security and familiarity provided by primary school. Particularly regarding pupil-teacher relationships, friendships, and social stature. Many pupils were concerned about secondary school expectations, academic competence and 'fitting in'. There was a strong desire for additional information. Parents reported anxieties about their

children regressing socially and emotionally. They were frustrated by a lack of information and concerned about how secondary schools would accommodate their children. Like pupils, parents emphasised the significance of their children's sense of belonging.

Scanlon et al.'s (2016) findings illustrated the high levels of stress that students with SEN and their families experience prior to transition. This stress centred around 'fitting in' at secondary school. Scanlon et al.'s (2016) findings provide rich data on the views of pupils with SEN and their parents prior to secondary school transition, illustrating the significance of pupil voice. Data triangulation revealed similarities in pupils and parents' feelings towards transition. Focus groups could have limited the information participants shared, and group dynamics may have resulted in dominant personalities leading discussions, causing others to withhold opinions or respond to social desirability bias. Discussions from three of the seven focus groups were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim, whilst the others "were attended by a research assistant who took a verbatim 'short-hand' record of verbal exchanges" (Scanlon et al., 2016, p.47). This could have introduced bias, reducing the validity of the findings. Other than the role of the research assistant, limited information is provided about the researchers' roles within this study and reflexivity is limited. This raises questions about the trustworthiness of this research.

A limitation of Scanlon et al.'s (2016) research is it only considered the perceptions of pupils with SEN and their parents prior to secondary transition. The inclusion of follow-up interviews once pupils were at secondary school would have added to the quality of the data, enabling further conclusions and recommendations to be drawn. The research was conducted in Ireland, whose differing education system to England means the findings cannot be generalised. Pupils in Ireland transition to secondary school a year later than in England, potentially impacting on transition experiences. Nevertheless, pupils in both Ireland and England are likely to experience similar challenges, including changes in peer relationships,

academic demands and pupil-teacher relationships (Sirsch, 2003). An overall WoE score of 'medium' was given for this study.

2.3.1.1.6 *Maras and Aveling (2006).* Maras and Aveling's (2006) research stemmed from previous research highlighting that secondary school transition may be impacted on by SEN type. Maras and Aveling (2006) argued investigating the experience of transition for children with and without SEN does not identify stressors which may develop during transition or suggest strategies to minimise them. Instead they contended that research must "compare and contrast the individual experiences of CYP with different types of SEN" (Maras & Aveling, 2006, p. 198). They utilised a longitudinal case study design to explore the transition experiences of six CYP who had statements of differing SEN. The CYP completed SSIs in the presence of a teacher or parent. After the interview, this adult could make additional comments. Two of the CYP were interviewed both prior to and following transition to secondary school. The others were interviewed after transition.

Maras and Aveling (2006) analysed their findings using thematic analysis. This revealed that CYP's needs and experiences of transition varied. CYP with SEN are not a homogenous group. Individuals are different and have unique experiences and preferences for support. Schools differed in provision, flexibility, and the quality of transition support provided. Despite the differences, Maras and Aveling (2006) highlighted some common themes. Prior to transition, the presence of a SEN provision was an important influencing factor on the expectations and attitudes of both parents and CYP. Being provided with information about what to expect in advance and continuity of support reduced transition anxiety for students. Post-transition, CYP shared concerns about increased workload and organisational and orientational factors, such as navigating new buildings and organising equipment. Some CYP shared initial concerns around forming friendships, but after transition this appeared

irrelevant. Maras and Aveling (2006) noted transition visits, a dedicated SEN space and schools adopting a flexible approach to timetabling facilitated transition for CYP with SEN.

A prominent finding from this research was the importance of person-centred practice. It highlighted that participants had differing views about the type of support and provision they wanted. This illustrates a significant limitation in existing literature which groups CYP with SEN as a homogenous group, assuming their views and needs are the same. Instead, Maras and Aveling (2006) emphasised the importance of schools, families and students working collaboratively to develop individualised interventions and support. This study identifies stressors during secondary transition alongside measures to minimise their impact. It highlights the importance of research considering common stressors and beneficial support for CYP with differing SEN. This is particularly relevant to the current research. The case study design enabled CYP's transition experiences to be explored in detail, generating rich data. It also gathered the perspectives of different individuals involved in transition. However, the sample size was small and not all participants were interviewed both pre- and post-transition.

This study was one of the few pieces of research in this literature review, which was conducted in England. Nevertheless, it was conducted over a decade ago. Within this time there have been multiple changes to the education system, including a new curriculum and new SEN Code of Practice (DfE & DfH, 2015) which changed statements of SEN to EHCPs. These changes are likely to have impacted on CYP with SEN and their education, affecting the validity of these findings. This study was given a weighting of 'medium'. It examined the transition experiences of CYP with SEN and highlighted the importance of considering the impact of SEN type and individual factors on transition. However, it did not investigate the experiences of deaf CYP. Further research is required to ensure all CYP receive effective support during transition to secondary school and beyond.

2.3.1.1.7 Dockrell and Lindsay (2007). Instead of investigating the transition experiences of CYP with SEN as a homogenous group, Dockrell and Lindsay (2007) focussed on the views of CYP with specific speech and language difficulties (SSLD). Since HI can affect communication, social interaction and speech and language (Marschark et al., 2012), this research was deemed relevant to the review question. It received an overall WoE rating of ‘medium’. The design was appropriate to the aims of the study; however, the use of a coding scale for open-ended questions may have reduced the richness of the data.

Dockrell and Lindsay (2007) noticed minimal research had considered the needs of CYP with SSLD upon entering secondary school. They highlighted these children are likely to experience additional challenges, for example no longer receiving specialist language support. Therefore, Dockrell and Lindsay (2007) examined the language, literacy, and numeracy performance of 69 CYP with SSLD prior to entering secondary school. They investigated the expectations of students, parents, and teachers prior to transition and during the first year of secondary education. To determine factors related specifically to transition for CYP with SSLD and to control for confounding variables; participants were matched with two other peers, a typically developing (TD) child and a child with a non-language related SEN. All CYP completed standardised assessments of reading, decoding and numeracy in Spring of Year Six. These assessments were repeated in Spring of Year Seven and CYP also completed tests to examine their reading comprehension, spelling, and writing. In Year Six, CYP with SSLD completed language assessments to determine the extent of their language difficulties. Parents, CYP, teachers and SENCOs were interviewed in Year Six. In Year Seven, form tutors and subject specialists completed questionnaires. SENCOs completed questionnaires for the SSLD and SEN cohorts. Parents and CYP were re-interviewed.

Dockrell and Lindsay’s (2007) findings highlighted that many CYP and parents reported concerns about transition during Year Six. However, in Year Seven, the parents of TD CYP

reported their children had experienced a successful and easy transition. Many CYP reported enjoying aspects of school, but both the SSLD and SEN cohorts were aware of their difficulties and were more likely to report getting lost, forgetting equipment and disliking having several teachers. These CYP were also more likely to be experiencing lower self-esteem and difficulties managing academic demands. In Year Seven, teachers and parents raised concerns regarding curriculum access for CYP with SEN or SSLD due to their literacy and numeracy skills. This study concluded that transition to secondary school is especially challenging for pupils with SSLD and SEN. The importance of effective communication between parents, primary and secondary schools was noted.

A strength of this study was the variety of methods used, enabling triangulation. These methods were appropriate to the research questions. Multiple stakeholders were involved to provide a holistic picture of transition, enabling similar perspectives to be identified increasing the credibility of the findings. Comparison groups enabled the researchers to disaggregate factors related to transition, SEN in general and SSLD. This increased the study's validity. Like Scanlon et al.'s (2016) and Maras and Aveling's (2006) studies, this study had a small sample size limiting generalisability of the results. Females were underrepresented and the researchers did not acknowledge their role or position within the research. The research was conducted over a decade ago and participants may have responded to demand characteristics. Nevertheless, this study highlights the significance of further research focussed on transition to secondary school for CYP with a range of SEN to enable strategic interventions to be implemented preventing disengagement and supporting academic achievement.

2.3.1.1.8 *Foley et al. (2016).* Foley et al. (2016) aimed to investigate attitudes of both students and staff towards secondary school transition, focussing specifically on students with SEN. They hoped to develop understanding of the difficulties CYP with SEN

experience during this transition and supporting factors. Like the other papers discussed under this topic, Foley et al. (2016) did not specifically focus on deaf CYP. However, CYP with varying SEN participated and therefore this study is relevant to the review question. This study received an overall WoE rating of 'medium'. This was because the sample size was small, and two separate groups of participants were used at the pre-transition and post-transition phases of the research.

This was ethnographic research which employed a mixed methods approach. Fifty-eight Sixth Class students (eight students with SEN) and 63 First Year students (nine students with SEN) from Ireland completed questionnaires about transition. From these students, four primary school students (two students with SEN) and four secondary school students (two students with SEN) were purposively sampled to participate in focus groups. Key stakeholders in the transition process shared their perspectives through interviews or questionnaires.

The results illustrated students with SEN encountered greater obstacles during transition than TD students. They experienced increased anxiety and were more likely to be bullied. Common worries for students with SEN prior to transition included being able to find their way around the school; being bullied; and being different. Post transition, students with SEN reported difficulties establishing friendships, following the timetable, and contending with more demanding academic work. Teachers highlighted that the organisational and social demands of secondary school were challenging to all students, but especially those with SEN. Foley et al. (2016) suggested the following factors affect transition for CYP with SEN: bullying, teacher time, inadequate staff training, staff attitudes and adjustment to the new environment. Secondary teachers were dissatisfied with the information shared by primary schools. As noted by Maras and Aveling (2006), Foley et al. (2016) reported the quality of provision provided for CYP with SEN varied by school.

Foley et al.'s (2016) research illustrated complex factors which influence transition. Schools must be aware of the increased difficulties CYP with SEN experience during transition and place greater emphasis on supporting them. Like Dockrell and Lindsay's (2007) study, Foley et al (2016) sought the views of both CYP and key stakeholders in the transition process. This enabled data triangulation. Whilst stakeholder's views were sought through questionnaires and interviews, most CYP solely completed questionnaires. This method does not enable detailed exploration of responses. Two focus groups were conducted with eight students in total. Group dynamics may have limited the information participants shared. The data from focus groups was transcribed, but information is not provided about the researcher's role. It is impossible to know whether biases which may have impacted on the results have been considered. Information is not provided to outline how themes were derived, but quotations from participants are included supporting the themes identified. The research is limited by the small cohort of schools involved preventing generalisation of the findings. This research was conducted within the Irish education system, so cannot be generalised to England due to Irish secondary school transition occurring one year later.

2.3.1.2 Topic 2: Influencing Factors on Secondary Transition Outcomes for CYP with SEN. Both the papers considered under this topic, highlighted that CYP with SEN are more likely to experience a poor transition to secondary school. They suggested factors that further impact on the transition outcomes of CYP with SEN. McCoy et al (2020) highlighted that the risk of a poor transition is further increased for CYP with learning disabilities (LDs); females; being of low SES and being from a single-parent family. Vaz et al. (2014) concluded that the mental health functioning (MHF) and academic competence (AC) of CYP with SEN was lower than other groups of CYP. The findings from both studies highlighted the importance of school staff providing support to CYP throughout transition to ensure this

is a positive experience. Vaz et al. (2014) suggested that the support from primary school staff is especially significant.

Both studies employed quantitative research designs. This highlights the need for qualitative research to further investigate factors which influence the secondary transition outcomes for CYP with SEN. They both used a longitudinal design which enabled participants to be tracked across transition and comparisons of CYP's wellbeing and attainment to be made both pre- and post-transition. However, it is important to note that although Vaz et al. (2014) collected data both pre- and post-transition, the post-transition data collection only occurred six months after secondary transition. This may not have allowed for the longer-term effects of transition to be studied. Information was collected from a range of individuals in both studies, including CYP, parents and school staff. This provided rich data and enabled triangulation to occur. The use of qualitative methods of data collection would have strengthened the findings. Neither of these studies were conducted in the context of the English education system and thus further research is required to investigate whether these findings are representative of the experiences of CYP with SEN in England. The following papers are described and critically appraised below:

- Secondary school transition for students with special educational needs in Ireland (McCoy et al., 2020)
- The impact of personal background and school contextual factors on academic competence and mental health functioning across the primary-secondary school transition (Vaz et al., 2014)

2.3.1.2.1 McCoy et al (2020). McCoy et al. (2020) identified that research has begun to exemplify the difficulties CYP with SEN experience during transition to secondary education. They noted that despite these findings, little research has considered how the

transition process can be improved and whether specific groups of CYP with SEN are particularly vulnerable. This was a longitudinal study involving a large sample size. Deaf CYP were grouped together with children who had physical disabilities. This study received an overall WoE score of 'medium'.

This study was part of a large-scale longitudinal study tracking Irish children from nine-years-old through transition to secondary school. It involved 7423 CYP and their families. Multiple quantitative measures were used (see Appendix C), enabling information to be obtained about secondary transition experiences, SEN, family characteristics, self-concept and school engagement.

The findings revealed that CYP with a diagnosed SEN by age nine, were much more likely to experience a poor transition to secondary school compared to their peers. The risk of a poor transition was found to be further increased for children who had LDs. Those with other disabilities were at increased risk, but this was reflective of the socio-economic composition of these groups. McCoy et al. (2020) found girls, CYP from households of lower SES, CYP from single-parent families and those who experienced high levels of maternal conflict were more likely to experience a negative transition. Academic ability at age nine also influenced transition experience with those with poor reading scores more at risk of a negative transition. Students with positive relationships with their teachers at age 13, were less likely to have experienced a negative transition to secondary school. These findings highlight the significance of transition support and relationships throughout transition. It is essential schools are aware of the transition difficulties different groups of children experience and work collaboratively to ensure CYP are fully engaged and supported.

This study incorporated a large sample size. Data was compiled from children, parents and school principals, which McCoy et al. (2020) argued was reflective of Bronfenbrenner's

(1979) bioecological model. Various quantitative measures were used capturing information about several dimensions related to transition, including social adjustment, emotional and academic factors. The inclusion of qualitative data reflecting pupil voice would have enhanced the richness of the findings. Unlike some studies previously discussed, McCoy et al (2020) acknowledged the heterogeneous characteristics of CYP with SEN. They classified participants into one of five categories depending on SEN type, enabling the impact of SEN type on CYP's transition experience to be considered. Nevertheless, participants were still grouped into five broad SEN categories and therefore further research is required to identify the impact of specific SEN on CYP's transition experiences.

As acknowledged by McCoy et al. (2020), this research is based upon CYP who successfully transitioned to secondary school. It does not include the experiences of CYP who moved to specialist provisions. They did not assess the support structures that individual schools employed to support transitioning students. These may have acted as protective factors for some CYP affecting the validity of the findings. This research was conducted in Ireland which has a different education system to England and thus the findings may not be relevant to this context.

2.3.1.2.2 *Vaz et al. (2014).* Vaz et al. (2014) argued that literature focused on primary to secondary school transition is dominated by literature reviews and case studies. They highlighted that few studies have considered the impact of transition to secondary school on student's mental health functioning (MHF) and academic competence (AC). Of those which have, Vaz et al. (2014) noted the small sample sizes and limited generalisability of the results. To fill this identified gap, they conducted a quantitative study which aimed to explore and compare the MHF and perceived AC of students with and without SEN six month prior- and post-transition to secondary school. They examined the impact of personal background and school contextual factors. Although this study did not focus on CYP's

experiences of transition to secondary school, MHF and AC influence this and therefore this study was deemed relevant to the review question. Deaf CYP were included within the SEN group.

The study was conducted in Australia involving 197 TD students and 69 students with SEN. Students and their parents/guardians completed questionnaires six months before and after moving to secondary school. Students' AC was measured using the Self Perception Profile for Adolescents (Harter, 1988) and their MHF measured using the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (Goodman, 1997). Information about school context and family demographics was collected using questionnaires. The results illustrated students with SEN and students from lower SES reported lower AC and MHF in both primary and secondary school. These students benefitted from school support to ensure positive transition outcomes. Support from primary school was particularly important. This suggests the importance of primary schools fostering a sense of belonging in students and ensuring this is nurtured during transition.

This study highlights the importance of schools being sensitive and responsive to the MHF and AC of students. It holistically considered the impact of multiple factors including disability, gender, school context and SES on MHF and AC across transition. It was conducted in one area of Australia and thus the results may not be representative of the experiences of CYP across Australia or in England. As acknowledged by the researchers, 70% of schools declined to participate which may have introduced bias (Vaz et al., 2014). Vaz et al. (2014) noted their inclusion criteria may have excluded some CYP with SEN and they did not account for the confounding effect of disability severity and the impact on MHF and AC. CYP self-reported their AC which may have resulted in social desirability bias. Parents assessed CYP's MHF, but CYP may have provided a better insight into this. These factors may have reduced the validity of the findings. CYP of low SES were

underrepresented. Since this study employed a quantitative research design, the views and experiences of CYP were not shared. Overall, this study received a WoE rating of ‘medium’.

2.3.1.3 Topic 3: Supporting the Primary to Secondary School Transition for CYP with SEN. Studies have begun to consider interventions that may support the experience of transition from primary school to secondary school for CYP with SEN. The three studies focussed on this topic highlighted the importance of personalised and tailored transition support for CYP with SEN. They illustrated the significance of actively involving CYP and their families in decisions affecting them. White and Rae (2016) explored the experience of person-centred reviews (PCRs) for CYP with SEN and their parents/guardians. The results indicated that CYP and their parents/guardians were predominantly positive about their experience of PCRs. However, the themes identified generally reflected the process of PCRs rather than the outcomes. These findings in combination with the other studies discussed under this topic, suggest that further research is required investigating the transition outcomes for CYP with SEN following person-centred planning and interventions. In addition to providing personalised and targeted transition interventions to support CYP with SEN, Bunn et al., (2017) highlighted the importance of CYP being prepared for transition, having a good support network, and being given time to adapt to their new environment.

The three studies grouped together under this topic used different research designs. Both White and Rae (2016) and Bunn et al. (2017) employed a mixed methods approach. This enabled participants to share their experiences using their own terms, in addition to providing quantitative data. The incorporation of qualitative methods of data collection would have strengthened the findings of Neal et al. (2016). Nevertheless, Neal et al.’s (2016) research included a large sample of CYP and was longitudinal, enabling data to be gathered both pre-and post-transition. This was a limitation of both White and Rae’s (2016) and Bunn et al.’s (2017) research as follow-ups were not included to investigate the long-term impact of

interventions after secondary transition. These studies all grouped CYP with SEN as a homogenous group. Therefore, further research is required to investigate supporting factors during secondary transition for CYP with different types of SEN. The following papers are described and critically appraised under this topic:

- High school transition – an intervention that empowers children with SEN and improves school practice (Bunn et al., 2017)
- Exploring the longitudinal association between interventions to support the transition to secondary school and child anxiety (Neal et al., 2016)
- Person-centred reviews and transition: An exploration of the views of students and their parents/carers (White & Rae, 2016)

2.3.1.3.1 *Bunn et al. (2017).* Bunn et al. (2017) discussed the process and results of a junior school initiative aimed to ensure successful secondary school transition for vulnerable students. They used focus groups to explore the transition experiences and expectations of CYP with SEN and discussed support mechanisms. They designed, delivered, and evaluated an intervention. This study was pupil led and centred around pupil voice. However, it had a small sample size, involving six Year Six pupils and four Year Seven pupils from one junior school and one secondary school respectively. It did not discuss CYP's SEN diagnoses and CYP may have responded to demand characteristics. Therefore, this study was given an overall WoE rating of 'low-medium'.

Bunn et al. (2017) transcribed the focus group and used thematic analysis to identify recurrent themes. When discussing transition concerns, 'feelings' about transition was a key theme, and this was split into sub-themes; feelings about 'change' and feelings about 'being different'. Changes included learning demands, the environment, and peers. 'Being different' related to CYP feeling different to their peers and external misconceptions (e.g. portrayal of

secondary school in films). ‘Help with transition’ was another theme identified which was split into three subthemes: what helped pupils ‘before Year Seven’, ‘after Year Seven’ and during ‘both’ time periods. Before Year Seven, CYP valued a good support network, active support from their primary school and being supported with the school layout. During Year Seven, CYP discussed the significance of being given time to experience the new environment and the benefits of secondary school. Outside support was perceived as important during both time periods.

Based on their findings, Bunn et al. (2017) designed an intervention to support vulnerable CYP to successfully transition to secondary school. This involved the completion of a transition booklet and workshops. CYP reported researching and visiting their new school were the two most useful parts of the intervention.

2.3.1.3.2 *Neal et al. (2016)*. Research suggests CYP experience increased anxiety around transition to secondary school. There are multiple universal transition strategies available which primary schools use to support students. These interventions can be grouped according to their overarching theoretical approach (cognitive, behavioural, systemic). Neal et al. (2016) conducted a longitudinal study to investigate the transition anxiety reducing impact of these strategies. They examined whether the findings differed for CYP with SEN. The overall WoE rating for this paper was ‘medium’ due to its topic relevance and use of triangulation. The rating was lowered as it was a quantitative study with low method-specific relevance to the current study. The questionnaires relied on participants’ memory, potentially biasing and limiting the validity of the findings.

This study was completed in two phases, May of Year Six and November of Year Seven. In phase one, primary school teachers completed questionnaires outlining their strategies to support transition. Additional information about each pupil and information outlining

strategies used to support CYP with SEN was gathered. CYP completed questionnaires measuring their anxiety levels. Given the timing of this questionnaire, some transition interventions may have occurred influencing these scores. Pupils and parents completed questionnaires providing information about the transition strategies schools had used. The anxiety measures questionnaire was repeated at phase two.

The results revealed CYP with SEN had higher generalised and school anxiety scores than their peers at both points in the study. Systemic interventions were most effective at reducing transition anxiety for TD CYP. However, for CYP with SEN these approaches increased anxiety. Neal et al. (2016) concluded that CYP with SEN require a different approach to transition support to their peers. This should be personalised.

This was a good quality study which incorporated a large sample size. Clear information was provided about the participants and the measures used. Parents, teachers, and pupils completed questionnaires enabling data triangulation. A limitation was that each student was exposed to multiple intervention strategies. An effect was discovered for systemic interventions. However, it is difficult to be certain this effect was not due to the amalgamation of different interventions. Neal et al. (2016) highlighted that schools may have implemented transition interventions differently, allocating differing amounts of time and effort to their implementation. They noted it was impossible “to compare the effects of time and effort on strategy implementation because no objective measure of this was available” (p.41). Limited information was provided about SEN type for CYP with SEN. Instead these children were grouped as a homogenous group. Neal et al. (2016) recognised that this study only focused on one aspect of transition: anxiety. They highlighted future research should focus on additional outcomes, such as motivation and academic attainment.

2.3.1.3.3 *White & Rae (2016)*. White and Rae (2016) aimed to investigate the experiences of PCRs during transition for CYP and their parents/guardians. PCRs place the child and their family at the centre of the review aiming to empower them and support them to share their views. It focuses on the strengths, interests and preferences of the child and results in an action plan. In addition to gathering the views of CYP and their parents/guardians, White and Rae (2016) hoped to explore whether PCRs affected CYP's locus of control, feelings towards school and knowledge of their learning targets. They also considered whether CYP and their parents/guardians felt listened to. Participants were 16 CYP (14 of whom were in Year Six) with SEN who attended mainstream schools and their parents/guardians. A mixed-methods design was used. SSIs were conducted with both CYP and their parents/guardians. CYP were interviewed before and after the PCR and parents/guardians were interviewed after. CYP also completed the children's locus of control scale (Nowicki & Strickland, 1973) and scaling questions to explore their motivation and feelings towards education. These measures were completed both before and after the PCR.

The SSIs were analysed using thematic analysis revealing multiple themes. The findings suggested transition is daunting for CYP and their families due to the many changes. Participants reported the prospect of a PCR was anxiety-provoking and these concerns appeared to be increased by a lack of preparation. However, they reported finding the actual review containing and reassuring. Parents/guardians appreciated the solution-focused nature of the process and found it informative. They noted the PCR had positively impacted their child's self-esteem. It was also reported that the review may support the development of self-advocacy skills for CYP. Both parents/guardians and CYP reported it was a collaborative and empowering process in which they felt listened to. They felt the visual process used during the PCR supported its aims and in general the review was perceived as child friendly. No difference was discovered in CYP's feelings of control, motivation and positivity following

the PCR. White and Rae (2016) argued it is likely a one-hour PCR is not sufficient in influencing these factors and additional person-centred interventions are required.

White and Rae (2016) noted limitations to this study. They highlighted that they did not attend the PCRs and so it is impossible to know if they were aligned with the principles of person-centred approaches. The same person facilitated the reviews and therefore the findings may reflect their skills rather than participants' experiences of the review. The sample was not representative of CYP with SEN and their families, girls, fathers, and individuals from ethnic minority groups were underrepresented. Like much qualitative research, the data may have been influenced by the researchers and participants may have responded to demand characteristics. Some CYP found the locus of control scale difficult and the interviews challenging. The use of visual methods may have been beneficial. Nevertheless, the findings have important implications for EP practice. They highlight the benefits of pupil involvement in education planning and suggest that PCRs are useful at secondary transition. The use of SSIs enabled rich data to be gathered and allowed researchers to follow the participant's lead where appropriate. The incorporation of visuals within PCRs appeared valuable. This suggests visuals may be a beneficial addition to research involving CYP with SEN. Overall, this study received a WoE rating of low-medium.

2.3.1.4 Topic 4: Wellbeing and Relationships for deaf CYP in Early Secondary School. It is clear from the studies discussed above that research has typically focussed on CYP with SEN as a homogenous group. Limited research has considered the transition experiences of deaf CYP. Two studies were located which focussed on this area. However, they focussed on a specific area of transition: relationships and wellbeing. These studies highlighted that early secondary school can be a challenging time for deaf CYP. This emphasises the need for additional research focussing on the secondary school transition experiences of deaf CYP. Deaf CYP educated within mainstream education settings show

increased withdrawn behaviours and reduced wellbeing in comparison to hearing CYP (Woolters et al., 2012). They also appear to be less accepted and popular and therefore may have a lower sense of belonging (Woolters et al., 2014).

These studies highlighted the importance of educators facilitating interventions to improve the wellbeing of deaf CYP and supporting them to form friendships during early secondary school. They suggested that support is required to guide deaf CYP through transition and to help all CYP to develop positive attitudes towards individuals with disabilities. Nevertheless, these studies only focussed on wellbeing and relationships. They did not investigate the holistic experience of secondary transition for deaf CYP nor examine potential barriers and facilitative factors. Both studies employed quantitative research designs, predominantly using peer nominations and rating questionnaires which may lack validity and be affected by order bias. The quantitative research designs did not enable participants to expand on their responses or provide additional information which would have strengthened the findings. Both studies included a large sample size, but they did not provide information about the participants' levels of HI. They were conducted in the Netherlands and thus additional research is required with deaf CYP educated within the English education system. The two studies discussed and critically appraised under this topic are:

- Impact of peer and teacher relations on deaf early adolescents' wellbeing: Comparison before and after a major transition (Wolters et al., 2012)
- Social adjustment of deaf and early adolescents at the start of secondary school: The divergent role of withdrawn behaviour in peer status (Wolters et al., 2014).

2.3.1.4.1 ***Wolters et al. (2012).*** Wolters et al. (2012) conducted two studies exploring the peer and teacher relationships of deaf children during transition from elementary school to junior high school. The effects of these relationships on their wellbeing

was considered. CYP with a HI of 25 decibels or more were included and ‘deaf’ was used to group CYP irrespective of their degree of HI. Due to the high topic relevance, thorough analysis and transparent report, this study was given an overall WoE rating of ‘medium-high’.

Study one was conducted in the last three months of the school year and investigated predictors of wellbeing. It included 759 Grade Six pupils (87 deaf) and 840 Grade Seven pupils (104 deaf). These CYP either attended a mainstream school or a SEN provision. Pupils completed peer nomination and rating questions and parents provided background information. The rating questions included questions about the individual’s wellbeing, their feelings about school and their pupil-teacher relationship.

The results illustrated deaf CYP had lower levels of wellbeing than their hearing peers in both grades regardless of education provision. For deaf CYP in Grade Six, the strongest predictor of wellbeing was their teacher relationship. Post-transition, acceptance, popularity, and peer relationships became more important and predicted wellbeing. Wolters et al. (2012) reported that in Grade Seven there was a positive correlation between levels of acceptance and levels of wellbeing for deaf CYP irrespective of education setting. They highlighted that for Grade Seven students who attended a specialist provision, teacher relationship predicted wellbeing; however, for mainstreamed deaf students, peer relationships predicted wellbeing.

Study two furthered these findings by investigating whether wellbeing remains consistent over time and across transition to secondary school. This study was a longitudinal study of a subgroup of participants from study one (39 hearing and 59 deaf). The same procedure and measures were used. The findings revealed wellbeing remained stable across transition for hearing mainstream CYP, but not for deaf CYP in any educational setting. The wellbeing of deaf mainstream boys increased from Grade Six to Seven but decreased for deaf

mainstream girls. The opposite was found for deaf CYP who attended a specialist provision. This suggests gender may influence wellbeing for deaf children. Overall, deaf CYP in mainstream education were less accepted than their peers and deaf boys were less accepted than deaf girls. After transition, acceptance decreased for all children in mainstream education. There was a particularly noticeable decrease in acceptance for deaf girls. Popularity decreased for all CYP in mainstream education between Grades Six and Seven. In both grades deaf CYP were already less popular than their hearing counterparts or deaf peers in specialist provisions. A positive increase in the pupil-teacher relationship from Grade Six to Grade Seven was noticed for all pupils.

It is evident from this study that gender, school setting, hearing status, popularity, peer acceptance and teacher relationship are key influencers on CYP's wellbeing at school. Wolters et al. (2012) concluded the importance of peer and teacher relationships for CYP's wellbeing. The results emphasise the significance of adults supervising transition for deaf CYP and providing guidance where required. This was a comprehensive piece of research which provided clear and detailed information about the methodology, participants, and methods of data analysis.

There are some limitations to this research which must be considered. Qualitative differences between deaf participants were not considered. The transition experiences of deaf CYP may be affected by their level of HI and spoken language. Despite the large sample size in study one, this was considerably reduced in study two which may have impacted on the validity of the statistical analysis. This study only examined CYP's wellbeing in Grades Six and Seven. To understand the impact of transition, further longitudinal research is needed to include Grade Eight (Wolters et al., 2012). By Grade Eight peers will have greater familiarity, a similar situation to Grade Six prior to transition. This study was conducted in the Netherlands which has a different education system and culture to England and thus the

results cannot be generalised. Dutch children transition to secondary school between the ages of ten and 12 (Rodrigues et al., 2018), which is similar to children in England who move to secondary school at 11 years of age.

2.3.1.4.2 *Wolters et al., (2014)*. The findings from Wolters et al.'s (2012) study were furthered by Wolters et al. (2014) who examined peer relationships and social behaviours of CYP in the first two years of secondary school. The same criteria for deafness was used as in Wolters et al.'s (2012) study. Due to this study's relevance to the review question and the detailed data analysis, it was provided with an overall WoE rating of 'medium-high'.

Questionnaires were administered to 74 deaf and 271 hearing CYP in Grades Seven and Eight. This involved peer nominations and ratings of behaviour and peer status. Parents provided background information. Consistent with Wolters et al.'s (2012) findings, deaf mainstream CYP were less popular than their hearing peers and less accepted, although deaf mainstream boys were more accepted than deaf mainstream girls in Grade Seven. Deaf CYP in mainstream education showed increased withdrawn behaviour in comparison to hearing classmates. Deaf CYP who attended specialist provisions were not only more withdrawn but showed less prosocial and more antisocial behaviour. Thus, differences were discovered with regards to the social status and behaviours of both mainstream deaf and hearing CYP and deaf CYP educated in mainstream and specialist provisions. It is likely the withdrawn behaviour displayed by deaf CYP contributed to their lower levels of popularity and acceptance.

This study illustrates some of the challenges deaf CYP in mainstream education may experience after transition to secondary school. It only focused on one area: peer relationships amongst their classmates. However, it is possible deaf CYP have friendships with peers in

different classes, that may act as a protective factor. Like Wolters et al.'s (2012) study, this study was completed in the Netherlands and thus the findings may not be generalisable to deaf CYP in England. Overall, this was a high-quality study which provided transparent information about the data collection methods and analysis procedures.

2.4 Summary and Conclusions

This literature review has considered a wide range of research encompassing various theoretical and methodological approaches with the aim of answering the following review question:

- 1) What do we know about the experiences of transition to secondary school for deaf CYP?

The review highlights a growing body of evidence investigating the primary to secondary school transition for CYP with SEN. However, only four of the 11 transition papers identified were conducted in England and thus are reflective of the English education system (Bunn et al., 2017; Dockrell & Lindsay, 2007; Maras & Aveling, 2006; Neal et al., 2016). Two of these were conducted prior to the updated SEN Code of Practice (DfE & DfH, 2015) and introduction of the new curriculum and therefore may not be representative of current transition experiences for CYP with SEN. Only two of the identified studies focussed exclusively on the experiences of deaf CYP (Wolters et al., 2012, 2014) and these focussed on one area of transition: relationships.

The findings from the systematic literature review illustrate that children with SEN encounter greater obstacles and stress before, during and after transition (e.g. McCoy et al., 2020). Key concerns include academic competence, managing orientational and organisational challenges and 'fitting in' (Dockrell & Lindsay, 2007; Foley et al., 2016; Maras & Aveling, 2006; Scanlon et al., 2016). The literature review highlighted evidence to

suggest that type of SEN may impact on transition experiences, for example McCoy et al. (2020) noted CYP with LDs were more likely to experience a poor transition. Despite being excluded from the literature review due to CYP moving between specialist provisions, Perfitt (2013) identified a positive correlation between academic ability and stress level during transition. Since deafness is not a LD, this group of children may experience increased stress at transition. These findings highlight the need for additional research investigating the impact of SEN type on transition experiences to ensure all CYP are fully supported.

2.5 Aims of the Current Research

Given the limited research investigating the transition experiences of deaf CYP and evidence to suggest CYP with SEN are vulnerable during transition; the current study aims to develop the evidence base by exploring deaf CYP's experiences of secondary school transition. Specifically, the researcher aimed to work collaboratively with deaf CYP, empowering them to investigate the transition experiences of other deaf CYP. Thus, providing recommendations to schools to improve transition for this group. An additional literature review revealed that CYP with SEN are rarely involved in conducting research in this area. However, when they are involved multiple benefits have been noted. CYP with SEN report feeling empowered and developing new skills (Rome et al., 2015). They bring different experiences and perspectives to the research process enhancing the findings (Tarleton & Ward, 2005). It was hoped the use of a qualitative research design would enable rich stories about deaf CYP's experiences of transition to be elicited. This would develop understanding of how this group of CYP make sense of this distinct moment in their education leading to recommendations to support future CYP.

2.6 Research Questions (RQs)

Having explored and critically reviewed the literature, the researcher formulated the following RQs:

2.6.1 *Primary Question:*

What are the experiences of deaf children, within a mainstream education setting, during the transition from primary to secondary school?

2.6.2 *Secondary Questions:*

- What are the most significant impacts on wellbeing that deaf pupils experience during transition?
- What are deaf CYP's perceptions of the support mechanisms provided by schools to support the transition from primary School to secondary school?
- What support mechanisms do deaf pupils find most useful during the transition from primary to secondary education?

Chapter 3 – Methodology

3.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter provides a detailed outline of the methodology and data collection methods used within the current research. It begins by describing the purpose of the research and the research aims. This is followed by an explanation of the participatory nature of the research and consideration of the researcher's ontological and epistemological position. The research design is outlined providing details of the recruitment process and the procedures used for data collection and analysis. Finally, ethical considerations, reflexivity and trustworthiness are discussed.

3.2 Purpose of Research and Research Aims

This research aims to provide a unique contribution to educational and child psychology, by addressing some of the issues identified within the literature review and adding to the evidence base. This includes addressing a research gap, regarding the experiences of transition to secondary school for deaf CYP. As highlighted in the literature review, the researcher was unable to locate any research focussed on this area. The researcher aimed to work collaboratively with deaf CYP, empowering them to investigate transition experiences. The aim was to generate rich data to develop understanding of the transition process for deaf CYP. It was hoped this would produce recommendations to be shared with schools and other stakeholders to improve transition for this group.

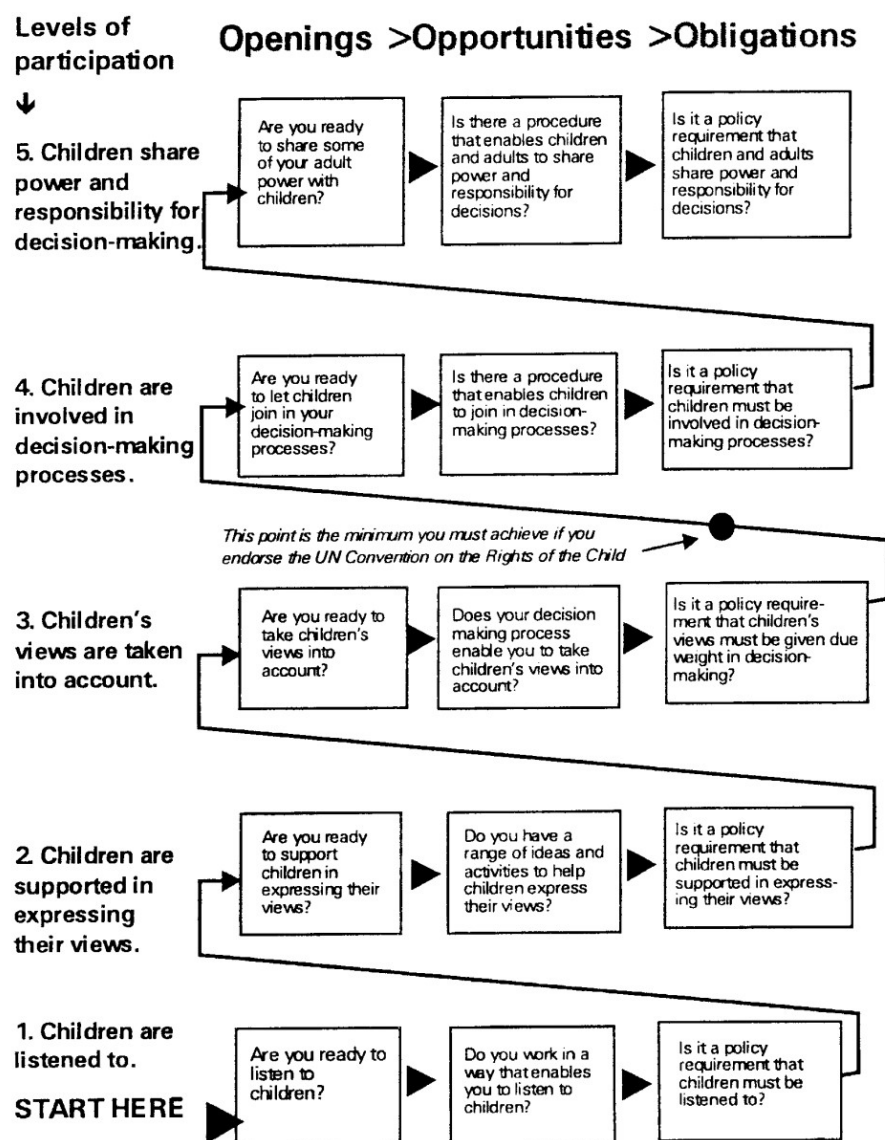
Fox et al. (2007) stressed the importance of researchers identifying a clear purpose for research as this influences the research design and RQs that can be investigated. As such, Robson & McCartan (2016) identify four types of research: exploratory, descriptive, explanatory and emancipatory. The purpose of the current research is both exploratory and emancipatory. Exploratory research investigates new or little-understood phenomena (Kirby

et al., 2017). In this research the focus is on the experiences of deaf CYP, within a mainstream education setting, during transition to secondary school. This research has an emancipatory purpose. It recognises the importance of providing CYP with a voice and seeks to empower them. The researcher also aimed to empower deaf CYP by involving them in the research process. It is hoped this research will provide benefits for deaf CYP and address the power imbalance of traditional research paradigms. These points are aligned with the principles of emancipatory research espoused by Stone and Priestley (1996).

3.3 Participatory Research

Figure 3.1

Pathways to Participation (Shier, 2001)



Legislation including the SEN Code of Practice (DfE & DfH, 2015) and the United Nations Conventions on the Right of the Child (United Nations, 1989) highlight that CYP should be actively engaged in decision making. Yet, historically CYP with SEN have been investigated within research, but not actively involved in the research process. Some research suggests they are the least empowered group of students (Cefai & Cooper, 2010). Mertens (2015) argues to understand the lived experiences of individuals and create meaningful change, the community involved in research projects needs to be empowered to actively contribute.

Participatory research aims to empower individuals to create change, treating them as experts in their own lives. This adds strength and rigour to research, ensuring it is informed and relevant to real world contexts (Vaughn & Jacquez, 2020). Participatory research can be viewed on a continuum ranging from consulting individuals on the research process to individuals being actively involved and making joint decisions with researchers (Asaba & Suarez-Balcazar, 2018). Often participatory research uses participants as co-researchers, however in this study two separate groups of CYP were used. Key Stage Three deaf CYP as participants and deaf college students as co-researchers. Since deafness is a low incidence condition, it would be difficult to recruit two deaf CYP attending the same mainstream secondary school as co-researchers. Therefore, co-researchers were recruited from a large college instead. College students have previously experienced transition to secondary school and may have different reflections and ideas to the researcher. It was believed this would add value to the research and minimise researcher bias (Mertens, 2015).

Shier (2001) designed the Pathways to Participation model (see Figure 3.1) which is often used by researchers when developing and evaluating CYP's level of participation in research (Larsson et al., 2018). It depicts a framework of participation ranging from the lowest level where CYP are listened to, to the highest level where CYP are actively involved

in the research process and decision making. Throughout a research project, the amount of power and decision making given to participants changes (Kirby & Gibbs, 2006). The researcher initiated the current research, but CYP were involved in designing the study. They made collaborative decisions with the researcher about the research design and techniques used. This meant co-researchers were both consulted and given equal power and responsibility for some decisions, thus reaching level five of Shier's (2001) framework in the design of the study. Hart (1992) highlights the importance of ensuring CYP's participation in research is guided by their feelings and desires. The researcher informed the co-researchers they could choose which parts of the research they participated in. Due to the co-researchers' individual commitments and the Covid-19 pandemic they selected not to be involved in data collection or analysis. However, they are interested in disseminating the findings following thesis completion.

3.4 Conceptual Framework

Individuals view the world surrounding them through a lens shaped by their beliefs (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). These beliefs represent their world view (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). This determines how they perceive information, act and interpret their environment (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Kivunja and Kuyini highlighted that an individual's world view defines their philosophical and theoretical orientation which "has significant implications for every decision made in the research process" (p.26). It includes their beliefs about the nature of reality (ontology), the nature of knowledge (epistemology) and the acquisition of knowledge (methodology) (Robson & McCartan, 2016). It is imperative researchers are aware of the research paradigm underpinning their research, so they can engage in reflexivity and consider the impact of their position on their research.

3.4.1 *Ontology*

Ontology refers to “theories about the nature of reality or being” (Braun & Clarke, 2013). It is the consideration of whether a single reality exists which can be understood or whether reality is constructed through individual perspectives (Cohen et al., 2007). At one end of the continuum is realism; the view that only one reality exists and this can be discovered and understood through appropriate research (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The other end of the continuum is relativism. This suggests there are multiple constructed realities which vary between individuals (Robson & McCartan, 2016). These realities are impacted on by time, context and culture and are subjective.

The aim of this research was to further understand the transition to secondary school for deaf CYP. This takes the realist view that there is one reality which exists: transition. It is a reality that CYP experience transition at some point during their school career. However, the timing, nature and support provided during this transition differs. Therefore, transition is a reality, but one’s understanding of transition can be defined as a social construct. By investigating transition, recommendations can be developed to support this transition. The researcher sought to learn about this phenomenon ‘through the eyes of deaf CYP’. This meant the findings were probably shaped by the background, culture, and context of individual participants. This fits with the relativist perspective that reality is constructed by individuals. Given these conflicting positions, a further ontological position was considered, critical realism. Critical realism is situated between realism and relativism and accepts aspects of both positions providing an alternative research paradigm (Kelly, 2017).

Critical realism acknowledges the realist view that there is an external reality which exists, but like the relativist position suggests individuals experience this reality differently depending on their constructs, experiences and social history (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Critical realists recognise the complex nature of the world, highlighting multiple factors

which affect how individual's view their surroundings (Robson & McCartan, 2016). This means events are not replicated across settings, but shaped by culture and context (House, 1991). Kelly (2017) argues critical realism allows value-based professionals such as EPs to apply robust methodology and scientific analysis to socially constructed environments such as classrooms.

Within this research, a critical realist ontology enabled investigation into the external reality of 'transition' to secondary for school for deaf CYP whilst also accepting this reality is not identical for every individual. In addition to exploring the transition experiences of deaf CYP, the researcher aimed to empower deaf CYP encouraging them to share their perspectives to promote positive change. This fits well with critical realist research. The researcher hoped to empower deaf CYP by involving them in the research process which fits the critical realist ontology. It enabled the researcher and co-researchers to have different perspectives on transition for deaf CYP whilst agreeing it exists.

3.4.2 Epistemology

Epistemology refers to the theory of knowledge (Willig, 2013). It considers what counts as legitimate knowledge and how knowledge is acquired (Braun & Clarke, 2013). It also considers the role and impact of the researcher on the research. Epistemology is guided by the ontological position of the research (Bryman, 2012). The current research adopts a critical realist epistemological position. The research is phenomenological as it explores how individuals experience a phenomenon (transition). The researcher accepts knowledge is subjective and is influenced by one's perspective, social and historical context (Willig, 2013).

From a critical realist perspective, knowledge is developed through the interaction between the researcher and the participants (Robson & McCartan, 2016). This is pertinent given the use of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) in this research. 'Double

hermeneutics' is involved in IPA. This means "the researcher is making sense of the participant, who is making sense of x" (Smith et al., 2009, p.35). This approach is compatible with a critical realist epistemology, as it acknowledges the production of knowledge is subjective. It relies upon the meaning participants' give to their experiences, the way researchers elicit this information and how they interpret it. Therefore, it is vital researchers acknowledge their own beliefs, assumptions and experiences (Mertens, 2015).

3.4.3 Researcher's Theoretical Position: Critical Realism

To summarise, the current research adopts a critical realist research paradigm. Transition is a reality which exists but the experience of this reality differs for individuals (Robson & McCartan, 2016). By positioning the research within the critical realist paradigm, it is possible to explore the experience of transition 'through the eyes of deaf CYP'. The current research takes an inductive approach employing qualitative research methods to further understand the experience of transition to secondary school for deaf CYP. It draws upon various psychological theories, including Attachment Theory and Self-Determination Theory. The methodological approach to the current study is further explored below.

3.5 Research Design

Robson and McCartan (2016) argue "the design framework should have high compatibility between purposes, research questions, conceptual framework and sampling strategy" (p.74). There are three types of research design; quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Quantitative research uses scientific inquiry to gather measurable information, whereas qualitative research is an interpretive and naturalistic approach (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Qualitative research seeks to understand and interpret phenomena through words (Braun & Clarke, 2013). This study used a qualitative research design.

As stated previously, the current research adopted a critical realist conceptual framework. The researcher acknowledges there is an external reality which exists, but individuals experience this differently (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Critical realists believe research can help individuals to better understand the world, but this understanding is specific to the context. Critical realists aim to discover why things happen and are not bound like positivist researchers to use research designs that generate empirical data (Vincent & O'Mahoney, 2017). Instead, researchers can employ research methods that are most appropriate to understanding the issues being explored (Danermark, 2002). Vincent and O'Mahoney (2017) highlight that critical realists typically advocate for the use of multiple methods to enable rich data to be collected. This marries well with the current research. Since it can be difficult to fully represent lived experiences verbally (Boden & Eatough, 2014), both visual and verbal methods of data collection were used.

The research design must be appropriate to the RQs (Robson & McCartan, 2016). The current study was phenomenological. It sought to generate rich, in-depth information exploring participants' interpretations of reality (transition). The RQs related to the experiences of deaf CYP. Sutton and Austin (2015) state "qualitative research [should be] used to gain insights into people's feelings and thoughts" (p.226).

The purpose of the current research was both exploratory and emancipatory. Qualitative research is useful when little is known about a phenomenon (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). To the researcher's knowledge, this study is the first to explore the secondary school transition experiences of deaf CYP. The researcher was keen to empower CYP, providing them with a voice to share their experiences. To enable this to happen and to ensure that detailed data was generated, a qualitative research design was adopted.

3.6 Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

IPA is an inductive, qualitative research approach which is “committed to the examination of how people make sense of their major life experiences” (Smith et al., 2009, p.1). It was first proposed by Smith (1996) and has since become one of the main qualitative research methodologies employed in many academic disciplines including Psychology (Tuffour, 2017). Smith et al. (2009) report that IPA research aims to:

- Consider in detail how an individual understands or makes sense of a lived experience
- Provide a rich and detailed interpretation of the account enabling the experience to be understood

In this sense, Smith et al. (2009) argue participants within IPA studies are ‘experiential experts’. The researcher’s job is to interpret the participant’s interpretation of their experience, developing an insider perspective and establishing meaning. IPA is underpinned by phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography (Smith et al., 2009).

3.6.1 *Phenomenology*

Phenomenology studies the human experience and how people’s consciousness of things effects the way they perceive them (Langdrige, 2007). It is a philosophical approach which aims to discover meaning by understanding individual experiences, including thoughts, feelings, and memories. Phenomenologists argue how individuals perceive and experience a seemingly identical phenomenon differs and depends on their ‘intentionality’ (i.e. their emotions, desires, aims etc) (Husserl, 1982; Husserl & Carr, 1984). They note the importance of researchers seeking to suspend their assumptions. Husserl referred to this as ‘bracketing’ (Smith et al., 2009).

3.6.2 *Hermeneutics*

“Hermeneutics is the theory of interpretation” (Smith et al., 2009, p.21). Meaning and experience are intertwined and thus from a hermeneutic perspective language is a way of expressing experience (Tuffour, 2017). Hermeneutic theorists believe knowledge cannot be obtained without some form of interpretation (Heidegger et al., 2013). IPA researchers engage in ‘double hermeneutics’(Smith et al., 2009). This means “the researcher is making sense of the participant’s sense making” (Tuffour, 2017, p.4). As explained by Smith et al. (2009, p.35) “there is a phenomenon ready to shine forth, but detective work is required by the researcher to facilitate the coming forth, and then the making sense of it once it has happened”. IPA acknowledges the researcher brings presumptions to the process and therefore highlights the importance of reflective practice (Smith et al., 2009). IPA researchers must engage in an iterative, dynamic and cyclical process, known as the hermeneutic circle (Smith et al., 2009). This means researchers move between the participant’s account and their interpretation of the account and the whole text and individual extracts of text (Shinebourne, 2011).

3.6.3 *Idiography*

“Idiography is concerned with the particular” (Smith et al., 2009, p.29). IPA aims to provide a detailed and rich analysis of the phenomena being researched (Smith et al., 2009). It seeks to understand how a specific phenomenon has been understood from the perspective of an individual within a specific context (Smith et al., 2009). IPA is committed to each individual case; this means analysis occurs at an individual level before moving to more general claims. This ensures individual stories are heard.

3.7 Rationale for Using IPA

A range of qualitative approaches were considered for the current study, including discursive and narrative approaches. However, based on the reasons outlined below, it was felt IPA was most suitable.

IPA empowers individuals to provide a rich, detailed, and first-person account of their experiences, enabling them to describe an experience in their own terms (Smith et al., 2009). This generates rich data. It is a valuable research approach for studies investigating new or little-understood phenomenon (Reid et al., 2005). This is pertinent to the current study, as to the researcher's knowledge this is the first piece of research investigating the secondary school transition experiences of deaf CYP. IPA fits with the exploratory and emancipatory purposes of the current study. It is inductive, focussing upon interpretation of meaning (Smith et al., 2009) and provides individuals with a voice to share their experiences, thus empowering them. IPA does not test predetermined hypotheses, but gains a detailed understanding of individuals' experiences (Smith et al., 2009). This fits well with the aims of the current study.

IPA is highly compatible with the conceptual framework of the current study, critical realism (Smith et al., 2009). IPA aims to develop knowledge based on the meanings individuals give to the phenomenon being investigated (Braun & Clarke, 2013), thus the existence of an external reality is accepted. It is described as a 'contextualist approach' (Larkin et al., 2006), focussing on context dependent knowledge and acknowledging the active role of researchers in interpreting participant's interpretations.

The idiographic nature of IPA was deemed valuable to the current study. Despite all identifying as 'deaf', participants had different needs and experiences. IPA enabled the researcher to focus on the experiences of each participant. This meant the researcher could

identify individual differences in participant's accounts of their transition experiences as well as notice general themes. This allowed for a deeper level of understanding to be reached.

A limitation of IPA is its reliance on language and the assumption that participants can use language to fully describe their experiences (Noon, 2018; Willig, 2013). The researcher acknowledges that sometimes it can be difficult to describe experiences verbally and therefore adapted the IPA process to include both verbal and visual data (further information is provided in section 3.13). Some researchers argue language constructs reality rather than describe it (Noon, 2018; Willig, 2013). Meaning it is impossible to fully access someone else's experience, as the language they use to describe it provides meaning (Willig, 2013). However, given the critical realist position of the researcher; the aim of this research was not to produce objective knowledge. The researcher acknowledges the production of knowledge is subjective and relies upon the meaning participants' give to their experiences and the way researchers elicit and interpret information. The inclusion of visual methods in the current study adds an additional layer of interpretation supporting CYP to express their true views.

3.8 Co-researchers and Recruitment Procedure

Two co-researchers were recruited using purposive sampling. These co-researchers were required to have an identified HI and be aged 16 or above. The age requirement was to ensure the small sample size of possible participants was not further reduced by the recruitment of co-researchers. The co-researchers were recruited by ToDs within the researcher's placement LA. ToDs contacted CYP who they felt may be interested in being involved. They shared the study information sheet and consent form (Appendix H) with those who expressed an interest. Two CYP returned the consent form and were selected to be co-researchers in this study. The co-researchers were not paid for their involvement, but a reference to support their studies was provided upon request.

The co-researchers were both female, aged 16 and 17, and attended the college within the LA. They both had bilateral hearing losses and wore hearing aids. The co-researchers selected their level of involvement within the study and were only involved in designing the research.

3.9 Research Participants and Recruitment Procedure

Due to the aim of this research a purposive sample was required. To ensure participants who had the relevant experience were selected, eligibility criteria were established. Prospective participants had to be attending a mainstream secondary school within the researcher's LA. Since this research investigated transition to secondary school, it was felt students who had experienced this process most recently would be able to provide the most valuable insight. Therefore, CYP had to be in Key Stage Three. Since data collection occurred from July to October 2020, CYP who entered Year Seven in September 2020 were not included. These CYP were still experiencing transition and could not give a full picture of their experiences.

Participants were required to have an identified HI. Their HI needed to have been present during transition to secondary school. This research occurred in a relatively small LA. Conversations with ToDs revealed relatively few deaf CYP transition from a mainstream primary to a mainstream secondary each year. To ensure access to sufficient prospective participants, the researcher did not stipulate the degree of HI required to participate within the current study. The involvement of a ToD may indicate the level of need.

Further factors were considered which may have impacted on participants' experiences of transition and thus exclusion criteria were created. Participants had to have transitioned from a mainstream primary school within the LA. Therefore, CYP from other settings such as specialist provision or home-schooling were excluded, as their transition

experience may have been different. CYP with a dual diagnosis of a HI and an additional SEN were excluded from this research. This was because it would be impossible to ascertain whether the transition experience was related to the student's HI or their other SEN.

Due to needs of the current research, purposive sampling was used (Smith et al., 2009). Recruitment of participants occurred through ToDs within the LA. They acted as gate keepers to participants. The researcher explained to ToDs that eligible CYP should be given equal opportunities to participate in the study, although it is acknowledged this may not have occurred. The ToDs contacted parents/guardians of CYP who met the study's eligibility criteria. They introduced the study verbally to parent/guardians and then sent the study's information letter and parental consent form (Appendix I) to parents/guardians who were interested. If parents/guardians consented to their child participating they returned their completed consent form to the ToD or directly to the researcher. This meant the names and details of potential participants were only shared with the researcher upon receipt of parental consent. The researcher contacted parents/guardians who returned the consent form to arrange an initial meeting with the child. The researcher also sent a participant invitation letter containing information about the study (Appendix J) to parents/guardians to share with their child.

The initial meeting between the child and the researcher occurred remotely using Microsoft Teams. Often the child's parent/guardian was present in the background. The researcher shared the purpose of the study with the child and read through the participant invitation letter. This included information about the tasks involved in the research and ethics. The child was given an opportunity to ask questions and to participate in the research. They were reminded they did not have to participate and could withdraw at any time. If they agreed they completed the informed consent form (Appendix J), which was sent to

parents/guardians in advance of the meeting. Parents/guardians returned this to the researcher by e-mail.

In total four participants were recruited from four secondary schools. Table 3.1 provides an overview of the participants. Pseudonyms are used to protect their anonymity.

Table 3.1

Overview of Participants

Participant	Gender	Year group (academic year 2019-20)	Selective or non- selective school	Hearing loss	Support received
Ruth	Female	8	Selective (grammar school)	Moderate, bilateral hearing loss.	Hearing aids
Lottie	Female	8	Non-selective	Severe-profound bilateral HI.	Cochlear implants. Some use of sign language. Teaching assistant support at times.
Daniel	Male	7	Non-selective	Profound HI in the right ear. Severe HI in the left ear.	One hearing aid and one cochlear implant. Use of a Mini Microphone
Michael	Male	7	Non-selective	Profound HI in the right ear.	One hearing aid.

				Mild-moderate HI in the left ear.	In classes with additional adult support, although he does not receive one- to-one support.
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3.10 Data Collection Techniques

Research methods which enable participants to provide a rich, detailed, and first-person account of their experiences are most appropriate to IPA research (Smith et al., 2009). Smith et al. (2009) suggest diaries and interviews are most suitable in enabling participants to share their stories, thoughts and feelings about a phenomenon. Kvale (1996) states “interviews are particularly suited for studying people’s understanding of the meanings in their lived world, describing their experiences and self-understanding, and clarifying and elaborating their own perspectives on their lived world” (p.105). Semi-structured, one-to-one interviews are the most widely used data collection method within IPA research (Reid et al., 2005). They allow the researcher and participant to engage in rich dialogues, whilst also allowing flexibility. Participants can discuss relevant topics which may not have been anticipated by the researcher (Robson & McCartan, 2016).

Due to the aims of the current research and the guiding principles of IPA, SSIs were used (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). The researcher acknowledged sometimes verbally describing experiences can be difficult, some individuals may prefer to use visual techniques as a method of expression (Guillemin, 2004). It was felt the incorporation of a visual method of data collection would complement interviews. Visual methods support the development of rapport between the researcher and the participant (Bagnoli, 2009; Harper, 2002); provide time for participants to reflect on the topic (Harper, 2002); and may provide a novel insight

into the topic (Bagnoli, 2009). They support those less confident in spoken language. Therefore, ‘The Ideal School’ (Williams & Hanke, 2007) was also used in this study.

3.10.1 ‘The Ideal School’ (Williams & Hanke, 2007)

‘The Ideal School’ technique (Williams & Hanke, 2007) is based upon the principles of Personal Construct Psychology (Kelly, 1991). It is adapted from Moran's (2001) ‘The Ideal Self’ technique which sought to explore children’s constructs about themselves. Williams and Hanke (2007) developed ‘The Ideal School’ technique to investigate what mainstream pupils with Autism Spectrum Disorder felt were the most important features of school. They used a combination of drawing, writing, and talking which enabled CYP to express their views comfortably. The process involves individuals completing two drawings to illustrate their non-ideal and ideal schools. As part of these drawings, individuals are asked to consider the school, classroom, children, adults, and themselves. They are asked questions to further explore the features of their drawings and prompt discussions about their previous and current school experiences (see Appendix K).

‘The Ideal School’ technique “clearly shows the value of asking the pupils themselves how they experience school and what they might like to be different” (Williams & Hanke, 2007, p.124). By asking individuals to consider contrasting phenomena (i.e. ideal verses non-ideal school), constructs can be elicited which may not be generated through questioning (Burnham, 2008). Avoiding direct face-to-face interaction through craft or drawing-based activities can be beneficial to research (Beresford et al., 2004). Since the current research aims to investigate the secondary school transition experiences of mainstream deaf students, this approach was selected alongside SSIs to provide rich data. Integrating different methods allows different parts of a phenomenon to be explored, strengthening the validity of the research (Mason, 2002).

3.10.2 Semi-Structured Interview

Robson and McCartan (2016) highlight interviewing is a commonly used tool within social research, involving the researcher asking questions to an interviewee who should provide responses. The current research aimed to investigate the secondary school transition experiences of deaf CYP by empowering participants to share their thoughts, feelings, and beliefs. From these rich descriptions, knowledge can be generated based upon the meanings participants give to their experiences. Interviews can be placed on a continuum from “unstructured” to “structured” depending on the level of “control” the researcher has over the interaction (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Since the current research aimed to gather participants’ views, open questions were required. This enabled the free flow of responses and allowed participants to dictate the flow of the conversation, sharing information they felt was relevant. The researcher wanted to provide some structure to the questions to ensure the interview was reflective of the participant’s transition to secondary school. Therefore, SSIs were conducted as they enable rich data to be obtained flexibly (Smith, 2010). The interviewer could listen to the participant and further explore their perspectives. SSIs also promote the active participation of participants (Gersch, 1992) which was important given the emancipatory element to this research.

An interview guide was designed in conjunction with the co-researchers. The researcher facilitated a meeting with the co-researchers to generate a list of themes, topics and questions they felt were relevant to the RQs (Appendix L). From these ideas, the researcher created an interview schedule which was shared with co-researchers. This was jointly edited leading to the production of the final interview schedule (Appendix M). The researcher and co-researchers were aware of the importance of questions being straightforward and the need to avoid leading questions which may influence participants’ responses. They aimed to ensure questions used neutral language and were clearly phrased

avoiding jargon and ambiguous words or phrases. The interview guide acted as an aide-mémoire for the researcher and was not rigidly adhered to. Participants' answers could be followed up with unplanned questions. The question order could be altered, and questions removed based on the flow of the conversation. Probes were used encouraging participants to expand on their answers. Robson & McCartan (2016) suggest multiple tactics for this, including questions such as 'anything else?', a period of silence and repeating what the participant has just said. These tactics were employed at appropriate times during the interviews.

3.11 Research Procedure

Data collection occurred between July and October 2020. The researcher contacted participants' parents/guardians upon receipt of informed consent to arrange an initial meeting with their child on Microsoft Teams. Most of the CYP had used Microsoft Teams to access remote learning during the Covid-19 lockdown period. However, the researcher was willing to support parents/guardians with Microsoft Teams where required. Once a time was agreed, parents/guardians were e-mailed the Microsoft Teams link to access the meeting. The researcher e-mailed the participant invitation letter and participant informed consent form to parents/guardians (Appendix J). The researcher asked that where possible CYP accessed the remote meeting in a room with limited distractions. The researcher requested parents/guardians were present during the initial meeting, so the researcher could verify her identity.

During the initial meeting, the researcher shared the participant invitation letter with the child. The researcher shared her screen to show this and read it aloud. The researcher ensured the participant understood this information and provided an opportunity for questions. If the child was willing to participate in the research, they completed the consent form which had previously been e-mailed to parents/guardians. Some CYP completed this

remotely and others by hand. Parents/guardians e-mailed the completed consent form to the researcher. All participants elected to complete the first part of the research within the initial meeting.

The first part of the research was ‘The Ideal School’ (Williams & Hanke, 2007). Participant’s parents/guardians were asked to ensure CYP had two pieces of plain A4 paper and a pencil in advance of the meeting. As outlined in section 3.10.1, participants completed drawings of their non-ideal and ideal school. As part of these drawings, participants were asked to consider the school, classroom, children, adults, and themselves. They were asked questions to further explore the features of their drawings and prompt discussions about their previous and current school experiences (see Appendix K for the instructions). This involved scaling questions and therefore a visual image was shared remotely with participants to support them (Appendix N). This task was not recorded and instead the researcher took detailed notes of the participant’s comments and ideas. The decision to not record this activity was made as the researcher was keen to develop rapport with the participants as this was the first activity completed. Participants may have felt under pressure during this activity if it was recorded, resulting in less honest and open responses negatively affecting the findings’ validity. Parents/guardians photographed their child’s drawings and e-mailed these to the researcher (Appendix O).

The second part of the research was a SSI. This occurred in a separate meeting. This meeting was also conducted using Microsoft Teams. Despite having previously given consent to participate in the study, participants were again asked if they wished to partake in the interview and reminded of their right to withdraw. Like the first meeting, the researcher asked that where possible CYP accessed the meeting in a room with limited distractions. Participants’ parents/guardians were present in the background to support with technical issues.

In line with the recommendations of Smith (2010), the researcher explained to the participant what the interview would involve, that it was not a test and there were no right or wrong answers. The researcher informed participants they did not have to answer any questions they did not want to and could stop at any point. They were also reminded of their right to withdraw and how the information would be used. Mertens (2015) highlighted SSIs often produce large amounts of rich data which can be challenging to analyse. To ensure a true account of the interviews was captured, each interview was recorded using Microsoft Teams with the participant's consent. A backup audio recording was captured using a Dictaphone. Once the researcher was sure the Microsoft Teams recording was complete, this was deleted. The researcher recorded contextual and observational notes to support the data analysis process. The interviews lasted between 30 to 45 minutes.

3.12 Transcription

The interviews were transcribed verbatim in preparation for data analysis. Due to the researcher's HI and thus to ensure accuracy a transcription service was used. The data was shared with the transcriber in line with the University's data management regulations. This ensured data remained confidential and data protection was upheld. During transcription the data was anonymised with names or places altered to pseudonyms. To ensure accuracy, the transcriber was asked to include pauses, laughter, mistakes, and corrections within the transcripts. Upon receipt of the transcripts, the researcher listened to the recordings and read the transcripts simultaneously to check their accuracy. Appendix P contains examples of worked transcripts.

3.13 Data Analysis

The data collected in the current study is multimodal, as it includes both verbal transcripts and drawings. Therefore, a data analysis method was required that could include both types of data. Similar to that used by Boden & Eatough (2014) an expanded

phenomenological hermeneutic approach was used which adapted IPA to incorporate the analysis of drawings. Both verbal data and drawings are versions of reality created by participants which can be interpreted by researchers (Attard et al., 2017). Each participant's drawings and transcript were analysed together. During the initial noting stage, the participant's drawings were looked at alongside their transcript. The researcher recorded her initial thoughts on the drawings, and these were included in the development of emergent themes. Unlike Boden & Eatough (2014) who focussed on both the composition and production of the drawing, the researcher focussed solely on what had been included in the drawings and what this may convey. The drawings were looked at alongside the researcher's notes of the comments and ideas that had been shared during this part of the research.

The use of IPA enabled a detailed examination of each participant's experience and sense-making of the phenomenon being investigated. It enabled patterns across cases to be identified. IPA researchers reflectively engage with participants' accounts to make sense of them; therefore the analysis is "a joint product of the participant and analyst" (Smith et al., 2009, p.80). This method of data analysis fits the critical realism paradigm of the current research. IPA acknowledges the existence of an external reality, but recognises knowledge is socially and historically constructed (Smith et al., 2009).

Smith et al. (2009) reported a prescriptive method of IPA does not exist and instead data analysis using IPA should be completed flexibly following the common principles and processes. They provided a framework to support researchers in using IPA and this was used to guide the researcher. The framework was adapted to include the analysis of participants' drawings alongside their transcript (Appendix Q). The findings from data analysis are reported in Chapter Four.

3.14 Ethical Considerations

“Research ethics refers to the moral principles guiding research from its inception through to completion and publication of results” (British Psychological Society [BPS], 2014, p.5). Ethical approval was received from the University Research Ethics Committee in February 2020 and this was updated in light of the changes required due to the Covid-19 Pandemic (Appendix R). Ethical approval was also gained from the LA (Appendix S) and the Principal Educational Psychologist. The researcher adhered to ethical guidelines outlined by the BPS (2018), which refers to four core ethical principles: Respect, Competence, Responsibility and Integrity. These headings are used to discuss the ethical considerations involved in this research.

3.14.1 Respect

The researcher ensured all participants and co-researchers were treated fairly, with respect and dignity and without prejudice. Both participants and co-researchers were provided with clear, accessible information about the research project. Their autonomy was protected. It was emphasised that involvement in the research was voluntary; they could choose when to be involved and could withdraw involvement at any time without penalty. The researcher tried to create a relaxed atmosphere and put participants and co-researchers at ease.

Nobody involved in the research was exposed to physical or psychological harm. The researcher was aware that for some CYP transition to secondary school may have been a sensitive subject and therefore was available remotely to discuss any concerns. Participants, participants’ parent/guardians, and co-researchers were provided with contact information for support agencies should they have wanted to seek support.

Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, this research had to occur remotely. The researcher was aware that due to their HI, the participants and co-researchers may have found communicating via Microsoft Teams challenging, because it is harder to lipread over video. The researcher acknowledged these possible difficulties with participants and co-researchers and discussed ways she could support them throughout their participation, for example supporting verbal communication with written information using the chat function.

3.14.1.1 Informed Consent: Co-Researchers. Flewitt (2005) highlighted that due to the nature of participatory research, it is difficult to obtain ‘informed’ consent from co-researchers at the outset of research as the development of the research is unknown. Therefore, ‘provisional’ consent was secured from co-researchers and their ‘ongoing’ consent was sought throughout their involvement (Flewitt, 2005). Potential co-researchers were given an information sheet outlining their proposed role in the study (Appendix H). They attended a remote meeting with the researcher to discuss this information. This provided potential co-researchers with an opportunity to ask questions before providing ‘provisional’ consent to be co-researchers in the study. The information sheet and introductory meeting made it clear that participation was voluntary, they could decide their level of involvement and withdraw at any time. Co-researchers were reminded of these points throughout their involvement. After the introductory meeting, potential co-researchers were asked to provide initial consent by completing a consent form (Appendix H). By law, consent is required from legal guardians for CYP under the age of 16 to participate in research (BPS, 2014). Both co-researchers were aged 16 or over and understood the research, so parental permission was not required.

3.14.1.2 Informed Consent: Participants. Clear, accessible information was provided to both prospective participants and their parents/guardians outlining the purpose of the research, participant involvement, data storage, anonymity, and the right to withdraw (Appendices I and J). Contact information for the researcher was provided to enable

questions. Prior to CYP participating in the research, informed consent was provided by their parents/guardians (Appendix I). Informed consent was also provided by the CYP following an opportunity to ask the researcher questions (Appendix J). Participants were reminded throughout data collection they could withdraw at any time and could choose which tasks they completed. Due to data aggregation, it was necessary to place a time limit on data withdrawal. This was made clear to both parents/guardians and participants. Following the research, participants were fully debriefed. Both participants and their parents/guardians were issued with a copy of the debrief form (see Appendix T).

3.14.1.3 Anonymity. Due to the recruitment strategy and the use of SSIs, participants were unable to remain anonymous. The researcher and ToDs in the LA were aware of who was involved in the research. However, every effort was made to protect the anonymity of the data collected. Pseudonyms were used and any identifying information was removed.

Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, data collection occurred remotely. Often parents/guardians were present during data collection. Participants were aware of this and told their information would not be shared unless there were concerns about their safety or wellbeing. Whilst meeting with participants, the researcher ensured her laptop screen was not visible to anyone else and wore headphones to prevent others from overhearing the information. The researcher was careful to ensure the safety of participants during remote meetings. Remote meetings were set up securely using Microsoft Teams and only the researcher could admit participants into the meeting. All data was encrypted and stored securely adhering to data protection laws. The researcher verified her identity during initial meetings with participants and co-researchers.

3.14.1.4 Power. Power imbalances are present within traditional research (Karnieli-Miller et al., 2009). The researcher is perceived as an ‘expert’ who makes decisions without consulting the community involved in the research. However, emancipatory research aims to empower participants, “encouraging participants to ‘own’ the outcome by setting the goals and sharing in decisions about the most desirable process to be followed” (Everitt et al., 1992, p.50). Co-researchers were recruited from the target population and were involved in designing the study, ensuring the research was relevant to them.

Since the researcher was an adult and participants were CYP, a power imbalance was unavoidable. The researcher tried to reduce this by developing a rapport with participants and creating a relaxed atmosphere. The researcher consciously adopted an ‘active listening’ posture; remained neutral and curious; and reminded participants the data collection process was not a test. All responses were equally accepted and valid. The power imbalance may have further reduced by the remote nature of data collection. Participants could leave the meeting freely without informing the researcher. Since the researcher is a TEP in the LA where this research was conducted, she ensured her only involvement with participants was for the purpose of this study.

3.14.2 Competence

The researcher is a TEP used to working with CYP. She has previously completed research and undertaken training on research, ethics and working with CYP through University and her placement LA. The researcher received regular supervision where any concerns could be discussed.

3.14.3 Responsibility

The researcher had a Disclosure and Barring Service check and was aware of the LA’s safeguarding protocol and procedures. Nobody involved in the research was exposed to

physical or psychological harm and the researcher was attentive to signs of distress. The researcher ensured all research materials were accessible to participants and used visuals to support understanding (Appendix N).

3.14.4 Integrity

The researcher provided transparent information to all stakeholders about the study. Upon successful completion of viva, an accessible, anonymised summary of the research findings will be shared with all stakeholders, including CYP, parents/guardians and ToDs. Throughout the research, the researcher upheld the professional standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics, as outlined by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) (2018).

3.15 Reflexivity

Undoubtably the researcher influences the research process both as a theorist (epistemological reflexivity) and as a person (personal reflexivity) (Willig, 2013). Reflexivity involves the researcher critically reflecting upon their role in the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This means considering how their beliefs, experiences, personal background, and biases may have influenced the study and its direction. It is an essential requirement for good qualitative research (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Smith et al. (2009) noted its significance to increasing the integrity of IPA research.

Throughout the study, the researcher sought to be open-minded and non-judgemental. Every effort was made to acknowledge preconceptions, motivations, and interests so they did not influence the research. To aid this process, a research journal was kept. This enabled the researcher to record her position and views throughout the research, as well as noting key issues and decisions. The researcher engaged in regular supervision and informal research discussions with other researchers, supporting her to identify her own biases and beliefs.

In chapter one, the researcher acknowledged her motivations for completing the current study. She has a moderate bilateral HI and completed the transition to secondary school as a deaf individual. The researcher was aware of her personal experiences that may have influenced the study. To reduce this, two co-researchers were recruited who were involved in designing the research. The co-researchers had different beliefs and experiences which enabled rich discussions to occur, challenging the researcher to consider areas not previously considered. This was especially useful when designing the interview schedule.

Whilst working with the co-researchers, the researcher was conscious to reflect upon how she may be influencing them. This was considered both in terms of her views, as well as her age and role. The researcher made it clear to the co-researchers she was not an expert in the research and all ideas were welcomed and encouraged. The co-researchers had opportunities to reflect upon their role during research sessions. For example, one co-researcher discussed her own experiences as a hearing child becoming a deaf adolescent. She noted her experiences were likely to be different to a child born deaf.

3.16 Trustworthiness

Since the aims and epistemological assumptions of qualitative and quantitative research differ, different approaches are required to evaluate research (Yardley, 2017). “There are no absolute criteria for judging whether a piece of qualitative research is any good” (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p.278). Qualitative research is diverse in terms of the methodologies and associated epistemological assumptions applied (Yardley, 2000), leading to challenges with regards to evaluation.

Yardley (2000) developed a set of ‘open-ended, flexible’ quality principles regarding qualitative research. Smith (2010) advocates using these criteria to consider the quality of IPA research. Yardley’s principles appear to be aligned with the principles and theoretical

foundations of IPA and therefore were considered throughout this research. The principles and how they relate to the current research are outlined below.

3.16.1 Sensitivity to Context

Yardley (2000) proposed good quality qualitative research must be context sensitive. The researcher should show sensitivity to “the socio-cultural milieu in which the study is situated, the existing literature on the topic [and] the material obtained from the participants” (Smith et al., 2009, p.180). The researcher immersed herself in relevant theoretical and empirical literature, noticing a clear gap in the research and drawing links between previous studies and this study. The findings from the current study were considered in light of previous relevant literature. Deaf co-researchers were involved which ensured the research was of interest and importance to this community. The researcher was aware of her interpersonal skills; developing rapport with participants and co-researchers; showing empathy; reducing power imbalances and recognising interactional challenges. During data analysis, the researcher remained aware of the participant’s socio-cultural context and supported interpretive claims with quotations from participants, ensuring their voices were heard and remained central to the research.

3.16.2 Commitment and Rigour

Commitment and rigour refer to prolonged engagement with the research topic and inclusion of a thorough research process. The researcher is a deaf person who has experience working with and supporting deaf CYP and working with ToDs. The researcher immersed herself in relevant transition literature to gain a thorough understanding of current knowledge. Data analysis was conducted comprehensively and systematically following the steps outlined in Appendix Q. To ensure rigour, the researcher worked closely with the co-researchers to design the interview schedule. The researcher used two methods of data collection: SSIs and ‘The Ideal School’. This enabled data triangulation. The researcher used

skills learnt from an IPA support group, university teaching and additional reading throughout the research process.

3.16.3 Coherence and Transparency

The researcher prioritised coherence and transparency throughout the research report. She provided a detailed account of the research methodology and data analysis process including reference to previous literature. Draft submissions and supervision have supported this process. A research journal has been kept throughout the research process which has supported the researcher to make decisions in a systematic and thorough way. Many of these decisions have been discussed and justified throughout this research report to ensure transparency and clarity for the reader. The researcher has critically reflected upon her role within this study (see section 3.15).

3.16.4 Impact and Importance

Yardley (2000) argues “the decisive criterion by which any piece of research must be judged, is arguably, its impact and utility” (p.223). The researcher believes this is the first study to explore the secondary school transition experiences of deaf CYP, therefore the findings will be a valuable contribution to the current evidence base. The researcher aimed to empower deaf CYP providing them with a voice and involving them within the research process. Upon completion of the thesis, the researcher will disseminate the findings and recommendations to schools, specialist teachers and EPs within her placement LA. The findings will be shared at the university’s TEP conference. The researcher hopes to publish the current study and present the findings at various events including academic conferences to ensure the findings are shared as widely as possible.

3.17 Summary

This chapter has outlined the methodology of the current study by first considering the research aims and purpose. The conceptual framework was presented alongside a justification for the use of IPA. The procedures for participant recruitment, data collection and data analysis have been explained. Attention has been given to the trustworthiness of the research and ethical considerations. The research findings following the IPA process will be presented in chapter four.

Chapter 4 – Findings

4.1 Chapter Overview

Previously chapter three described the IPA process, this chapter provides an overview of the research findings. The researcher has presented the findings using an idiographic approach. This means the findings for each participant are presented first. Common themes across participants are then considered. Quotations from participants are used to support the themes identified. This approach was selected to represent the individual views and experiences of participants. The numbers in brackets refer to the line numbers on the transcripts. An overview of the themes identified for each participant can be viewed in Appendix U.

An adapted version of IPA to incorporate the analysis of drawings was used to analyse the data. In IPA, the researcher engages in double hermeneutics to identify themes. This means “the researcher is making sense of the participant, who is making sense of x” (Smith et al., 2009, p.35). Therefore, this account is subjective, it presents one interpretation of the findings. Other researchers may highlight different themes.

4.2 Individual Interview Findings

Individual participant’s transcripts and drawings were analysed simultaneously using the IPA process described in chapter three.

4.2.1 Ruth

Ruth was in Year Eight at a selective school. She had a moderate bilateral HI and wore two hearing aids. At school she sat at the front of the class facing the teacher so she could lipread. She was supported by subtitles/transcripts for videos and received extra time for examinations. Figure 4.1 provides an overview of the themes identified in Ruth’s interview and her drawings from ‘The Ideal School’ task.

Figure 4.1

Themes Identified from Ruth's Interview

Relationships	Growing up	Deafness does not define me	Challenges	Supporting factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friendship • Belonging • Value of support from others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difference between primary school and secondary school • Mixed emotions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treat me like everyone else • Hearing loss rarely noticed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practical challenges • Social situations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value of consistency and continuity • Familiarity

4.2.1.1 Superordinate Theme 1: Relationships. The following emergent themes were grouped together as they highlighted the importance of relationships for Ruth.

4.2.1.1.1 Subordinate Theme 1: Friendship. Ruth discussed the significance of friendship both in her interview and ‘The Ideal School’ task. She noted missing her primary school friends and *“although we do still keep in touch”* (156) their friendship had changed. Ruth suggested that transitioning to secondary school without her best friend made her anxious, noting *“a lot of people went with ehm, like their best friends and everything”* (61). Her language implied that although she knew some people at secondary school, not having her best friend for support made her feel vulnerable. The word *“everything”* highlighted a sense of loss, implying Ruth perceived transitioning to the same secondary school as your best friend as valuable.

Despite missing her primary school friends, Ruth explained she *“got along with everyone”* (130) and *“made lots of really nice friends”* (131-132). She appeared hesitant

which perhaps suggested she was surprised and relieved by the ease of making friends and being accepted.

Ruth highlighted the importance of teachers supporting friendship development by organising “*getting to know each other [activities] and group projects*” (409-410). Again, this suggested she believed friendship was vital to a successful transition to secondary school. This point was further highlighted within ‘The Ideal School’ task. Ruth reported at her non-ideal school making friends would be hard leading to nervousness and unhappiness. This suggests for Ruth friendship was an important determinant of happiness.

4.2.1.1.2 Subordinate Theme 2: Belonging. Ruth described her anxieties about making new friends:

“Probably nervous ... if I couldn’t make any friends” (49-50)

“I was just looking for like some friends really” (127)

Her repeated reference to making friends, suggested Ruth perceived social belonging as significant to secondary school success. “*If I couldn’t*” indicated worry about not fitting in and loneliness. “*Looking for*” suggested she viewed friendship as essential and actively searched for it. In ‘The Ideal School’ task Ruth reported she would be friends with everyone in her ideal school.

Ruth discussed the house system at her secondary school which appeared important to her sense of belonging. She noted having competitions, stating “*we used to have house arts and sports day*” (260) and “*the one who raises the most amount of money ... gets loads of house points*” (255-258). Use of the first person indicated Ruth felt she belongs to her house and this was an important part of her identity.

4.2.1.1.3 Subordinate Theme 3: Value of Support from Others. Ruth

frequently acknowledged the support she had received from others during secondary transition. This support came from different people, including her new friends, parents, and teachers. She discussed how her parents had supported her reporting “*they ferried... I think they ferried me to school on the first day*” (210-212). The tailing off after “*they ferried*” to “*I think they ferried...*” suggested uncertainty. This implied Ruth was aware her parents were a significant supporting factor during her transition to secondary school, but she had not previously considered how they supported her. The word “*ferried*” suggested more than giving her a lift to school. It implied their active involvement in the journey, perhaps providing emotional support.

Ruth discussed how her friends supported her in social situations: “*...everyone just says one at a time and stuff*” (340). This quotation suggested ambivalence. Prior to this, Ruth discussed how others did not notice her HI and treated her “*as if I was say anyone normally*” (322-323). She liked to blend in with her peers, but also wanted to participate socially. It appeared she was reluctant to remind people not to speak at the same time but was grateful when friends did this for her. Ruth’s hesitation suggested she was conscious her friends reminding others to speak one at a time may make her look different but enabled her to participate. “*Everyone*” implied this had become the norm, many people supported her, and she no longer felt singled out. She valued the support she has received to participate successfully.

Ruth noted how her secondary school teachers provided support and opportunities to develop friendships. She explained “*we did getting ... to know each other activities* (187-188), which included “*lots of group projects ... to help us make friends in classes*” (173-175). This support appeared valuable to Ruth and she would advise other secondary school teachers to do “*the same*” (409) when supporting deaf CYP during transition. Since these activities occurred at the start of secondary school, it is likely they supported Ruth to integrate quickly relieving her of friendship anxieties.

4.2.1.3 Superordinate Theme 2: Growing up. The following subordinate themes were grouped together as they related to growing up.

4.2.1.3.1 Subordinate Theme 1: Difference Between Primary School and Secondary School. Ruth noted several differences between primary and secondary school, stating at secondary “*teachers are a bit stricter*” (243), “*it’s a lot bigger*” (248) and you must “*go between different classrooms*” (95). Ruth reported it would be helpful to “*make primary school a little bit more like secondary school so it doesn’t feel... as such a big of a jump*” (88-89). This suggests significant change between primary and secondary school. It implied this change was challenging and took time to adjust. She suggested primary school should change to be more like secondary school rather than the other way around. This indicated she enjoyed the new experiences and freedoms of secondary school but would have benefitted from experiencing these changes gradually.

Ruth spoke positively about the new opportunities at secondary school, noting “*the food is nicer*” (248), “*they had pizza and stuff*” (43), “*you do lots of charity and house events*” (248-249) and “*we do lots of things to get house points, which is really fun*” (250). The repeated references to food implied this was a positive change from primary school. It

suggested increased choice, symbolising increased autonomy linked towards preparation for adulthood. Ruth's mention of charity events indicated that secondary school offers more opportunities to be involved in the local community and meet different individuals. This theme was further emphasised in 'The Ideal School' task. Ruth stated that her secondary school was closer to her ideal school because she did more events and practical activities.

Linked to new opportunities, Ruth suggested she had outgrown primary school and was ready for a new challenge, noting "*the work wasn't very challenging... and we didn't really do much interesting stuff*" (110-112). She highlighted the difference in responsibility and independence between primary school and secondary school. Ruth stated at primary school "*everything was already there for you*" (103-104), whereas at secondary school "*you've got loads of stuff to remember*" (273-274) and "*are responsible*" (275-276). These quotations highlighted the increased organisational demands Ruth had experienced since secondary transition. They implied her independence was limited at primary school. This suggested Ruth associated her increased independence and responsibility with a loss of the safety she felt at primary school. Ruth repeated "*and*" when listing her responsibilities at secondary school: "*you've got your books and equipment and you've got to be there on time...*" (274-275). This suggested the list was never-ending and perhaps felt overwhelming.

Ruth described "*remembering all my equipment*" (195) as challenging at first. This contrasted with an acknowledgement that increased independence and responsibility was "*...kind of a good thing as well*" (282). "*Kind of*" suggested uncertainty that whilst maturing and progressing through school, Ruth has noticed the benefits of increased responsibility but also felt nervous about not meeting demands.

4.2.1.3.4 Subordinate Theme 2: Mixed Emotions. Ruth described feeling mixed emotions about transition, sharing "*I was very nervous, and I was kind of sad to leave some*

of my friends, but then I was also excited because I got to go to a new school and meet new people” (26-28). Ruth’s emotions appeared to centre around friendships highlighting the importance of relationships and belonging. These feelings of excitement versus sadness signified her feelings of loss versus opportunities.

Ruth reported secondary school “...*was a bit overwhelming at first, but I got used to it quite quickly*” (358-359). This implied she was apprehensive about her ability to cope but coped well surprising herself.

4.2.1.4 Superordinate Theme 3: Deafness Does Not Define Me. The following emergent themes were grouped together as they related to Ruth’s identity, suggesting she does not feel defined by her HI.

4.2.1.4.1 Subordinate Theme 1: Treat me Like Everyone Else. Ruth referred to this theme seven times across her interview and ‘The Ideal School’ task, indicating its significance. When asked how she would support other deaf students during secondary transition she suggested: “... *it is important for them to know that everyone treats you like a normal person... there is nothing really to worry about*” (378-379). This suggests Ruth was concerned she would be treated differently because of her HI but was relieved this was not the case. This was illustrated in Ruth’s non-ideal school drawing where she reported other children would judge her, and this would upset her.

Ruth emphasised her desire to be treated like everyone else stating “*I don’t really want anyone to treat me differently because of that [HI]*” (383-384). “*Really*” suggested at times she accepted accommodations, but her preference was to blend in with her peers. When referring to her HI, Ruth used the word “*that*” which indicated she felt her HI was not a defining feature.

4.2.1.4.2 Subordinate Theme 2: Hearing Loss Rarely Noticed. Ruth explained when she started secondary school people were interested in her HI and “asked ... [her] about it” (321):

“...some people just ehm saw them and was wondering if I could actually hear them or if I was properly deaf, but everyone just...ehm...kind of got used to them and don't really see them anymore” (327-330).

This suggests a general lack of knowledge about HI, which initially led to curiosity. It was significant that Ruth stated others “got used to them and don't really see them anymore” (329-330). This implied an equity in status suggesting both Ruth and her peers had to adapt, rather than the emphasis being exclusively on Ruth needing to ‘fit in’.

4.2.1.5 Superordinate Theme 4: Challenges. There were two prominent challenges to transitioning to secondary school which Ruth alluded to. These were grouped together under this theme.

4.2.1.5.1 Subordinate Theme 1: Practical Challenges. During her interview, Ruth highlighted the challenge of “trying to find ... [her] way around” (141-142) secondary school, noting she “got lost a few times” (143). Ruth described her non-ideal school as a maze, sharing it would be very big with too many people and difficult to navigate. These ideas contrasted with Ruth's ideal school described as clearly laid out with maps available. She noted classrooms would be labelled, with wide hallways for everyone to get through. Ruth stated there would be somewhere to go for help and private rooms available for individuals who wanted time alone. These features suggested sometimes Ruth found the busyness of secondary school overwhelming. They also implied Ruth found it frustrating and anxiety provoking when she got lost or could not move through the busy corridors. It is likely the organisational features described in Ruth's ideal school would support her to feel contained.

4.2.1.5.2 Subordinate Theme 2: Social Situations. This theme was mostly apparent in ‘The Ideal School’ task. Ruth reported in her non-ideal classroom everyone would be shouting and sitting far away from another. She would be unable to hear and would have difficulty concentrating. This suggests Ruth benefits from a quiet environment.

4.2.1.6 Superordinate Theme 5. Supporting Factors. These subordinate themes were grouped together as they represented supporting factors during secondary transition.

4.2.1.6.1 Subordinate Theme 1: Value of Consistency and Continuity. Ruth described how the support she received at primary school and secondary school was “*quite similar*” (301). She shared she still goes “*to the front of the class*” (302) and her ToD still visits. Ruth’s ToD was the same person who visited her at primary school which she described as “*reassuring*” (391). She advised staff supporting deaf CYP to transition to secondary school “*try and keep the person who visits the same*” (390). Ruth’s interview suggests she experienced changes during transition but being visited by someone she knew “*kind of helped*” (76). It is likely she found this containing, enabling her to feel confident and able to discuss concerns with a familiar individual.

4.2.1.6.2 Subordinate Theme 2: Familiarity. Ruth spoke about visiting her secondary school “*on open evenings and open days*” (31) but missing “*the like day when you go and try out secondary school*” (120-121). She explained this “*wasn’t a good thing*” (124) and made her feel “*nervous*” (120) about starting secondary school. Ruth’s tone of voice placed emphasis on “*missed*” suggesting this event was significant and not attending was a disadvantage. She blamed her primary school for this stating “*my primary school had their school trip on that day*” (122). This highlighted the significance of primary schools being aware of key secondary school induction dates ensuring students can attend and feel prepared for transition.

Familiar people were a significant supporting factor for Ruth during secondary transition. As highlighted previously, she benefitted from having the same ToD. She stated her anxiety was lower than some of her peers because “*some people went there with no one they know no one they knew, so that might have been scary*” (58-59). The repetition of not knowing anyone emphasised this was a significant factor for Ruth. It suggested having familiar people around was important for safety and containment. It indicated moving to secondary school and not knowing anyone would cause substantial anxiety for her. Ruth knew two people transitioning to the same school as her. She noted “*they wasn’t really close friends from, but I did know them*” (37-38). Despite appearing disappointed they were not close friends; Ruth was relieved to have transitioned with familiar individuals.

4.2.2 Lottie

Lottie was in Year Eight at a mainstream secondary school. She had a severe-profound bilateral HI which was the most significant HI of the participants. She had two cochlear implants which were activated approximately one year earlier. Previously Lottie used hearing aids. Lottie used a Personal Frequency Modulation system at school. A TA supports Lottie by sometimes signing for her and writing on a whiteboard. She sat at the front of the classroom facing the teacher and was provided with transcripts/subtitles for videos. Lottie received extra time for examinations. Figure 4.2 provides an overview of the themes identified in Lottie’s interview and ‘The Ideal School’ task.

Figure 4.2

Themes Identified from Lottie's Interview

Inclusion	Challenges	Fresh start	Supporting factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equal opportunities • Feeling different 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social situations • 'Settling in' period • Practical challenges • Loss of safety from primary school • Expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New opportunities • Negative experiences at primary school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult Support • The environment

4.2.2.1 Superordinate Theme 1: Inclusion. The following subordinate themes were grouped together as they were deemed to represent inclusion.

4.2.2.1.1 Subordinate Theme 1: Equal Opportunities. Lottie discussed how deaf CYP should be supported at school. She noted school staff should give deaf CYP “*as much help as they can*” (363), supporting them “*to speak if they can*” (362) and providing “*early preparation*” (365) for new topics. These ideas implied Lottie believed deaf CYP experience educational disadvantages and require additional assistance to give them equal opportunities to their peers. She highlighted the importance of supporting deaf CYP to speak. This suggested Lottie has found communicating ideas challenging. She may not have always felt listened to and wanted additional opportunities to share her views. Lottie suggested providing deaf CYP with pre-tutoring to support access to the curriculum, this may indicate Lottie felt her HI has caused her to miss information affecting her academic attainment. She perhaps felt the education system did not acknowledge her needs as much as others’ needs. Lottie suggested pre-tutoring would help deaf CYP to “*learn a bit more*” (366). This implied

she felt she was not receiving sufficient support to achieve her potential. In ‘The Ideal School’ task, Lottie reported that her secondary school experience would be improved if she was given further assistance to understand lessons.

Lottie spoke positively about a TA who “... *was the only one there [at secondary school] that could do sign language and she came into my class and supported*” (183-184) “*She was the only one*” suggested Lottie felt isolated in a large secondary school where only her and one TA could sign. Lottie reported she was “*teaching some people to sign*” (200), but “*would like it*” (200) if sign language was used more frequently. This suggested sign language was an important part of Lottie’s identity and she wished it was more widely used.

4.2.2.1.2 Subordinate Theme 2: Feeling Different. Lottie appeared to view herself and other deaf CYP as different to others. She suggested deaf CYP would benefit from being taught “*stuff differently from the normal regular hearing kids*” (377-378). This indicated Lottie felt school teaching methods were not suited to the needs of deaf CYP. It suggested teachers must be flexible in their teaching methods and alter them to meet the needs of individual CYP. The phrase “*normal regular hearing kids*” further supported this suggesting she felt like an outsider compared to her peers. Lottie suggested taking “*the [deaf] kids out alone*”. This indicated she believed deaf CYP require intensive teaching support and even small group instruction was insufficient. This fits the personalised and tailored approach to teaching Lottie suggested deaf CYP require.

4.2.2.2 Superordinate Theme 2: Challenges. The following emerging themes were grouped together as they highlighted challenges Lottie experienced during transition.

4.2.2.2.1 Subordinate Theme 1: Social Situations. Lottie discussed how her HI affected her when she started secondary school. She explained it “*affected the way I could...able to hear everything*” (282). “*Everything*” indicated Lottie experienced challenges

in all areas due to her HI. However, further analysis suggests these difficulties relate to social situations. She noted having difficulty communicating with others *'cos I couldn't hear them or anything'* (285) which implied confusion and isolation. It suggested in addition to being unable to hear, she had difficulties concentrating to lipread or use other coping strategies. Therefore, she felt overwhelmed and lost in her new environment. This theme was also indicated within 'The Ideal School' task. Lottie reported her non-ideal school would be noisy with lots of background noise and shouting out. She shared this would be distracting.

Lottie explained it took her longer to make friends than her peers which she attributed to her HI, *"I make friend like two weeks"* (289) *"with ehm two girls, that's it"* (292). Lottie's feelings of disappointment and frustration were emphasised by *"that's it"*. This suggested she wanted more friends. Her hesitation elicited doubt as to whether these *"two girls"* were true friends or simply peers she communicated with.

Lottie's feelings of isolation were further highlighted by her acknowledgment that there was only one other girl in her school who had a HI. Lottie emphasised that this student *"is going into Year 10"* (298) indicating she does not see her therefore possibly felt she was the only student at her school who was deaf.

4.2.2.2.2 Subordinate Theme 2: 'Settling in' Period. Lottie discussed her first days at secondary school explaining lessons *"started off easy"* (120). This indicated a planned settling in period. She explained she *"didn't do much on the first day 'cos there was learning lessons and learning names and stuff and everything"* (163-164). Lottie's language and tone suggested disappointment. She did not give specific details and instead used words such as *"stuff"* and *"everything"*. This indicated her first day did not meet her expectations. The information she provided implied a lack of structured or planned activities, suggesting her first day felt chaotic and overwhelming. As acknowledged in section 4.2.2.2.1, Lottie

discussed finding social situations difficult stating she “*could not communicate with anyone very well ‘cos I couldn’t hear them or anything*” (284-285). It is likely these difficulties affected Lottie’s access to the ‘settling in’ period leaving her feeling isolated and confused.

4.2.2.2.3 Subordinate Theme 3: Practical Challenges Lottie described multiple practical challenges when she transitioned to secondary school:

“...it was quite big and you’ve gotta like have a wander around to find your classes and ehm... like nobody was pretty much talking to each other ‘cos ehm they didn’t actually know each other and ehm...yeah the lessons were different and everything...” (218-222).

“...times for everything was different so normally we would be all in a class and we all go to different different times but there’s loads of classes” (224-226).

Lottie’s repetition of “*and*” implied these practical challenges and differences between primary school and secondary school were never-ending. This was emphasised by the word “*everything*”. She linked these challenges to making her feel “*upset ‘cos I keep getting lost and everything*” (110). The present tense indicated “*getting lost*” was an ongoing problem. “*Everything*” suggested “*getting lost*” was not the only challenge Lottie experienced, but perhaps she felt there were too many to name. This indicated Lottie felt overwhelmed by the increased independence of secondary school.

4.2.2.2.4 Subordinate Theme 4: Loss of Safety of Primary School. Lottie discussed the best things about primary school. She noted “*it was easy (pauses) ... for me to communicate with people*” (91); “*it was easy and less anxious to be there*” (92-93); and it was a “*much quieter environment*” (94). These points implied Lottie had lost the sense of safety she had at primary school. She paused frequently whilst considering the best things about primary school, suggesting a deep level of reflection. Her answer implied secondary

school was more challenging than primary school and was associated with higher anxiety. This suggested Lottie did not feel as supported or safe in her new environment. Lottie's increased anxiety at secondary school appeared to be related to her HI. At secondary school it was harder to communicate and the environment was noisier.

4.2.2.2.5 Subordinate Theme 5: Expectations. The final subordinate theme under the superordinate theme of challenges was Lottie's expectations. Lottie shared that prior to transition she expected secondary school to be "*very big*" (39), "*very noisy*" (39), "*quite challenging*" (40) and "*the lessons [were] gonna be a lot harder...*" (134). These quotations suggested before secondary transition, Lottie already believed it would be challenging. It is likely these preconceptions heightened her anxiety making transition appear more challenging, causing a self-fulfilling prophecy.

4.2.2.3 Superordinate Theme 3: Fresh Start. The following emergent themes were grouped together as they suggested secondary school was a 'fresh start'.

4.2.2.3.1 Subordinate Theme 1: New Opportunities. Lottie spoke positively about the new opportunities secondary school provided:

"Looking forward to being able to become independent and ehm...take to the next level my learning and stuff" (31-32).

"The lessons...the way that ehm teachers can help us if we're stuck or need help and ehm...that we're able to ehm...do like loads of activities like after school or during school and ehm...to be able to develop more learning" (239-243).

Lottie appeared excited by the new learning and extracurricular opportunities, implying she had outgrown primary school and was ready for a new challenge. Her focus on developing her learning indicated she felt she had learnt as much as she could at primary school with the

resources available. Lottie's use of the first person suggested a sense of belonging to secondary school. This appeared to be related to her relationships with teachers.

4.2.2.3.2 Subordinate Theme 2: Negative Experiences at Primary School. On three occasions, Lottie spoke about negative experiences at primary school related to learning and friendships, *"the lack of learning and stuff they teach us and ... a [friendship] problem"* (97-98). Lottie's tone of voice conveyed disappointment, indicating she could have learnt more at primary school and felt let down. She suggested there was a lack of flexibility from her primary school teachers, *"in primary school they stick with that one method"* (316-317). This symbolised the significance of teachers considering individual needs and tailoring approaches to these. Her mention of friendship problems which *"they try to deal with but don't actually do anything"* (98-99) suggested ongoing problems which were not resolved. Her tone of voice indicated helplessness.

4.2.2.4 Superordinate Theme 4: Supporting Factors. Lottie identified multiple factors which supported her during transition to secondary school.

4.2.2.4.1 Subordinate Theme 1: Adult Support. On eight occasions, Lottie acknowledged adults who had supported her during transition. This support focused on helping her find her way around her new environment and supporting her to understand learning:

"They ehm mainly kept us in groups to like...so we could find our way around buildings" (158-159).

"...they could ehm put a TA in the class to help us when we got stuck on an activity" (172-173).

“...they provided more methods to ehm...to be able to understand ehm lessons and stuff and they were able to ehm...answer most questions and make sense of them”
(232-234).

This suggests these were significant factors for her. Lottie tended to refer to supporting adults as “*they*”. This appeared impersonal, suggesting Lottie was unaware of who was providing support. It implied a ‘them and us’ attitude, indicating she felt detached from school staff. The above quotations indicated a diversity of support offered by Lottie’s secondary school, but Lottie’s language suggested indifference, indicating she did not mind who supported her if she received support.

Lottie’s reference to teachers providing more methods “*to be able to understand...lessons*”, suggested she benefitted from teachers being flexible. This highlighted the importance of a person-centred approach where teachers tailor teaching strategies to individual needs. Lottie referred to this within ‘The Ideal School’ task reporting her primary school teachers tried to help her, but not how she would have liked. This highlighted a need to consult and listen to pupils’ views.

4.2.2.4.2 *Subordinate Theme 2: The Environment* A clear supporting factor for Lottie was the environment. This was evident within ‘The Ideal School’ task. She explained her non-ideal school environment would be unwelcoming with broken furniture everywhere. In her ideal school, the environment would be welcoming. It would be looked after and respected and teachers would ensure it was quiet.

4.2.3 *Daniel*

Daniel was in Year Seven at a mainstream secondary school. His HI was profound in his right ear and severe in his left ear. He wore one hearing aid and one cochlear implant. Daniel received one-to-one support from a TA and used a Mini Microphone. He sat at the front of all

lessons facing the teacher and could lipread. Daniel used subtitles/transcripts for videos and received extra time for examinations.

Figure 4.3 provides an overview of the themes identified in Daniel’s interview and his drawings from ‘The Ideal School’ task.

Figure 4.3

Themes Identified from Daniel’s Interview

Deafness does not define me	Supporting factors	Contrast between primary and secondary school	Challenges	Safety and belonging
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deaf YP are no different to anyone else • Treat me like everyone else 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processes • Talking to other deaf YP • Access to teaching materials • Familiarity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support • Differences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-advocacy • Practical challenges • Own expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value of friendship • Consistent support

4.2.3.1 Superordinate Theme 1: Deafness Does not Define me. The following subordinate themes were grouped together as they represented Daniel’s perception of his HI.

4.2.3.1.1 Subordinate Theme 1: Deaf CYP are no Different to Anyone Else.

Daniel did not view himself as different to his peers, “*I’m just like everyone else*” (384). He did not believe his HI had affected his transition to secondary school, suggesting he did not perceive it to be a barrier nor an identifying characteristic. Daniel emphasised the importance of deaf CYP sharing their experiences of transition:

“...just tell them your experiences....so they know they’re not the only one that’s probably, like think they’re struggling so they can feel just like everyone else. Because

everyone, everyone gets nervous, and one's lonely at school there's always one person at least that wants to help you" (498-503).

Again, this infers Daniel did not view deaf CYP as different to anyone else. This was emphasised by his repetition of *"everyone"*. He highlighted feeling nervous and lonely were not unique to deaf CYP. The word *"just"* suggested sharing experiences was a simple strategy that could prevent deaf CYP from feeling isolated, supporting them to *"feel like everyone else"*. His emphasis on *"one person at least"*, indicated in his experience people are willing to help. This suggested the need for deaf CYP to be open about their feelings and seek help when needed.

4.2.3.1.2 Subordinate Theme 2: Treat me Like Everyone Else. In line with the previous subordinate theme that deaf CYP are the same as others, Daniel highlighted they should be treated the same. He reported receiving the same transition support as his peers. Daniel stated he felt his secondary school *"over support"* (395) him, *"sometimes they [his TA] fully sit next to me and help me with every question, which I don't want"*. This highlighted the significance of school staff being aware of and accommodating individual preferences regarding support. *"Fully sit next to me"* implied Daniel felt claustrophobic by the closeness of the supporting adult suggesting he wanted more independence and did not want constant support. It is likely Daniel felt singled out when the TA was next to him, conflicting with his view that he was *"just like everyone else"* (384). Daniel stated that sometimes he was helped *"with every question"*. This implied he had limited freedom. *"Sometimes"* suggested some TAs who supported Daniel were more accommodating of his views. However, he grouped them together as *"they"* which suggested a 'them and us' attitude indicating Daniel felt detached from these supporting adults.

4.2.3.2 Superordinate Theme 2: Supporting Factors. Daniel identified multiple factors which supported his transition to secondary school. These were grouped together as ‘supporting factors’.

4.2.3.2.1 Subordinate Theme 1: Processes. Daniel acknowledged processes that supported him during transition to secondary school. He shared he felt ready to move on as “*we’d done everything*” (89). This suggested he had outgrown primary school. He noted “*we were just messing around*” (90) which implied boredom, indicating he was ready for the new opportunities of secondary school.

Daniel highlighted the importance of endings:

“we were supposed to have a leavers assembly where we all like had an assembly and then say goodbye to the school and everything, but I was on holiday...I was quite angry...” (218-223)

The correction in his speech from “*we had*” to “*we were supposed to have*” implied because he was not present, the leavers’ assembly did not occur. It is possible Daniel felt lost in the transition process because he had no opportunity to celebrate his primary school achievements and reflect on this period of his life.

4.2.3.2.2 Subordinate Theme 2: Talking to Other Deaf CYP. Daniel stated that sharing experiences with other deaf CYP provided reassurance and was a useful supporting factor:

“I think link up with students as well because the headteacher could be lying to make you feel good... talk with deaf students and then link up things that you’re both going to experience...” (516-519)

“... have already experience what you are about to go through so they can reassure you that it’s not that bad” (523-524)

This suggested Daniel perceived his peers to be more honest than adults. The suggestion that the headteacher “*could be lying*” indicated mistrust in staff perhaps implying a negative previous experience.

“*Link up things that you’re both going to experience*” highlighted the value of normalising feelings and realising you are not alone. Daniel’s confidence in stating “*they can reassure you that it’s not that bad*” implied despite anxieties his transition to secondary school was positive. “*Not that bad*” indicated in hindsight he felt his apprehensions were excessive.

4.2.3.2.3 Subordinate Theme 3: Access to Teaching Materials. Once at secondary school, Daniel reported some teachers sent him “*the actual...ehm PowerPoint*” (429-430) of lessons which he could view on an iPad. He reported “*I sometimes like*” (432) this which implied the slides were useful and something he wanted more often. However, Daniel appeared confused and frustrated as he explained teachers tell him “*to put the iPad away*” (433) because other students “*sit there playing games*” (437). This indicated mistrust of staff. It suggested staff provided the slides as a ‘tick box’ exercise, but then forgot Daniel’s needs and remove the support due to the actions of others. This indicated staff considered Daniel’s needs in isolation of the classroom, suggesting a need to think more eco-systemically.

4.2.3.2.4 Subordinate Theme 4: Familiarity. Daniel described his ideal school as having clean corridors and classrooms. He noted the corridors would be wide, lots of help centres, air-conditioning, soft carpets, and smartboards. This suggested the environment was important for Daniel. A welcoming, large, and well-cared for environment made him feel comfortable, perhaps enhancing his morale and making him feel part of the school

community. This helped Daniel to hear more easily and comfortably, for example carpets reduce sound reverberation.

Daniel highlighted that being familiar with his secondary school environment aided his transition. He noted the value of transition days, stating *“I’d had a few taster days there, so they eased the transition”* (37-38). Daniel reported he *“made some friends in the transitions”* (45-46) which suggested transition days were valuable to the development of his sense of belonging at secondary school. It also implied Daniel was apprehensive about friendship prior to transition. The transition days provided him with reassurance as he had already begun to form friendships and had people *“to hang around with”* (47). Daniel noted he *“had already settled in on the second transition”* (247). This suggested the transition days made his move to secondary school easier than anticipated.

Daniel reported receiving a visit whilst at primary school from a key staff member from his secondary school, *“...I did see one person that came over, because she was my...the person that was gonna take care of me there”* (124-126). This visit did not appear significant because at first Daniel appeared unable to recall it. *“I did see”* implied he was convincing himself of its occurrence. Daniel’s initial use of the word *“my”* suggested originally, he perceived this staff member as belonging to him, indicating a close relationship. The change to *“the”* implied separation. This may suggest a difference in how support is organised at primary school and secondary school, indicating that at secondary school Daniel is supported by different individuals. *“Gonna take care of me”* indicated Daniel felt vulnerable when he moved to secondary school suggesting he needed protecting. This implied a lack of independence. Daniel reported at primary school *“I saw her once and that was basically it”* (129). This suggested he wanted additional visits, and to form a relationship with a key adult at secondary school before joining. It also indicated meeting a supporting adult once was not

enough to form a relationship. This contrasts with Daniel talking about meeting his peers on transition days, suggesting it took longer to build trust with adults than peers.

Daniel discussed the importance of having time to settle in at secondary school. He noted during *“the first two days we just stayed with our person tutor”* (287). Daniel referred to his form tutor as *“our person”* which implied ownership, symbolising he felt well looked-after by this person. *“Stayed in”* implied Year Seven students were initially protected from the rest of the school, suggesting a gradual introduction to the new environment. *“We just stayed”* suggested Daniel was surprised by his first few days at secondary school, indicating there was more support than he expected.

4.2.3.3 Superordinate Theme 3: Contrast Between Primary School and Secondary School. Daniel discussed multiple differences between primary school and secondary school which have been grouped together under this superordinate theme.

4.2.3.3.1 Subordinate Theme 1: Support. Daniel spoke positively about secondary school stating it was *“more set up”* (101) for supporting him than primary school:

“... [secondary school] teachers are nice and supportive; they know what to do if I’m in and have a problem or whatever” (353-355)

“...my secondary school was all prepared, they already had all the people that all look after me...” (98-100)

In these quotations, Daniel implied he required additional support to his peers which his secondary school could deliver. This indicated in his experience, secondary school staff are more informed and equipped to support deaf CYP. Since secondary schools are bigger than primary schools, it is possible secondary school staff have more experience working with deaf CYP and have previously received training.

In addition to staff being more informed, Daniel reported having *“loads of support in secondary that I kind of wish I had in primary...”* (391-392). *“Kind of”* suggested hesitation. This indicated in hindsight Daniel recognised he would have benefitted from increased support at primary school, but this conflicted with not wanting to appear different to his peers. He felt *“over support[ed]”* (394-395) at secondary school and wanted more independence.

Despite not receiving much support at primary school, Daniel acknowledged one teacher *“...that supported me...but there wasn’t a lot [of support] ...”* (416-417). This implied support at primary school depends on individual staff, whereas support at secondary school is more consistent.

4.2.3.3.2 Subordinate Theme 2: Differences. Daniel discussed differences between primary school and secondary school:

“Bigger schools [secondary school]..ehm...longer work..because in primary we had like two or three breaks now we have no...zero breaks we have like one lunch break and that’s it” (320-322).

The reduction in the number of breaks at secondary school appeared significant. His response suggested breaks at primary school were more flexible based on pupils’ needs. *“No”*, *“zero”* and *“that’s it”* implied Daniel did not feel there were enough breaks at secondary school.

Prior to transition, Daniel reported feeling excited about the new and different opportunities available at secondary school. He noted at secondary school *“they’ve a massive P.E area”* (148), *“you can use guitars, drums, everything”* (159-160) and *“you use like Bunsen Burners”* (59). Daniel spoke excitably about these activities contrasting them to activities he had completed at primary school: *“you just watched a teacher roll a pole down a ramp”* (56). The activities mentioned at secondary school highlighted increased trust and

responsibility. Daniel's enjoyment of these new opportunities was evident in 'The Ideal School' task where he stated secondary school lessons were better.

4.2.3.4 Superordinate Theme 4: Challenges. In addition to the new opportunities provided by secondary school, Daniel acknowledged challenges which have been grouped together under this superordinate theme.

4.2.3.4.1 Subordinate Theme 1: Self-Advocacy. Daniel discussed feeling “*over support[ed]*” (395) at secondary school, but powerless to change it:

“...like I don't know how to say it...” (403).

“So, then they just go ‘oh so you're telling me to go away?’ And I'm like ‘yeah’. But I wouldn't say it” (405-406).

These references suggested a power imbalance between Daniel and school staff, implying staff believed they knew best and did not include him in decision-making. Daniel felt unable to ask for increased independence. He seemed aware staff were trying to support him and did not want to appear ungrateful or rude. “*But I wouldn't say it*” implied Daniel understood there are expected ways to communicate at school, but had difficulty articulating his views appropriately. This suggested Daniel required an opportunity to review his support with a trusted member of staff, to safely express his feelings. Daniel reported he tried to speak to staff previously, but it had been misinterpreted, “*oh so you're telling me to go away?*” (405). This suggested some members of staff were defensive, indicating an antagonistic relationship between Daniel and them and a lack of trust.

4.2.3.4.2 Subordinate Theme 2: Practical Challenges. Daniel described the increased size of secondary school and the challenge of finding his way around:

“...finding my way around because it’s so big” (192-193)

“... I thought my primary school was big and then I looked at that... it’s like all those floors to it” (196-197)

The exclamation in his tone *“I looked at that”* indicated surprise implying his secondary school was bigger than anything he had seen previously. The words *“that”* and *“it”* suggested unfamiliarity. *“It’s so big”* and *“all those floors to it”* indicated that Daniel remained surprised by its size.

Daniel acknowledged organisational difficulties related to practical challenges. He reported being given a map, but *“I ended up losing it so I had to use a friend”* (282-283). This suggested Daniel relied on his peers to support him to navigate the new environment. Daniel’s peers were not always able to support him, *“sometimes I’d forget to bring it [microphone] and then forget to give it to them [teachers]”* (332-333). This indicated deaf CYP experience increased responsibility and organisational demands at secondary school. Daniel appeared to find this challenging.

4.2.3.4.3 Subordinate Theme 3: Own Expectations. On five occasions, Daniel suggested his expectations of secondary school prior to starting had led to anxiety and negative emotions. He explained he *“hated the [secondary] school”* (177) before starting because he had heard negative comments about it. He shared he thought *“it would be real strict and hard work”* (69). Daniel reported this was not the case, stating transition to secondary school *“is not as nerve-wracking as you think it is”* (465). This emphasised a discrepancy between Daniel’s expectations and reality.

4.2.3.5 Superordinate Theme 5: Safety and Belonging. Daniel acknowledged two factors which supported his sense of safety and belonging at secondary school. These were grouped together.

4.2.3.5.1 Subordinate Theme 1: Value of Friendship. It was evident from Daniel's interview that friendship was an important source of support. Prior to transition, Daniel stated feeling more anxious than his peers "*because all my friends had friends that they knew...*" (75-76). He reported moving to secondary school is "*better if you had friends that you know, because then you can hang around with them and just do what they do*" (465-467). This implied Daniel's anxiety was elevated due to an initial lack of peer support at secondary school. Not knowing anyone made him feel lonely and vulnerable. "*Just do what they do*" implied a lack of independence and a need to copy others to 'fit in'. It indicated being alone makes you noticeable and different to others. This reliance on peers was highlighted earlier in the interview when Daniel explained he lost his map and "*had to use a friend*" (283).

4.2.3.5.2 Subordinate Theme 2: Consistent Support. Daniel referred to consistent support across the transition to secondary school. He explained he already knew the ToD who visited him at secondary school as she had visited him at primary school. He reported she "*came every, every week just to come and see me, see how I'm doing and sometimes it was nice*" (255-256). These visits appeared informal, supportive and an opportunity to 'check-in'. This was emphasised by "*sometimes it was nice*". "*Sometimes*" indicated perhaps they were too frequent or caused Daniel to miss other activities he valued. Daniel said he also received support from his school's SENCo and TAs:

"...they [SENCo] used to come and see me and have a talk, so they were very supportive" (258-259).

“I always have like an assistant in the class that’s supposed to be looking after me...”
(309-310).

Like Daniel’s meetings with his ToD, his meetings with the SENCo appeared informal and nurturing, highlighted by *“have a talk”*. *“They used to come and see me”* suggested the SENCo made the effort to ‘check-in’ with Daniel which he appreciated. However, the past tense indicated this no longer happens. *“They were very supportive”* suggested a change indicating Daniel no longer perceived the SENCo to be as supportive as they were when he first joined the school.

Daniel spoke about the support he received from TAs. He noted there was always a TA to support him. However, *“supposed to be looking after me”* suggested Daniel did not always feel supported as he would like. *“Like an assistant”* implied Daniel was uncertain of the assistant’s role.

Daniel appeared to value the support he received from various individuals when starting secondary school as this helped him settle into his new environment. He spoke about finding this helpful but suggested that despite consistency at the beginning it did not stay this way, *“...she did it for like a mon...two months and then she just stopped...”* (262-263). Like with the SENCo who *“used to come and see [him]”* (258-259), Daniel’s ToD also stopped visiting. The phrase *“just stopped”* implied this was an unexpected change. His tone of voice conveyed disappointment. This implied Daniel initially felt well supported at secondary school, but this then reduced which was disappointing for him. This highlights a need for professionals to inform deaf CYP about their support and discuss it with them, collaborating with other supporting professionals to reduce input gradually whilst ensuring some consistent support remains.

4.2.4 Michael

Michael was in Year Seven at a mainstream secondary school. The school had a HI resource base, but Michael did not attend this. Michael had a profound HI in his right ear and mild-moderate HI in his left ear. He wore one hearing aid in his left ear. Michael attended classes with additional adult support but did not receive one-to-one support. He could lipread and sat at the front of classrooms facing the teacher. He was supported with subtitles/transcripts for videos. Figure 4.4 provides an overview of the themes identified in Michael's interview and his drawings from 'The Ideal School' task.

Figure 4.4

Themes Identified from Michael's Interview

Anxiety	Change and loss	Supporting factors	Reflections
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vulnerability• Others• School environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contrast between primary school and secondary school• Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Others• Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Resilience• Advice

4.2.4.1 Superordinate Theme 1: Anxiety. The following themes were grouped together as they represented Michael's concerns about secondary school transition.

4.2.4.2.1 Subordinate Theme 1: Vulnerability. Michael discussed feeling nervous before starting secondary school. He often referred to change related fears, particularly moving from the oldest in one environment to the youngest in another:

"...we were the powerful ones, kind of and then moving into secondary school we would become the smallest, Year Seven... I was becoming quite nervous of how people might act upon us, because we are the new ones, the younger ones" (60-64)

"...I did feel like I was the smallest and I would be picked on a lot or bullied" (216-217)

These references suggested Michael perceived being older as more “powerful”. He shared that moving from primary school to secondary school and becoming the youngest evoked anxiety linked to perceived vulnerability. “*How people might act upon us*” suggested he felt powerless and lacked control over the situation, implying older students had control of his direction. His references to being “*picked on*” or “*bullied*” implied a negative previous experience or awareness of negative stories from others that concerned him. It also indicated helplessness that he would be unable to protect himself because he “*was the smallest*”. This implied he felt intimidated by older students. His language, such as “*how people might act upon us*” suggested a ‘them versus us’ mentality. He felt a sense of belonging to the Year Seven cohort, but not to the whole school.

4.2.4.2.2 Subordinate Theme 2: Others. Michael discussed how others increased his anxieties around transition to secondary school. He noted feeling nervous about whether he “*would make a good first impression*” (86) on his teachers. This suggested he was keen to be liked by his teachers and perceived their impressions of him as important, perhaps impacting on his own sense of self.

Michael reported that some information shared by others induced anxiety. He explained his Year Six teachers often referred to the expectations of secondary school:

“*...we would have talks about...how we need to act and properly do the right and wrong stuff in secondary school*” (113-115)

“*...we would be told that our secondary school teachers would be much stricter*” (120-121)

This implied Michael’s primary school teachers used secondary transition as a behaviour management strategy, suggesting a ‘good guy’ (primary school) versus ‘bad guy’ (secondary school) attitude. References to teachers being stricter at secondary school is likely to have

implicitly reinforced a message that secondary school is scary increasing transition anxiety in students. It is possible Michael's concerns about how teachers would perceive him were induced by these messages.

4.2.4.2.3 Subordinate Theme 3: School Environment. Within 'The Ideal School' task, Michael discussed the school environment. He reported his ideal school would be organised and there would be one classroom in each section enabling easy access to classrooms and supporting students to find their way around. This contrasted with his non-ideal school which he described as disorganised. Michael reported nothing would have a set place; things would be constantly moving and moving; around the school would be confusing. He noted it would be unclear how to get help. These ideas implied organisation was important to Michael, increasing his sense of safety and decreasing anxiety.

4.2.4.3 Superordinate Theme 2: Change and Loss. This superordinate theme was used to represent the changes Michael experienced when transitioning to secondary school.

4.2.4.3.1 Subordinate Theme 1: Contrast Between Primary School and Secondary School. Michael highlighted multiple changes between primary school and secondary school:

"...like how big the school was, because in primary school I was used to having one teacher for the whole day and then not moving to different classrooms... But then you go from....staying in your classroom for the whole day to having to move around every hour" (246-251)

"Then you go from" suggested Michael was surprised by the differences and it took him time to adjust. "Having to move around every hour" indicated this was a chore and Michael preferred being based in one classroom. He reported the corridors were "jam-packed" (234), which conveyed they were busy and claustrophobic. Michael's tone of voice implied frustration suggesting he believed moving between classrooms was a poor use of time.

Michael discussed experiencing a change in the demands placed upon him when he moved to secondary school, highlighting increased responsibility. He noted receiving more homework; sharing it was “*nerve-wracking to complete*” (307) it all. This implied he felt overwhelmed. Michael discussed needing to be more organised, reporting “*my parents helped me to figure out a schedule*” (307-308). This suggested Michael was reliant on his parents to solve the problem, implying he was still developing independence. It suggested his secondary school expected more independence than his primary school which was challenging. This indicated a need for independent learning and organisation skills to be taught explicitly at the end of primary school or beginning of secondary school.

4.2.4.3.2 Subordinate Theme 2: Relationships. Michael explained the “*hardest bit*” (129) about transition was saying goodbye to his primary school friends and teachers. He noted his primary school teachers “*were really quite nice*” (257). This suggested at primary school he had a close relationship with his teachers which he missed. It implied the teacher-student relationship was more personal. This is likely to be due to the primary school set up; children have the same teacher for one year. It highlighted the significance of the student-teacher relationship to Michael, suggesting he missed having one consistent teacher providing him with security and familiarity.

Michael spoke excitedly about meeting other deaf CYP at secondary school, reporting “*we didn’t have any hearing-impaired people other than me at my primary school*” (77-78). This implied at primary school Michael felt different to his peers and was looking forward to meeting CYP who could relate to his experiences, “*it was quite reassuring to know there were other people*” (80). This indicated Michael felt more connected at secondary school, suggesting the presence of other deaf CYP increased his sense of belonging and identity.

4.2.4.3.5 *Superordinate Theme 3: Supporting Factors.* The following themes were deemed to represent factors Michael found supportive during transition.

4.2.4.3.6 *Subordinate Theme 1: Others.* It was evident Michael perceived support from others as a significant supporting factor in his transition to secondary school. He discussed receiving support from multiple individuals, including his parents, teachers, students, ToD and the HI resource base. Michael highlighted the significance of this support before and after transition. This suggested he perceived support at primary and secondary school to be equally important.

“...our teachers in primary school were very open and supportive...they let us know that if we had any troubles or concerns or questions, we could ask...” (160-162).

“I was reassured that they [secondary school teachers] were all really nice and that they would be able to help me, like she does [ToD]” (146-149).

“My form tutor was the kind of teacher that I could go to if I ever struggled with anything” (332-334).

These references highlighted that adults provided containment for Michael. They implied he benefitted from nurturing relationships with adults which he found reassuring and supportive during periods of emotional stress. Secondary school is characterised by increased student independence together with an increased reliance on peers as the primary source of resilience. These references indicated Michael benefitted from the nurturing approach characteristic of the primary school environment.

Michael discussed feeling reassured by the support he received at secondary school which was unexpected, *“I realised that everyone—staff and students—were very friendly”* (218). The reinforcement of “everyone” with “staff and students” suggested this was a significant revelation which contributed to his happiness at secondary school.

“I’ve got a lot of reassurance of how the teachers and older students have helped me and helped Year Seven...” (432-434)

“...having the reassurance of the HI Unit and how much they have helped me” (360-361)

These references further highlighted Michael’s surprise at the support he received. Despite, being reassured at primary school that he would be well-supported at secondary school, Michael needed to experience this for himself. He appeared grateful for the support and attributed this to his successful transition. Michael highlighted it was not just him that had been well-supported but *“Year Seven in general”* (434). This suggested Michael felt part of his school community. Despite not attending the HI provision, Michael acknowledged the support he had received from there, implying a sense of belonging and indicating the significance of an inclusive school ethos.

The positive correlation between feeling connected to others and happiness was reinforced within Michael’s ‘Ideal School’ task. He explained in his ideal school he would be talking to his friends and having a good time, whereas in his non-ideal school he would feel sad and alone. He noted in his non-ideal school he would be talking to his peers, but they would be facing away from him. This indicated belonging was important to Michael.

4.2.4.3.7 Subordinate Theme 2: Processes. Michael discussed processes that supported transition to secondary school. He shared *“the best thing”* (131-132) primary school teachers did was organise discussions *“about what it’s like leaving your friends to go to a different school”* (133-134). He also explained they rearranged the tables into *“rows, ...so we could get used to that”* (104-105). These points highlighted the significance of transition preparation at primary school.

Within ‘The Ideal School’ task, Michael highlighted the importance of classroom layout. He reported his ideal classroom would be organised, the desks in rows and the teacher positioned at the front. He shared he would sit in the front row in the middle so he could clearly see and hear. Michael noted in his non-ideal school, he would be unable to face the front and would have to turn around. This suggests teachers must consider individual needs when setting up classrooms, indicating classroom layout affects student comfort and attainment.

Michael reported the Year Seven cohort started school two days earlier than other students to meet their “*new teachers and get to know the school*” (32-33). He stated this “*was very nice*” (33). This implied staff at Michael’s secondary school had considered Year Seven cohort needs and he valued the quiet ‘settling in’ time before older students arrived.

4.2.4.4 Superordinate Theme 1: Reflections. The following themes were grouped together as they portrayed Michael’s reflections on secondary transition.

4.2.4.4.1 Subordinate Theme 1: Resilience. When asked what advice he would give to other deaf CYP transitioning from primary school to secondary school; Michael referred to individual resilience:

“...the longer that you’re there the easier it gets. So it does get easier to, to, to ask for help” (454-456).

“...it can and will be easier for them when they get there” (465-466)

These references suggested Michael drew on his own resilience to overcome the challenge of transition. His link to time appeared significant, implying the more time spent at secondary school, the more confident and resilient CYP become. The significance of perseverance was implied as Michael suggested transition was initially challenging but gets easier. “*It will get easier for them when they get there*” indicated the thought of changing schools may be more

anxiety provoking than the experience. Michael appeared confident in his responses illustrated by his assertive tone. This suggested this was his experience.

4.2.4.4.2 Subordinate Theme 2: Advice. Michael shared advice for supporting deaf CYP during transition to secondary school. He noted deaf CYP need to know “*there are people that can help them*” (441-442) and they should be given opportunities “*to get to know these people*” (442). This implied in Michael’s experience deaf CYP can feel isolated at school and attempt to deal with challenges alone. He highlighted the importance of deaf CYP being supported to form relationships with people who can help them “*so it’s easier for them to know them and talk to them*” (443-444). This implied deaf CYP may benefit from being allocated a key adult with whom they can build a trusting relationship. It also suggested deaf CYP may have reduced social skills in comparison to their peers, requiring increased support to communicate their needs and desires.

Michael’s reflections indicated the importance of school staff being deaf aware and experienced in supporting deaf CYP. He reported at secondary school there were staff who could support him effectively, but wished he had had “*teachers in primary school who knew what they were doing and who could properly sign and check my hearing aid*” (416-418). This implied Michael’s primary school teachers tried to help, but due to a lack of training were unable to. This may signify a lack of vital support for deaf CYP within mainstream classrooms, disadvantaging them and limiting inclusivity.

Michael discussed how other primary schools supported Year Six pupils prior to secondary transition. He reported they “*separated students by what school they were going to*” (177-178) and these students “*were taught with maybe a different teacher*” (178-179) “*so they would get to know*” (180) students moving to the same school. Michael reported “*I think that could have helped us a lot*” (180-181) which indicated he would have valued the

opportunity to connect with his primary school peers who were transitioning to the same school as him. It conveyed the idea of a support bubble which Michael perceived as an important protective factor.

Michael provided reassurance for deaf CYP transitioning to secondary school. He noted “*getting to know everyone—it was quite easy*” (228). He appeared surprised about “*how interactive everyone was with each other*” (228-229). This indicated prior concerns about inclusion, perhaps suggesting Michael was worried he may be ignored or appear invisible to his peers; however, this did not happen.

4.3 Findings Across Participants

As explained in section 3.13, the final stage of data analysis involved considering the participants’ data as a group to identify shared superordinate and subordinate themes. Each participant’s superordinate and subordinate themes were printed in a different colour. These were cut out and moved around to enable shared elements across cases to be identified. This process is illustrated in Appendix V and resulted in the reconfiguration and relabelling of some themes. As a result of this process, five superordinate themes were identified: ‘Attachment’, ‘Challenges’, ‘Support’, ‘New Beginnings’, and ‘Equal Opportunities’.

During cross-case analysis, some themes were discovered to be unique to individual participants, representing unique idiosyncrasies. For example, Lottie’s theme of ‘Negative Experiences at Primary School’. Shared higher-order qualities were also identified superseding other themes. For example, ‘Relationships’ was a common theme across participants. When considered together, greater meaning was apparent resulting in ‘Relationships’ being replaced with ‘Attachment’. This was due to the value participants afforded to belonging, support and safety in relationships that was better symbolised by ‘Attachment’.

Figure 4.5 illustrates the superordinate and subordinate themes identified for the collective group of participants. To ensure validity, each theme was referred to by at least two participants (i.e. 50% of the sample) to be included within this collective analysis. The collective themes identified in Figure 4.5 are further elaborated upon in Chapter 5 where they are discussed in relation to the RQs.

Figure 4.5

Superordinate and Subordinate Themes Identified for the Collective Group of Participants

Attachment	Challenges	Support	New Beginnings	Equal Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friendship • Belonging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difference between primary school and secondary school • Communicating with others • New environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistency and continuity • Familiarity • Processes • Others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feelings and expectations • New opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I'm just like everyone else" • Inclusion

4.3.1 Attachment

4.3.1.1 Friendship. All participants acknowledged friendship within their interviews. They discussed their hopes and concerns about friendship prior to transition. This included anxieties about making friends, “...*nervous about if...I could make friends...*” (Ruth, 49-50); being bullied, “...*I did feel like I was the smallest and I would be picked on a lot or bullied a lot...*” (Michael, 216-217); and missing primary school friends “...*I knew I was gonna miss some of my friends...*” (Lottie, 27-28). Participants discussed the importance of friendship, sharing how their new friends had supported the transition to secondary school, “*I ended up losing it [the map] so I had to use a friend*” (Daniel, 283-284) and “*they [my new friends] helped me around...err...getting around the school*” (Ruth, 134). Most of the participants explained that they had made friends at secondary school quickly and easily, “*I got friends*

really quickly because I met up with them in the transitions, so it was pretty easy to make friends” (Daniel, 187-188). However, this was not the case for Lottie who reported finding it challenging to make friends, , *“I make friend like two weeks ”* (Lottie, 289) *“with ehm two girls, that’s it”* (Lottie, 292).

4.3.1.2 Belonging. The significance of belonging and feeling connected with others was evident across participants:

“...making sure they feel welcomed and they want them there...” (Michael, 471-472)

“it’s better if you have friends...you can hang around with them and just do what they do” (Daniel, 482-483)

“I was just looking for some friends really” (Ruth, 127)

“...I was a bit nervous about making a first impression on all my teachers. If I would make a good first impression or a bad one” (Michael, 84-86)

These quotations suggested that participants wanted to feel valued and accepted by others and this was important during their transition to secondary school.

4.3.2 Challenges

4.3.2.1 Difference Between Primary School and Secondary School. All participants discussed the difference between primary school and secondary school. They noted that *“everything”* (Lottie, 213) is different at secondary school and there is a *“big of a jump”* (Ruth, 88-89) between primary and secondary school. Key differences discussed, included the increase in the size of secondary school, *“it’s a lot bigger”* (Ruth, 248); the change from *“staying in your classroom for the whole day to having to move around every hour”* (Michael, 249-251); and a reduction in break times, *“...in primary, we had like two or three breaks, now we have no...zero breaks...”* (Daniel, 218-219). Participants also

highlighted the increase in organisational demands and responsibility at secondary school, for example:

“you have loads of stuff to remember. You’ve got your books and equipment and you’ve got to be there on time, and you are responsible for...like if you’re late or if you forget something” (Ruth, 273-276)

“...the amount of homework it could be quite nerve wracking to complete that all the time...” (Michael, 306-307)

4.3.2.2 Communicating with Others. The participants shared that sometimes communicating with other people could be difficult. For example, Ruth stated that in her non-ideal school everyone would be shouting across the classroom and sitting far away from each other, so she would not be able to hear. Lottie explained that at primary school *“it was easy...for me to communicate with people...it was a...much quieter environment”* (Lottie, 284-285) and Daniel noted that he did not always know how to explain things to other people, *“...I don’t know how to say it”* (Daniel, 403).

4.3.2.3 New Environment. Difficulties navigating the new secondary school environment were raised by all participants. They highlighted *“getting lost”* (Lottie, 110) frequently and finding it challenging to find their way around, *“...I think the most challenging thing was ehm, trying to find my way around, because...on my own trying to find my way around I got lost a few times”* (Ruth, 141-143). Michael also reported that it could be hard to move around his secondary school, noting *“it would be jam packed and no one would be able to get anywhere...”* (233-235).

4.3.3 Support

4.3.3.1 Consistency and Continuity. Participants discussed feeling reassured by consistency and continuity during their transition from primary school to secondary school.

They reported benefitting from visits at secondary school from the same ToD who had visited them at primary school, *“she was like someone I knew from primary school and secondary school, so that kind of helped”* (Ruth, 75-76). They highlighted the importance of ‘being eased’ into secondary school and secondary school staff altering the environment and demands to be more in line with the primary school environment, *“they started of quite easy and ehm it was similar to the one in primary school”* (Lottie, 120-121).

4.3.3.2 Familiarity. A significant supporting mechanism highlighted by participants was the importance of familiarity. They discussed benefitting from visits to their secondary school prior to transition, knowing peers who were transitioning to the same school and meeting key adults:

“some people went there with...no one they knew, so that must have been scary”
(Ruth, 58-59)

“I felt nervous, but I was also OK because I’d had a few taster days there so they eased the transition...” (Daniel, 37-38)

“...the week prior to everyone else...all the Year 7s went in... to get to know where everything was an who our teachers were going to be...” (Michael, 273-276).

“...I did see one person that came over, because she was my...the person that was gonna take care of me” (Daniel, 124-126)

4.3.3.3 Processes. Participants highlighted several processes that they found useful during transition to secondary school. Within ‘The Ideal School’ task, most participants noted that their ideal school would be clearly laid out and organised. This was often contrasted with their non-ideal school which was described as disorganised. Participants shared that they valued secondary schools being prepared, *“...my secondary school was all prepared, they already had all the people that all look after me...they were more set up than my primary”*

(Daniel, 98-101). They also benefitted from transition visits, “...if I didn’t go to the transitions, I probably would have been really nervous” (Daniel, 173-174). Participants valued primary school staff providing opportunities to discuss transition to secondary school and highlighted the importance of endings:

“...the best thing that our teachers did is...we were able to come together in one assembly...and talk about what it’s like leaving your friends and going to a different school” (Michael, 131-134)

“we were supposed to have a leavers’ assembly where we all like had an assembly and then say goodbye to the school and everything, but I was on holiday...I was quite angry...” (Daniel, 218-223)

4.3.3.4 Others. Support from others was highlighted as a significant supporting factor during transition by all participants. Participants discussed receiving support from several individuals, including parents, friends, and teachers. They explained that this support helped them to adjust to the new environment and form friendships:

“They [my new friends] helped me around...err...getting around the school” (Ruth, 134)

“...lots of group projects...to help us make friends in classes” (Ruth, 173-175)

“They mainly kept us in groups...so we could find our way around buildings” (Lottie, 158-159)

“My form tutor was the kind of teacher that I could go to if I ever struggled with anything” (Michael, 332-334)

Participants also noted receiving and benefitting from assistance with academic work, organisation and support related to their HI:

“...my parents helped me to figure out a schedule” (Michael, 307-308)

“...they know what to do if I’m in and I have problems...” (Daniel, 354)

“...they provided more methods to ehm...to be able to understand ehm lessons and stuff and they were able to ehm...answer most questions and make sense of them”
(Lottie, 232-234)

Finally, participants emphasised the value of meeting other deaf CYP:

“...talk with deaf students and then link up things that you’re both going to experience” (Daniel, 518-519)

“it was reassuring for everyone...to get to know everyone else who had similar hearing impairments to you” (Michael, 286-287)

4.3.4 New Beginnings

4.3.4.1 Feelings and Expectations. All participants discussed having mixed feelings about secondary transition prior to it occurring, *“I was very nervous and I was kind of sad to leave some of my friends, but then I was also excited, because I got to go to a new school and meet new people and everything”* (Ruth, 26-28). Participants shared their expectations prior to transition, reporting *“I thought the lessons were gonna be a lot harder...”* (Lottie, 134-135); and *“I thought it would be real strict and hard work”* (Daniel, 69). They also noted concerns about being the youngest at secondary school, *“I was becoming quite nervous of how people might act upon us, because we are the new ones the younger ones”* (Michael, 63-64).

4.3.4.2 New Opportunities. Multiple references were made by participants to the new opportunities available to them at secondary school. This appeared to be linked to feelings of excitement and enjoyment:

“At secondary school we do more, practical things and more...like it’s more fun I guess” (Ruth, 232-234)

“...we’re able to ehm...like do loads of activities like after school or during school...”
(Lottie, 31-32)

“...in secondary school you can use guitars, drums, everything...” (Daniel, 159-160).

4.3.5 Equal Opportunities

4.3.5.1 “I’m Just Like Everyone Else”. Most participants discussed wanting to be treated like their peers. They noted being *“like any normal person more or less”* (Ruth, 364) and not wanting to be singled out or treated differently, *“no, I’m just like everyone else”* (Daniel, 384). Generally, participants believed they had experienced similar feelings about secondary transition to their peers, *“...because everyone, everyone gets nervous and one’s lonely at school”* (Daniel, 501-502).

4.3.5.2 Inclusion. Despite not wanting to be singled out for their HI, participants highlighted the importance of inclusion. They noted the significance of deaf awareness and support to ensure they could access the same opportunities as their peers:

“...having the teachers in primary school who knew what they were doing and who could properly sign and check my hearing aid” (Michael, 416-418)

“...like give them as much help as they can...of what people are normally learning in secondary school...” (Lottie, 363-364)

Participants referred to the importance of the acoustic environment at school. Within ‘The Ideal School’ task, participants shared that their ideal classrooms would be carpeted, and background noise would be reduced. They noted that they would sit at the front of the class with a clear view of the teacher.

Finally, it was suggested that CYP need to be actively involved in planning and evaluating their support, ensuring staff are aware of and respect their wishes, “...*sometimes they fully sit next to me and help me with every question, which I don’t want*” (Daniel, 397-398).

4.4 Summary

This chapter has described and interpreted the superordinate and subordinate themes that emerged from each participant’s unique experience of secondary school transition. The overarching superordinate and subordinate themes that were common across participants were also presented. The final chapter will consider these findings in relation to the RQs and existing research. Limitations of the current research will be discussed in addition to suggestions for future research and implications for EP practice.

Chapter 5 – Discussion

5.1 Chapter Overview

This final chapter will discuss the findings presented in chapter four in relation to the RQs, existing literature, and psychological theory. The secondary RQs will be explored first as they answer the primary RQ. A critical review of the research will be presented including suggestions for further research. Followed by a section outlining how the findings will be disseminated alongside implications for supporting deaf CYP during transition to secondary school. This will include implications for EP practice. The researcher's reflections, reflexivity and positioning will be discussed. This chapter will finish with an overall conclusion highlighting the key messages from this research.

5.2 Theoretical Links

5.2.1 *Self-Determination Theory*

The findings from the current study illustrate the importance of support, feeling connected, the environment and personal choice to the wellbeing of deaf CYP during secondary transition. These findings fit well with Self-Determination Theory and this provides a useful framework for understanding the findings of the current study. Attachment Theory and belonging are subsumed within Self-Determination Theory under the heading of 'Relatedness' and so this has not been presented as a separate theory.

Self-Determination Theory is a theory of human motivation which states individuals have innate needs which must be nurtured to support positive psychological and physiological functioning (Ryan & Deci, 2000). These needs are autonomy, relatedness, and competence. Research has highlighted the importance of the fulfilment of these needs for academic success (Goldman et al., 2017), for example Ratelle & Duchesne (2014) reported students adjust more successfully to secondary school when their needs for autonomy,

relatedness and competence are met. The findings from the current study suggest school staff can support transition to secondary school for deaf CYP by nurturing these innate needs.

5.2.1.1 Autonomy. Autonomy refers to the need for individuals to feel in control of their lives. CYP in the current study had different views about the support they wanted to receive. Some participants described wanting individuals to know about their HI, whereas others preferred to receive covert support. Discrepancies between the support participants wanted and the support participants received were also noted. These findings highlight the importance of actively involving deaf CYP throughout transition, seeking and listening to their views, which increases their autonomy.

The findings from the current study highlighted that secondary transition is characterised by new opportunities and increased responsibility. Participants reported looking forwards to the increased freedom and opportunities, suggesting that they valued the increase in autonomy. However, it is important that deaf CYP are supported to develop the organisation and self-advocacy skills that are required for increased responsibility and independence.

5.2.1.2 Relatedness. Relatedness is similar to the concept of belonging (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). It is the desire to feel affiliated with others, ‘fit in’ and experience positive and affectionate relationships. This was a prominent theme within the current study. CYP discussed feeling anxious about making friends and ‘fitting in’ prior to transition. They highlighted the importance of friendship for wellbeing and were keen to be liked and valued by everyone. Participants discussed how staff could support feelings of relatedness. They noted the value of staff orchestrating activities to support friendship development and providing academic and emotional support. These findings highlighted that attachment and relationships are central to successful transition to secondary school for deaf CYP.

5.2.1.3 Competence. Competence relates to an individual's ability to experience success. Within the current study a key area which affected CYP's feelings of competence, was the environment. They spoke about the significance of an acoustically supportive environment allowing them to be successful. They noted the need for the school community to be deaf aware and staff to be able to support with assistive listening devices. CYP discussed the importance of being familiar with their new school environment prior to transition and receiving consistent support throughout transition. They noted wanting to be challenged and able to access the same opportunities as their peers.

5.3 Discussion of the Findings

5.3.1 *Secondary RQ1: What are the Most Significant Impacts on Wellbeing that deaf Pupils Experience During Transition?*

Lester and Cross (2015) stated "transition to secondary school is a period of life known to affect the psychological, social and intellectual wellbeing of students" (p.2). Research has consistently highlighted that secondary transition is challenging for all students. Zeedyk et al. (2003) described it as "one of the most difficult [times] in pupils' educational careers" (p.67). Whilst most CYP successfully transition to secondary school, multiple factors facilitate or hinder this experience (Ashton, 2008; Tobbell, 2003; West et al., 2010). CYP with SEN have been found to experience increased challenges during secondary transition (e.g. Foley et al., 2016). In line with previous research, participants in the current study suggested there are big differences between primary and secondary school. Participants acknowledged several factors which impacted on their wellbeing during transition which are discussed below.

5.3.1.1 Attachment. Relationships were raised by all participants highlighting their significance. Three participants discussed their hopes and concerns for friendships prior to transition, indicating this was important to their wellbeing. They discussed feeling anxious about making friends and noted concerns about bullying. These anxieties are consistent with

previous research with CYP with SEN (e.g. Bunn et al., 2017). Research illustrates deaf CYP often experience communication difficulties, potentially leading to social marginalisation (Ridsdale & Thompson, 2002; Xie et al., 2014). Indeed, difficulties communicating with others was a subtheme identified in this study. It is likely participants were aware of their communication difficulties which enhanced anxiety. Previous research has highlighted the significance of peers for deaf CYP in supporting social inclusion and providing support in lessons (Jarvis, 2003). This suggests peers are important to both the academic and social inclusion of deaf CYP. This potentially enhances their friendship anxieties prior to transition, impacting on wellbeing. It was evident peer relationships were important to participants in the current study with three participants noting ways peers had supported them during transition. Examples included help navigating the new environment and reminding others to speak one at a time. This supports previous research which highlights the supportive role peers have in explaining HI to others and translating missed information (Eriks-Brophy et al., 2006). This assists deaf CYP to participate successfully in interactions, improving their wellbeing (Gascon-Ramos, 2008).

This study found a sense of belonging and feeling connected to others was vital to participants' wellbeing. Adults appeared to be significant in supporting this, with participants noting the value of teachers providing support activities for friendship development. Previous research has illustrated CYP who feel valued and connected to others show increased levels of wellbeing (Jose et al., 2012; Lester & Cross, 2015). In the current study, belonging was related to self-concept, especially for Michael who discussed feeling nervous about how others would perceive him. The importance of belonging is in line with the findings of Wolters et al. (2012) who reported peer relationships and acceptance were key to the wellbeing of deaf CYP.

All participants acknowledged previous relationships from primary school had changed. It is likely this impacted on their wellbeing. This supports the findings of Scanlon et al. (2016) who reported pupils with SEN had concerns about losing the security and familiarity provided by primary school; especially in relation to friendships, social stature, and pupil-teacher relationships. Other research has found losing old friends to be a lasting and significant concern for all CYP across transition to secondary school irrespective of SEN status (Pratt & George, 2005). Since research has suggested deaf CYP may experience greater difficulties in forming friendships (Ridsdale & Thompson, 2002), these friendship concerns may be amplified. This suggests the importance of increasing awareness of school staff about the social concerns of CYP and especially deaf CYP. Deaf CYP may benefit from additional transition preparation, focussed on maintaining and forming friendships.

5.3.1.2 Support. Another finding from this research was the value of support from others throughout transition. Participants appreciated support from parents, friends, teachers, and others, which significantly impacted on their wellbeing. This support included help adjusting to the new environment, assistance with academic work, support to form friendships and support related to HI. These findings confirm previous research highlighting the importance of support for a successful secondary school transition for all children. Evangelou et al. (2008) reported CYP who successfully transitioned were more likely to have received increased support from their secondary school. Much research has illustrated the critical role of teacher support during transition to secondary school (Coffey, 2013; Hanewald, 2013; McCoy et al., 2020). Parental support is central to student achievement and wellbeing during transition. Hanewald (2013) highlighted the value of parents providing constant support, paying attention to children's activities, and intervening positively where required. The significance of support is further emphasised by DeWit et al. (2011) who

suggested emotional support from peers and teachers can reduce and prevent mental health problems in CYP.

When discussing peer support, three participants in the current study highlighted the significance of connecting with other deaf CYP. They reported receiving reassurance from these individuals, and this helped them to feel less isolated. This confirms previous research, for example Iantaffi et al. (2003) noted social isolation is reduced in deaf people who socialise with other deaf individuals. Since relationships and acceptance are key predictors of wellbeing for deaf CYP in early secondary school (Wolters et al., 2012), this finding is noteworthy. It is likely deaf CYP benefit from forming friendships with other deaf CYP and this has a positive impact on their wellbeing. This suggests opportunities should be provided for deaf CYP to interact (Moore et al., 1999).

Despite valuing support, some participants reported feeling over supported at times. They feared being singled out from their peers and wanting to be challenged and provided with the same opportunities as others. This finding was also highlighted by Jarvis (2003) who noted some participants felt over-supported in some lessons and under-supported in others. This suggests a discrepancy in the support participants want and what they receive. This discrepancy in the current study appeared to induce frustration and helplessness which negatively affect wellbeing. These findings exemplify the need for deaf CYP to be actively involved in planning and evaluating their support. Supporting adults should demonstrate high expectations and promote independence. They should be aware of and respect pupils' wishes and provide support discretely without drawing unwanted attention to individuals. The active involvement of CYP in decision making is central to current legislation. The SEN Code of Practice (DfE & DfH, 2015) emphasises the importance of listening to the VoC and ensuring their active involvement in decisions. The views of participants in the current research emphasise the need to embed PCP in all areas of education.

5.3.1.2.1 New Environment. All participants referred to the difference between their primary school and secondary school building. They all reported the notable increase in size of secondary school and the difficulties they experienced navigating the new environment. This finding matches previous research which highlights CYP with SEN are more likely to report difficulties adjusting to the secondary school environment, particularly regarding organisational and orientational factors (Dockrell & Lindsay, 2007; Foley et al., 2016; Maras & Aveling, 2006). Within 'The Ideal School' task, all participants highlighted the significance of their school being clearly laid out, labelled and welcoming. This suggests these may be protective factors which reduce feelings of vulnerability in the new environment and thus are important for wellbeing.

Participants discussed getting lost and finding it challenging to navigate their new environment. It is likely deaf CYP pay less attention to their environment compared to hearing individuals, due to increased concentration on other activities such as following conversations. Since deaf CYP are less able to use sound to orientate themselves, they are more reliant on visual cues, highlighting the importance of clearly labelled school environments. Research has illustrated deaf CYP have difficulty understanding the concept of time (Marschark et al., 2002). This is likely to affect their ability to follow and remember directions increasing their probability of getting lost. In practice, deaf CYP will benefit from time to familiarise themselves with their new environment and support to develop orientational and organisational skills. They will benefit from being escorted to key areas multiple times.

In this study, reference was made to features especially relevant to deaf individuals due to the impact they have on the acoustic environment. Examples include classrooms being carpeted, background noise reduced, and deaf CYP seated with a clear view of the teacher. Previous research has illustrated schools can be unsupportive environments for deaf CYP

where they may feel isolated and misunderstood (Israelite, 2002). Deaf CYP frequently mishear information in the classroom environment (Marschark et al., 2015), due to issues such as high levels of background noise which increase deaf CYP's difficulties (Moeller et al., 2007). Given the emphasis CYP in the current study placed on the environment, it is likely to significantly impact on their wellbeing. Environments with poor acoustics lead to multiple difficulties for deaf CYP (Antia et al., 2009; Archbold et al., 2015) potentially resulting in confusion, loneliness and frustration.

5.3.1.3 Difference Between Primary and Secondary School. Prior to transition, participants discussed feeling excited about the new opportunities at secondary school. This supports previous findings which suggest despite apprehension, CYP look forward to the increased freedom and opportunities (Cantali, 2019; van Rens et al., 2018). Aligned with prior research, participants shared concerns about the increased organisation required at secondary school (Maras & Aveling, 2006) and reported getting lost frequently when they first transitioned (Dockrell & Lindsay, 2007). However, they described enjoying their newfound freedom and most participants suggested they coped with transition better than anticipated. This supports Eriks-Brophy et al.'s (2006) findings who highlighted the significance of deaf CYP's individual characteristics to their successful inclusion within mainstream classrooms. They noted personality characteristics which positively correlated with deaf CYP's success in the classroom, including organisation, independence, proactivity and willingness to take responsibility for learning. Research has also suggested a link between personality characteristics and wellbeing during transition (West et al., 2010). Therefore, it is likely the characteristics acknowledged by Eriks-Brophy et al. (2006) also relate to deaf CYP's secondary transition experiences.

This study showed that although participants valued the increased independence, they were challenged by the increased responsibilities that came with it. This was associated with

increased anxiety and a sense of loss of the safety of the primary school environment. Participants discussed needing to develop organisational skills quickly. Similar to previous research, these findings highlight the importance of school staff providing support to students to develop the skills required to adapt successfully to the secondary school environment (Evangelou et al., 2008). As discussed previously, participants in the current study reported a discrepancy in the support they wanted and the support they received. Participants seemed unsure how to change this, suggesting they were yet to develop effective self-advocacy skills. For example, Daniel reported being unsure how to articulate his desires to school staff and Ruth noted her reliance on peers to support her. Research highlights the development of self-advocacy skills is critical for deaf CYP and invaluable to their educational success and wellbeing (Hendrix, 2015). Despite this, it is acknowledged deaf CYP experience barriers to developing these skills, for example communication difficulties and others' expectations (Hendrix, 2015). Therefore, the findings of the current research and previous research suggest deaf CYP should be supported to develop self-advocacy skills from an early age. Research has highlighted PCP can develop self-advocacy skills (White & Rae, 2016) and thus is likely to be a beneficial approach for deaf CYP.

5.3.2 Secondary RQ2: What are deaf CYP's Perceptions of the Support Mechanisms

Provided by Schools to Support the Transition from Primary School to Secondary School?

Research has considered how children can be supported to successfully transition to secondary school (e.g. Cantali, 2019; van Rens et al., 2018). Yet to the researcher's knowledge, this is the first study to explicitly consider deaf CYP's perceptions of the support mechanisms provided to them during this transition. Participants in the current study reported they did not receive any additional support to their peers during transition. However, it is

possible additional support was provided but participants were unaware of this. Their stories suggested their experiences of support differed, but there were some common themes.

In general, participants spoke positively about their experiences of transition to secondary school and the support they had received. Participants struggled to identify how primary schools had supported the transition process, but reference was made to leavers' assemblies and discussions around the expectations of secondary school. Participants suggested they would have liked additional transition support from primary school, especially in preparation for the increased organisational demands of secondary school. Previous research highlights the support provided by primary schools is particularly important during transition (Vaz et al., 2014). Therefore, it is important future research considers how primary schools support secondary transition for deaf CYP.

Participants discussed receiving various support from secondary schools. They spoke positively about open evenings, induction days and meeting secondary school staff. They discussed 'being eased' into secondary school and receiving support to find their way around the new environment. This support varied, but participants discussed receiving maps, being guided by others, and remaining in one area to begin with. Participants reported receiving support to develop friendships through group tasks and 'getting to know you' activities. They noted teachers were more lenient at the beginning of secondary school.

5.3.3 Secondary RQ3 - What Support Mechanisms do deaf Pupils Find Most Useful

During the Transition from Primary to Secondary Education?

The support mechanisms participants in this study found most useful will be discussed below.

5.3.3.1 Processes. Prior to transition to secondary school, participants reported receiving some preparatory support. All participants had visited their secondary school prior

to joining in Year Seven, although the number of visits varied. Participants suggested these visits increased their familiarity with the new environment which some reported reduced anxiety. This supports previous research which indicates students experience an easier and more successful transition when they are familiar with the new school (Sirsch, 2003; Evangelou, et al., 2008). Some participants discussed meeting secondary school staff whilst still at primary school. Research has highlighted students with SEN who experienced a positive transition were more likely to develop positive relationships with teachers by age 13 (McCoy et al., 2020). Therefore, forming a relationship with a key adult from secondary school whilst in Year Six may be a protective factor during transition for deaf CYP. Reference was made to the significance of forming relationships with peers transitioning to the same secondary school. Again, this suggests familiarity is important to deaf CYP during transition, providing containment.

Participants discussed receiving some support from primary school teachers prior to transition. This support included both practical and emotional support. Some participants acknowledged that primary school teachers had spoken about moving to secondary school. They spoke positively about being able to ask questions. Primary school staff need to consider how they offer information about secondary school, as findings from this study suggest some information could induce anxiety. Michael noted primary teachers used secondary school expectations as a behaviour management technique, which made him nervous.

Some participants discussed the importance of endings and the role of primary school staff in facilitating this. Michael spoke positively about how his teachers supported his Year Six cohort to consider their feelings about moving to a different school and leaving their friends. Daniel also referred to the significance of endings, stating he felt angry to have missed the leavers' assembly. This highlights the importance of teacher support and

reassurance to deaf CYP (Hanewald, 2013) and the need for school staff to be aware of individual's emotional needs. This aligns with research by Neal et al. (2016) who highlighted CYP with SEN may benefit from a person-centred, individualised approach to transition.

Participants spoke positively about 'being eased' into secondary school. During the first few days, participants referred to the support they had received from adults. Most participants described staying with a consistent adult and group of peers to build friendships and explore their new surroundings. They discussed completing "getting to know you" activities and "group projects" which facilitated friendship development. Michael reported term started two days earlier at his secondary school for Year Seven pupils. This allowed him to explore the new environment and meet his teachers and peers whilst the school was relatively quiet. Much research has illustrated the importance of friendship for CYP during transition (e.g. Hanewald, 2013; McCoy et al., 2020). In their research, Evangelou et al. (2008) discovered CYP who experienced a successful transition to secondary school had formed friendships and received more support from secondary schools than other pupils. The current findings add to this conclusion, by highlighting that deaf CYP perceive teachers providing opportunities and supporting friendship development to be valuable. Israelite (2002) reported a similar finding for CYP attending special classes for deaf students. These students shared that "teachers helped us connect with one another" (Israelite, 2002, p.143) which was beneficial. The results from the current study suggest adult support to develop friendships is also useful for deaf CYP transitioning to secondary school. Nevertheless, it is important adults are equipped with the skills to support deaf CYP to interact and participate in group activities preventing them from feeling isolated. For example, Lottie reported her HI made social situations challenging and impacted on participation.

Participants described teachers as generally friendly and supportive, which is representative of their 'ideal school's' descriptions of adults. All participants reported people

were available to help when they first transitioned to secondary school. Some participants noted staff were initially more lenient and understanding. Within 'The Ideal School' task participants typically stated there was a place to go and seek help in their ideal school. These findings suggest deaf CYP benefit from a nurturing environment and positive teacher relationships. This is in line with previous research which highlights the importance of teachers during transition (van Rens et al., 2018). This is especially important for deaf CYP as Wolters et al. (2012) reported the strongest predictor of wellbeing for deaf CYP in Grade Eight was their relationship with teachers. Participants in the current study discussed staff being flexible and willing to support in different ways. This highlights the importance of adults implementing a person-centred approach to supporting deaf CYP.

5.3.3.2 Consistency and Continuity. A prominent finding across all participants within the current research was the value of consistency and continuity of support during secondary transition. Previous research has highlighted this period in a child's educational career to be characterised by multiple discontinuities. Children experience distinct changes in the curriculum (Evangelou et al., 2008); pastoral care systems (Powell et al., 2006), the environment (Virtanen et al., 2020) and expectations (van Rens et al., 2018). Given these changes, it is unsurprising participants in the current study were reassured by support that mirrored their primary school experiences. They noted benefitting from visits at secondary school from the same ToD who had visited them at primary school. They reported receiving more frequent visits at the start of secondary school which they described as helpful. However, careful consideration relating to the planning of this support needs to be considered, as Daniel reported it stopped unexpectedly which he found frustrating. Previous research shows transition is aided by continued information exchange between primary and secondary teachers (Green, 1997). Nevertheless, often the information shared is generic (Topping, 2011). Where the ToD remains consistent across primary school to secondary

school, it is likely they ensure relevant information is shared. Since they already know the child, they can provide tailored advice to secondary school staff and monitor support. They are also able to support the development of a home-school partnership ensuring effective communication and the involvement of all stakeholders which has been found to be invaluable to successful transition (Coffey, 2013). Research has highlighted the communication skills of deaf CYP can impact upon their teacher relationships (Antia et al., 2011). Therefore, it is likely deaf CYP benefit from a pre-existing relationship with their ToD, enabling them to share experiences and concerns freely.

As discussed previously, Participants valued ‘being eased’ into secondary school and secondary school staff altering the environment and demands to be more in line with the primary school environment. This suggests participants benefitted from a gradual increase in workload and expectations. Changing academic demands are often a source of anxiety for CYP during transition (Evangelou et al., 2008; Zeedyk et al., 2003). Concerns have also been raised about the lack of curriculum continuity between primary and secondary school, with research illustrating limited communication between the two (Evangelou et al., 2008). Both these findings and the current study highlight the importance of schools working together to ensure a smooth secondary transition (Coffey, 2013; Evangelou et al., 2008). Participants noted in class they still sat at the front with a clear view of the teacher at secondary school and received additional support where required. Again, this signals the importance of clear communication between schools to ensure consistent support for deaf CYP.

5.3.3.3 Support from Others.

5.3.3.3.1 Peer Support. The importance of peer relationships for deaf CYP across transition was evident in the current study. All participants discussed their interpersonal relationships which were generally positive. They described how their peers had

supported them to find their way around the new environment and included them in social situations. This supports previous findings regarding the significance of peers to the academic and social inclusion of deaf CYP (Eriks-Brophy et al., 2006; Jarvis, 2003). When asked how they would support other deaf CYP during secondary transition, most participants reported they would support them to develop friendships. This illustrated that participants perceived friendships to be a vital source of support during transition. Lottie spoke more negatively than other participants about her experiences of making friends at secondary school, reporting she found it difficult. This suggests staff must be aware of the friendship difficulties deaf CYP may experience and intervene positively where required.

As highlighted in Section 5.3.1.2, participants spoke positively about friendships with other deaf CYP. They noted these interactions provided reassurance and reduced feelings of isolation.

5.3.3.3.2 *Adult Support.* All participants referred to support they received from various adults during transition. Specific mentions were made to parents, form tutors, SENCos and ToDs. Participants acknowledged teachers more generally, reporting they were mostly friendly and supportive. Parents provided both emotional and organisational support which was deemed beneficial. This confirms previous research that demonstrates the fundamental role parents/guardians have in supporting secondary school transition (Hanewald, 2013). Participants emphasised the value of an adult contact they could speak to for support. Michael mentioned his form tutor and Daniel described regular meetings with the SENCo. Previous research has illustrated the significance of a key adult in supporting certain children, for example CYP with Autism Spectrum Disorder (Makin et al., 2017). Based on this study's findings, transition to secondary school would be enhanced for deaf CYP if each pupil was allocated a key adult to support them throughout the process. Finally, participants

spoke positively about ToDs. They noted they provided reassurance before transition and monitored and supported their progress regularly at the start of secondary school.

5.3.3.4 Equal Opportunities. Generally, participants in the current study discussed wanting to be treated like their peers and not singled out for their HI. However, they noted the importance of being supported by adults who were deaf aware and able to support with assistive listening devices. Two participants reported wanting sign language to be used more consistently. These findings highlight the significance of secondary schools being informed of individual's needs, receiving appropriate training and advanced preparation. This is in line with previous research suggesting transition to secondary school for CYP with SEN is affected by inadequate staff training (Foley et al., 2016). With regards to deaf CYP, research has illustrated a lack of teacher deaf awareness and preparation impacts on their attainment and communication (Eriks-Brophy et al., 2006). Increased deaf awareness amongst teachers and hearing peers increases the social inclusion of deaf CYP (Hadjikakou et al., 2008). Both these findings and the current study indicate the significance of clear communication between primary and secondary schools to ensure deaf CYP are effectively supported throughout transition.

5.3.4 Primary RQ: *What are the Experiences of deaf Children, Within a Mainstream Education Setting, During the Transition from Primary to Secondary School?*

This RQ has been addressed through the secondary RQs. Participants generally spoke positively about their experiences of secondary transition. They described feeling both anxious and excited prior to transition. Anxieties typically related to their ability to 'fit in'; the change and loss in primary school relationships; and the 'big jump' between primary school and secondary school. Excitement centred around the new opportunities that secondary school offered. Participants reported their anxieties subsided quickly, and this was attributed to the support of others and their own individual resilience. They spoke positively

about the support they had received from secondary schools in comparison to primary schools during transition. They had mixed views of how they perceived themselves and the support they wanted to receive during transition. This illustrates the importance of PCP to the transition of deaf CYP.

5.4 Critical Review of the Research

The strengths and limitations of the current research are acknowledged below.

5.4.1 *Strengths*

This research has contributed to the increasing body of literature focussed on transition to secondary school for CYP with SEN. The use of IPA enabled the elicitation of a rich and detailed understanding of participants' experiences (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). The combination of SSIs and 'The Ideal School' task enhanced the richness of the data. 'The Ideal School' task provided novel insights into participants' experiences of transition which were not always communicated verbally. It supported participants who were less confident in spoken language. It also developed rapport between the participant and the researcher, improving the quality of the data gathered. The SSIs enabled the researcher to take a flexible approach, following the participant's lead and adapting language where required. A clear audit trail was kept throughout the research process to ensure transparency, this was shared regularly with the research supervisor. A fellow TEP checked the data analysis section of this report to ensure this section was congruent with the research data.

A clear strength of this research was that it empowered deaf CYP to share their views. Historically, this group of individuals have been underrepresented in research (Banas et al., 2019). The current research sought to address this by ensuring the voices of deaf CYP were heard and also by involving them in the research process. The research was initiated by the researcher, but deaf CYP were involved in making decisions. For example, selecting data

collection methods. This ensured the research was of value to deaf CYP and adhered to the socio-political drive for person-centred practice (DfE & DfH, 2015).

5.4.2 Limitations

The first limitation of the current research relates to the transferability of the findings due to the limited number of participants included in this study. However, the aim of the current study was not to produce transferable findings. Instead the aim was to develop a rich understanding of deaf CYP's experiences of transition to secondary school, developing the evidence base and informing future research. Nevertheless, the findings from the current study are in line with findings from previous research investigating the secondary transition experiences of CYP with SEN. This suggests that the current findings are transferable to other contexts. A rich account of the research process and findings have been provided to enable others to consider the transferability of the findings.

An idiographic approach was used to present the findings of the current study to ensure the individual voices of participants were fully represented and heard. This was in line with a key finding from this study, the importance of implementing a person-centred approach to supporting deaf CYP to transition to secondary school. Nevertheless, this meant that the individual participant's stories were focused on as opposed to cross case themes. Existing literature tends to group deaf CYP with other CYP with SEN. Thus, to blend the individual's stories together again would have weakened the key points that individuals shared. However, it is acknowledged that this may have been a limitation to the current research as the findings from individuals are less likely to be transferable to the experiences of other deaf CYP. In addition, the researcher chose not to use member checking to enhance the credibility of the results. This was due to concerns related to remote data collection with deaf CYP. Following discussions with ToDs in the LA and the researcher's supervisor, it was

agreed that additional remote meetings to enable member checking to occur would be unethical.

Recruitment of participants was a further limitation. ToDs within the LA acted as gatekeepers to participants. It is possible this introduced bias into the recruitment process as ToDs may have been more likely to contact parents/guardians with whom they had a positive relationship. Thus, it is likely participants had a positive relationship with their ToD. This may have influenced their responses to questions leading to response bias. Nevertheless, the researcher aimed to minimise this by assuring participants there were no right or wrong answers and all answers were confidential.

Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, data collection had to occur remotely. There were advantages to this as participants may feel more comfortable in their own environment (Seitz, 2016) leading to more open responses (Lo Iacono et al., 2016). Nevertheless, participants in the current research may have represented a subpopulation of deaf CYP, who were able to and felt comfortable accessing remote data collection. This means the findings and conclusions drawn may not be representative of the mainstream secondary school transition experiences of all deaf CYP within the LA. Instead they reflect the lived experiences of the individuals involved, their individual schools and the local context. Further research is required to determine whether the themes identified are reflective of the experiences of deaf CYP more widely.

Due to the remote nature of this study, some participants' parents/guardians were present during data collection. This may have impacted on the results in two ways. Firstly, parental presence may have increased participants' confidence during data collection, supporting them to be more open in their responses. Thus enabling richer data to be obtained (Gardner & Randall, 2012). However, the opposite effect may have occurred. Individuals

may have withheld or altered their views due to the presence of a parent/guardian (Gardner & Randall, 2012). The researcher does not believe parental presence significantly influenced the results of this study.

Like all methodology, IPA is not without limitations. The interpretive nature of IPA and the absence of a prescriptive method means when investigating the same data, researchers are likely to identify different themes (Giorgi, 2010). Thus, the findings from the current study represent the researcher's interpretation of the CYP's interpretation of their experiences based on the information shared. To ensure transparency, the researcher has provided quotations from participants enabling the reader to reflect on the interpretations and consider alternative suggestions. The researcher aimed to take a reflexive, reflective and transparent approach to the research. She acknowledged in Appendix Q that she can never totally bracket off her preconceptions but took steps to minimise researcher bias and increase the trustworthiness of the data. This included keeping a research journal, taking regular breaks, and having a fellow TEP read through the transcripts and check the identified themes.

5.4.3 *Recommendations for Further Research*

Within the current research, it is not possible to determine which of the identified themes were unique to the transition experiences of deaf CYP as oppose to all CYP. Additional research is required involving comparison groups, such as CYP without SEN and CYP with alternative SEN. To ensure access to enough prospective participants, the researcher did not stipulate the degree of HI required to participate. Future research should compare the transition experiences for CYP with differing degrees of hearing loss, as this may affect their experiences. The current research focussed solely on deaf CYP attending mainstream schools. However, it would be beneficial for future research to compare the transition experiences of deaf CYP transitioning to mainstream schools and specialist provisions. It would also be beneficial to consider why some parents/guardians select a

mainstream school for their child over a specialist provision and whether this has an impact on the child's experiences.

The current study focussed on the transition experiences of deaf CYP from their perspective. It is acknowledged due to the research timeframe and limited number of prospective participants available; some participants had transitioned to secondary school two years previous. It is likely some of them had difficulties remembering specific details about their transition. Thus, to gain a deeper understanding of the transition experiences and support provided to deaf CYP, it would be beneficial to follow deaf students throughout secondary transition, interviewing them at various timepoints along their journey. It would also be useful to collect the views of teachers and parents/guardians, enabling data triangulation. This would provide further information about the support provided for deaf CYP during transition, potentially generating additional recommendations for schools.

5.5 Dissemination of the Findings

To ensure the voices of the CYP involved in the current study are truly heard, dissemination of the research findings was considered critical. It is hoped the co-researchers will be involved in this process.

All participants will receive a letter summarising the main findings from this research. A link will be included to enable participants to access the final thesis if they wish. A leaflet will be prepared outlining the key findings and implications for practice which will be shared with all schools within the participating LA. The researcher will deliver a presentation to EPs and ToDs within the LA. This presentation will also be delivered at the University's TEP conference. The presentation will outline the research, discuss key findings and implications for school and EP practice. The researcher hopes to share the findings within her new LA in

September 2021. It is hoped the current research will be published in the future and presented at relevant conferences, so the findings are available to wider audiences.

5.6 Implications of the Findings for External and Internal Support

The current research has highlighted several important implications for the practice of both EPs and other stakeholders. It is clear from this research, that participants appreciated the opportunity to have their voices heard. Yet, the findings suggest deaf CYP are rarely consulted and involved in planning or evaluating the support they receive. Participants noted they did not always receive the support they felt they needed but were unable to communicate this to school staff. This aligns with previous research which illustrates teachers are often unaware of the perceptions of deaf CYP (Ridsdale & Thompson, 2002). This emphasises that school staff must provide opportunities to listen to deaf CYP and involve them in support planning. Achieving this would involve consideration of appropriate ways to support individuals, for example some CYP may be more able to communicate openly through writing or drawing. Participants had different views about the support they would have liked to have received during their transition. Both Ruth and Daniel emphasised they did not want to be singled out due to their HI, whereas Lottie wanted additional support to help her gain the same opportunities as her peers. This suggests a ‘one size fits all’ approach to supporting deaf CYP is inappropriate. Instead a person-centred approach is required. The use of PCRs would support the development of deaf CYP’s self-advocacy skills (White & Rae, 2016).

The CYP in the current study reported benefitting from speaking to other deaf CYP about their experiences of transition, as this helped them to feel connected. There is rarely more than one deaf child in a class or even in a school (Antia et al., 2009) and therefore it can be difficult for deaf CYP to form relationships with other deaf individuals. It is possible that ToDs could support with this, perhaps by developing a mentoring scheme. As part of the transition support, ToDs could consider running a session for deaf CYP in Year Six in which

older deaf students share their transition experiences. Supporting opportunities for communication between deaf CYP could also be a role for deaf support services such as local groups affiliated with the NDCS.

A key finding in the current study was the significance of peer and adult support for deaf CYP throughout transition. Participants described feeling anxious about the change and loss of relationships they experienced when they left primary school. They also expressed concerns about being able to 'fit in' at their new school and make friends. They described benefitting from adult led activities to support the development of friendships. These findings highlight key implications for school staff. Firstly, primary school staff need to consider ways to support deaf CYP to prepare for changes to their friendships. This could include supporting deaf CYP to consider ways to stay in touch with primary school friends; supporting them to develop social skills where appropriate; and providing opportunities to mark the ending of primary school. Secondly, secondary school staff need to be aware of the importance of peer support and belonging for deaf CYP during transition. They should provide opportunities to support friendship development; be observant to difficulties that deaf CYP experience and intervene sensitively and positively where needed. Some deaf CYP may benefit from the allocation of a key adult from their secondary school. Time would need to be provided to enable a trusting relationship to be developed, but this is likely to support the wellbeing of deaf CYP across transition. Schools must provide a deaf aware environment which is nurturing and welcoming for all CYP.

Familiarity, consistency, and continuity were important for participants in the current study. They benefitted from opportunities to visit their new school, meet key staff members, and begin to develop relationships with peers. It is likely deaf CYP benefit from additional visits to their secondary school in comparison to other CYP and therefore schools should consider how to facilitate this. Primary schools must be aware of visit dates as Ruth described

missing her induction day due to a primary school trip which she reported made her feel more nervous about starting secondary school. As stated above, some deaf CYP may benefit from the allocation of a key adult from secondary school who could visit them multiple times at primary school prior to transition. Similarly, a transition book containing key information and pictures of the school and key people is likely to be helpful.

Participants reported benefitting from having the same ToD at secondary school to whom they had worked with at primary school. This meant they already had a relationship enabling them to feel more supported. Where possible, ToDs should remain constant between primary school and secondary school. Participants noted benefitting from increased visits from their ToD to support them to settle into secondary school and provide advice and guidance where needed. It is important deaf CYP are involved in the planning of this and are aware of when the number of visits will change.

Finally, the importance of primary schools and secondary schools collaborating and sharing information was highlighted. Participants reported wanting their primary schools to share key information to ensure support was already in place at the start of secondary school. They noted the importance of school staff being aware of their HI and able to support them effectively. This included being able to support with assistive listening devices. This highlights the importance of all staff being trained in deaf awareness. Participants reported experiencing a “big jump” between primary school and secondary school. They described finding the organisational demands of secondary school challenging. Again, this highlights the significance of primary schools and secondary schools working together to ensure deaf CYP are fully prepared and able to meet the expectations of secondary school staff.

5.6.1 Implications for EP Practice

EPs are well placed to support the primary to secondary school transition of deaf CYP through both direct and indirect work. The results from the current study suggest deaf CYP do not always feel able to share their views and be heard by school staff. EPs are well placed to encourage and train school staff to use person-centred approaches. They are also able to work with groups of CYP to develop self-advocacy skills, supporting deaf CYP to advocate for themselves. It may be beneficial for EPs to support school staff to develop systems enabling deaf CYP to provide regular feedback about their support.

The importance of friendship and belonging were key themes in the current study. Participants expressed concerns about the change and loss of primary school relationships and their ability to develop new friendships. EPs can use therapeutic skills to work with individuals or small groups to develop social skills, build self-esteem and provide wellbeing support. EPs can work alongside school staff to help provide interventions and develop systems, ensuring deaf CYP develop a sense of belonging and inclusion to their school. EPs can provide training to school staff, so they understand the significance of peer support and belonging to deaf CYP and how to promote this. They can support staff to develop policies and guidance related to inclusion. EPs can work with primary school staff to consider ways to support the ending of primary school for deaf CYP, helping them to manage concerns raised.

Since EPs work with both primary schools and secondary schools, they are well-positioned to support schools to develop a joined-up approach to transition. They can share current research and work systemically with schools and ToDs to develop guidance to support the transition of deaf CYP. They can highlight the importance of transition to other school services and work collaboratively with them to share ideas to ensure deaf CYP are well-supported during transition. EPs can offer joint problem-solving consultations where appropriate and support schools to develop effective parent-school relationships. They can

raise awareness of the significance of parental involvement during transition (Hanewald, 2013) and provide guidance to parents/guardians where required.

The current study illustrates the importance of person-centred practice which is aligned with the current SEN Code of Practice (DfE & DfH, 2015). It is important EPs promote this throughout their work and provide training where required.

5.7 Ethics Revisited

As outlined in Section 3.14, multiple steps were taken to safeguard participants and co-researchers within the current research. These measures were deemed sufficient. The Covid-19 Pandemic introduced an additional ethical consideration to this research, namely whether remote data collection with deaf CYP was ethical. To address this, the researcher had extensive conversations with ToDs and her research supervisor. For many deaf CYP, the Covid-19 Pandemic meant remote learning became a reality. It was decided remote data collection was ethical and appropriate at this time. The researcher was aware some CYP may have felt uncomfortable with remote data collection, she ensured they understood participation was voluntary and remained sensitive to participants' needs throughout data collection.

5.8 Researcher Reflections

(This subsection is written in the first person). The purpose of this research was to empower a group of CYP who in my opinion are often marginalised. I wanted to enable them to share their experiences and views, which I hope will influence policy and practice, improving the education experiences of deaf CYP. Unfortunately, deaf CYP encounter multiple disadvantages at school. They experience social difficulties (Stinson & Kluwin, 2011), lower levels of wellbeing to their peers (van Eldik, 2005) and poorer academic outcomes (Hamre & Pianta, 2001). As a deaf woman who has had academic success, I feel passionately that change is required to support deaf CYP to fulfil their potential.

Undoubtably, my educational experiences as a deaf individual influenced the aims and purpose of this research.

As discussed in Section 3.15, several measures were used to promote reflexivity throughout the research process. I kept a research journal to reflect upon key moments and decisions during the research. As part of this, I considered my role within the research process, for example I recorded my personal reflections of transition as a deaf individual. This raised my awareness of and minimised the influence of my own experiences and preconceptions on the findings. The impact of researcher bias was further reduced through collaborative work with co-researchers to design the data collection materials. I maintained a clear audit trail of the research process which was shared with my research supervisor. After each meeting with participants, I recorded my thoughts and reflections of the session in my research journal which I referred to during data analysis.

Throughout my research journey, I encountered challenges which will be reflected upon below.

5.8.1 Covid-19 Pandemic

Whilst recruiting the co-researchers for my research, the Covid-19 Pandemic struck altering the way people work and interact. This resulted in a period of remote working which affected and altered this research. The college who were supporting the recruitment of co-researchers could no longer help and guidelines from the University meant I could not complete face-to-face research. At first, I paused my research hoping the situation would change, and I would be able to complete it as planned. However, due to the limited timeline to complete this research, I was forced to adapt to meet the demands of the current climate. Since my research was with deaf CYP, remote data collection presented several issues and I was anxious about the impact this would have on my study. ToDs within my placement LA

reassured me most deaf CYP attending mainstream schools would be able to access remote methods of data collection.

The remote nature of data collection may have resulted in some eligible participants electing not to participate. However, my reflections suggest there were advantages to these methods. Individuals could participate in the research in their own space which I believe increased their feelings of comfort and control. I believe this allowed them to be more open in their responses, increasing the validity of the data. In contrast to the school setting, participants had increased control over their environment, enabling them to select a setting with limited background noise. Remote data collection helped to reduce potential power imbalances. Participants could leave the meeting at any time by closing their browser window. Since society was in lockdown, it was easier to arrange data collection meetings. Participants appeared keen for a break in their online studies.

Despite my initial anxieties, all participants presented as confident with the technology used in the current study. Three participants connected their assistive listening devices to their computer and seemed confident doing this. It is likely they were used to doing this to access remote education. During my first meetings with participants and co-researchers, I acknowledged the potential difficulties of remote data collection and shared information about my HI. I believe this helped participants feel comfortable and able to share any difficulties they were having. Parents/guardians were available to support with technical difficulties. I was flexible in my approach and willing to adjust to support participants, for example moving my camera to ensure a clear view of my face.

5.8.2 Power and Positioning

CYP experience unequal power-relations with adults within society (Punch, 2002). Within this research, I aimed to position CYP as experts in their experiences and allow them

to freely express their views. To support them to do this, I spent time during my initial meetings with participants developing rapport. Upon reflection perhaps a session focussed on developing a trusting relationship with each participant would have helped.

Throughout data collection, I aimed to provide an environment for participants to express their views clearly. However, whilst reflecting on my interview with Lottie, I noticed occasionally my prompts may have appeared leading, potentially influencing her responses. This led me to reflect upon the value of silence and the importance of providing participants with thinking time.

5.8.3 *Personal Learning*

The process of completing doctoral research has been equally challenging and rewarding. It has taken me on a journey of both personal and professional growth. I enjoyed meeting the CYP and listening to their stories, empowering them to share their lived experiences. I also valued the opportunity to work alongside CYP to design and develop this research. The co-researchers undoubtedly added value to this study, challenging me to consider new areas.

The difficulties I encountered along this journey have challenged me to be more flexible in my work and supported my development as a resilient practitioner. Although, I have always sought to gather the VoC throughout my work, this research experience has illustrated the power of different media to do this. The use of drawing in ‘The Ideal School’ task was invaluable in developing rapport with participants. Participants’ drawings added new information, which was either not mentioned or less spoken about during interviews. This has caused me to reflect upon my practice and consider how I can include more creative methods in my work with CYP. The importance of language was also highlighted. Whilst developing the interview schedule with the co-researchers, I reflected upon how

language is interpreted and the different meanings it can have. This helped me to realise the significance of follow up questions, to further my understanding of responses and reduce the impact of my own assumptions on CYP's views. I have also considered the power of silence and the importance of allowing CYP time to respond.

This research has challenged me to consider my position within my work. Throughout this research I endeavoured to position the CYP as experts, empowering them to talk freely about their experiences. This has led me to consider my work as a TEP, helping me to realise the significance of how I set up meetings with CYP. With adults I frequently acknowledge I am not the expert, but with CYP this is less explicit. Moving forward, I hope to further address potential power imbalances within my work, empowering CYP to share their true thoughts and feelings.

Finally, I have welcomed the opportunity to complete research in an area I am passionate about. This study has increased my appreciation for the significance of research to EP practice. The importance of the findings from the current study has made me determined to continue to engage in research. It emphasised to me the importance of research for developing and improving practice, ultimately improving outcomes for CYP. It is imperative EPs spend time engaging with current research so they can disseminate findings to school staff and the wider community.

5.9 Final Conclusions

This thesis has provided a novel contribution to research literature focussed on CYP's experiences of transition to secondary school. It has sought to empower deaf CYP to share their experiences of secondary transition, which to the researcher's knowledge is an area that has not previously been explored. This research has further empowered deaf CYP by involving them in the research process, hopefully providing them with new skills, knowledge,

and confidence. This developed a unique insight into deaf CYP's lived experiences of secondary transition and the factors they perceive to be important.

Several key findings arose from this project. Participants highlighted the significance of both peer and adult support to a successful transition. They reflected upon significant support mechanisms during transition. For example, being familiar with the new setting; experiencing consistent support; and having the opportunity to share experiences with other deaf CYP. They also noted the importance of deaf awareness and the school environment being both welcoming and acoustically supportive. Challenges included difficulties communicating with others and the increase in organisational demands. A particularly notable finding was the need for schools to implement a person-centred approach to transition planning and support, actively involving deaf CYP and listening to their views. In addition to illustrating the experiences of deaf CYP during secondary school transition, it is hoped these findings will be applied to school settings and promote positive change.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Gough's (2007) Systematic Map of Research Activity and Systematic Synthesis of Research

Evidence

Define review questions	1) What do we know about the experiences of transition to secondary school for deaf CYP? 2) What do we know about the active involvement of CYP with SEN in research investigating transition?
Outline search strategy	See Appendix B and information presented under 'Details of Systematic Search'.
Define and apply inclusion and exclusion criteria	Presented in Figure 2.1
Screen the studies (ensure the studies meet the inclusion criteria)	The studies were screened according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria outlined in Figure 2.1 and Appendix B.
Describe studies (systematic map of research and data extraction)	See Appendix C.
Appraise quality and relevance of the studies	Despite meeting the inclusion criteria, studies may not meet the relevance and quality standards for the current review. Therefore, the relevance and quality of each study was assessed. See Appendices E and F.
Synthesis and communication of the findings	A critical review of the included studies is presented for each review question.

Appendix B

Table Outlining Systematic Search – 07/05/2020

Search Terms	Limiters	Number of Results	Notes on Exclusions	Key References Found	Names of Articles
("deaf" OR "hard of hearing" OR "hearing loss" OR "hearing disorder" OR "hearing impairment" OR "d/hh" OR "special needs" OR "special educational needs" OR “additional support needs” OR “ASN” OR disabilit*) AND (“transition” OR “transfer” OR “secondary transition” OR “secondary transfer”) AND ("primary school" OR “post-primary” OR "secondary school" OR “primary-secondary" OR "high school" OR "middle school" OR "mid-school") NOT (“adulthood” OR "post secondary" OR "postsecondary" OR "post-secondary" OR "employment" OR "college")	Published within the last 20 years Peer Reviewed Journals Full Text	285	Related to a specific SEN that is not hearing impairment: 20 Not related to SEN: 7 Not related to transition: 149 Not focussed on the transition from primary to secondary school: 65 Focussed on a very specific transition programme/area of transition: 6 Not mainstream schools: 2	7	Primary to Post-primary Transitions for Students with Special Educational Needs from an Irish Context Impact of Peer and Teacher Relations on Deaf Early Adolescent’s Well-being: Comparisons Before and After a Major School Transition Students with Special Educational Needs: Transitions from Primary to Secondary School The Impact of Personal Background and School Contextual Factors on Academic Competence and Mental Health Functioning across the Primary-Secondary School Transition Intervening to Improve the Transfer to Secondary School

			<p>Not an empirical study - 20</p> <p>Not written in English: 5</p> <p>Duplicates - 4</p>		<p>High School Transition – An Intervention that Empowers Children with Special Educational Needs and Improves School Practice</p> <p>Person-centred reviews and transition: An exploration of the views of students and their parents/guardians</p> <p>Exploring the longitudinal association between interventions to support the transition to secondary school and child anxiety</p>
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Appendix C

Summary of the Articles Included in the Systematic Literature Review

The following table outlines the 11 articles relevant to this review question. The articles are ordered in terms of themes. As outlined in the literature review, the identified themes were:

- 1) The experience of transition for CYP with SEN
- 2) Influencing factors on transition outcomes for CYP with SEN
- 3) Supporting the primary to secondary school transition for CYP with SEN
- 4) Wellbeing and relationships for deaf CYP in early secondary school

Theme 1: The experience of transition for CYP with SEN

Author, date, paper title	Aim	Sample	Design	Measures & Date Analysis	Major findings	Limitations
Scanlon et al. (2016) The experiences of pupils with SEN and their parents at the stage of pre-transition from primary to post-primary school	To investigate the experiences of pupils with SEN and their parents at pre-transition from primary to post-primary school	32 participants with SEN and 42 parents of pupils with SEN	Mixed methods	Focus groups and questionnaires Quantitative data analysis – SPSS Qualitative data analysis – open coding, theoretical memo writing and constant comparisons	Pupils were most concerned about: 1) Losing the security and familiarity that their primary school provided them with. They were especially worried about secondary school teachers not showing them the understanding, care and trust that their primary school teachers and TAs had. 2) Being the youngest rather than the eldest. 3) Losing the stability of their current friendships at primary school 4) Organisation and having to be independent 5) Feeling as though they fit in 6) Not having the knowledge or academic competence to be able to access the work at secondary school. Parents were concerned about: 1) Their children regressing in terms of happiness and social integration at secondary school. 2) Secondary school teachers interpreting their children's SEN related behaviours as their children purposely causing trouble. 3) Not being given enough information It is important that secondary schools focus on ensuring that children feel secure in their new school, rather than just emphasising academic attainment.	Small sample size Conducted in Ireland Focus groups – more dominant personalities may have led discussions Social desirability bias

Author, date, paper title	Aim	Sample	Design	Measures & Data Analysis	Major findings	Limitations
Maras and Aveling (2006) Students with special educational needs: Transitions from primary to secondary school.	To consider the experiences of six young people with Statements of special educational needs prior to and following their moves from primary to secondary school.	6 young people (4 boys and 2 girls), 11 years of age	Qualitative – Case studies	Interviews focusing on the transition process with six young people (4 boys and 2 girls) with SEN and their teacher or parent(s) 3 of the young people attended mainstream schools and 3 attended specialist provisions Thematic analysis	Young people's needs and expectations of transition varied. There was a difference between schools in the efficacy and quality of support systems that were available. Recommendations emerging from the analysis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It should not be assumed that the same services will suit all young people with SEN - Continuity of support is beneficial - The existence of a special needs unit or private space for students with SEN seems to reassure both the parents and young people themselves. - Some young people with SEN will adapt alongside peers without SEN, coping with the transition to secondary school, whilst others need more structured support to make this a smooth transition. - Schools and Local Authority services assisting in the transition process need to communicate with parents and young people in advance and plan interventions tailored to individual needs and concerns. 	Small sample size – 6 participants Grouped students with SEN as a homogenous group, yet there are inter-individual differences Conducted over a decade ago Only 1 of the participants was interviewed both before and after their

						transition to secondary school.
Author, date, paper title	Aim	Sample	Design	Measures & Date Analysis	Major findings	Limitations
Dockrell and Lindsay (2007) Identifying the educational and social needs of children with specific speech and language difficulties on entry to secondary school.	To examine the ways in which parents, pupils and teachers appraise the transition prior to secondary transfer (Year 6) and during the first year of secondary school (Year 7) for a cohort of	69 children with SSLD who were matched with 2 peers from the same class (a matched typically developing peer and a matched peer with SEN)	Quantitative	In Spring of Year 6 teachers, parents and children completed interviews. All 3 cohorts completed standardised assessments of reading, decoding and numeracy. SSLD cohort completed a battery of language measures In Spring of Year 7 all 3 cohorts completed a series of	Both parents and children were concerned about the transition from primary to secondary school. This did not differ statistically across the cohorts. For the typically developing cohort, there was no statistically significant difference between the levels of concern from parents and parents' judgements of their children's concerns. For both the SSLD and SEN cohorts, parents reported more concern about the move from their perspective than from their child's. Pupils raised a number of worries in Year 6 about the transition, including: issues of bullying, harder work and the new environment, but there were no statistically significant differences between the cohorts for any of these concerns. Virtually all pupils were also looking forwards to aspects of transition. The high level of educational need for the SSLD cohort, as evidenced by their SATs results, was mirrored in the teacher's concerns. These academic concerns were found to be justified. All schools provided evidence of meeting a range of educational needs.	Small sample size. Some of the children in the SSLD sample moved into specialist provisions, decreasing the sample size further. Demand characteristics Conducted over a decade ago

Author, date, paper title	Aim	Sample	Design	Measures & Data Analysis	Major findings	Limitations
	children with a history of specific speech and language difficulties (SSLD).			standardised tests. Questionnaires were completed by form tutors, subject specialists and for SSLD and SEN cohorts the SENCO. Children and parents were interviewed again.	<p>In the interviews after moving to secondary school, many of the children reported enjoying aspects of secondary school. However, both the SSLD and SEN cohort were aware of their difficulties and more likely to report getting lost, forgetting equipment and not liking having several teachers than the typically developing cohort.</p> <p>SEN and SSLD cohort were significantly more likely to report problems with writing and reading, but not Maths.</p> <p>The parents of typically developing children generally reported that the secondary school transition had been easy, and their children were enjoying the new challenges of secondary school.</p> <p>The parents of children with SSLD and other SENs reported that their children were still experiencing challenges. They reported that the secondary school transition had been difficult for their children; children were showing decreased self-esteem and had difficulty managing the new curriculum and organisational demands required at secondary school.</p> <p>Year 7 teachers reported that the children with SSLD and SENs were having significant difficulties with academic subjects. However, their behaviour was not an issue and they had fitted in socially.</p>	

Author, date, paper title	Aim	Sample	Design	Measures & Data Analysis	Major findings	Limitations
					<p>A more systematic examination of the fine grained (evidence based) strategies put into place to meet the children's requirements is required.</p> <p>To conclude, the transition to secondary school is especially challenging for pupils with SSLD and those with additional learning needs.</p> <p>It is important that primary and secondary schools liaise about student's needs to ensure appropriate support during transition. Parents can also serve as an informed ally to support their children's development and the schools' effective practices.</p>	
Foley et al. (2016) Primary to post-primary transition for students with special educational	To investigate both student and staff attitudes towards primary to post-primary	58 sixth class students (8 with SEN) and 63 first year secondary students (9 with SEN)	Ethnographic employing a mixed methods approach	Participant observation Questionnaires Interviews 2 focus groups Thematic analysis	<p>Students with SEN found the transition to secondary school more challenging than their typically developing peers. They encountered more obstacles and showed heightened anxiety. Students with SEN were very vulnerable and more likely to be bullied.</p> <p>Children with visual, hearing and speech and language impairments also experienced a challenging transition to secondary school.</p> <p>The SENs of students positively correlated with their transition experiences. Therefore, it is vital that professionals recognise the</p>	<p>Not a longitudinal design</p> <p>Only represents the practices of a small cohort of</p>

Author, date, paper title	Aim	Sample	Design	Measures & Data Analysis	Major findings	Limitations
needs from an Irish context.	transitions with a specific focus on those with SEN.			Perspectives of key stakeholders gained through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews.	<p>importance of providing children with SEN support during transition.</p> <p>There are many complex factors which impact the transition from primary to secondary school.</p> <p>A big problem during transition to secondary school for children with SEN is bullying.</p>	<p>schools, so cannot be generalised</p> <p>Conducted in Ireland</p>

Theme 2: Influencing factors on transition outcomes for CYP with SEN

Author, date, paper title	Aim	Sample	Design	Measures & Date Analysis	Major findings	Limitations
McCoy et al. (2020) Secondary school transition for students with special educational needs in Ireland	To consider the extent to which individual child and family characteristics and their social and academic experiences in school at age 9 influence their experience of transitioning to secondary school	7423 young people and their families	Longitudinal – quantitative	Transition difficulties scale completed by primary caregivers Strengths and difficulties questionnaire Information about SEN status and family characteristics Pianta Parent-Child Relationship Scale on conflict and closeness Child reported Piers-Harris Self-Concept Scale	Young people with disabilities at age 9 were far more likely to experience poor transitions compared to young people with no disability. Those with general learning difficulties and intellectual disabilities are 3.1 times more likely and those with specific learning difficulties were 2.6 times more likely to have poor transition when compared with those with no disability. Girls and those from economically vulnerable families are more likely to be reported as having a poor transition Academic ability at age 9 also appears to influence the type of transition, with young people who had a poor reading score at age 9 twice as likely to experience poor transition as the top performing group. Young people from one parent families and those whose parents are cohabiting are more likely to experience a negative transition than those in different family contexts. Children who experienced high levels of maternal conflict were more likely to experience a negative transition. Students with more positive teacher relations at age 13 were less likely to fall into the negative transition group	Based on those who successfully made the transition to a mainstream secondary school and therefore excludes those who stayed in primary school or moved to a special school. Did not assess school level responses and support structures at a local level. Conducted in Ireland – different context.

				<p>Drumcondra achievement tests (reading)</p> <p>Two scales to capture positive and negative dimensions of student's relations with teachers, developed from study by Hannan et al., (1996)</p> <p>Analysis – descriptive and multivariate statistical approaches undertaken in SPSS.</p>	<p>Results highlight the importance of transition supports and relationships pre-and post- the transition period.</p> <p>Both primary and secondary schools have a key role to play in creating more positive transition experiences, particularly for young people at risk.</p> <p>Suggests the need for more formalised links between primary and secondary sectors, particularly in relation to academic and social supports for students with SEN.</p> <p>Importance of the voice of the child.</p>	
Author, date, paper title	Aim	Sample	Design	Measures & Date Analysis	Major findings	Limitations
Vaz et al. (2014)	To explore and compare perceived academic	197 typically developing	Longitudinal	Questionnaires completed by students and parents at both	Students with disabilities reported significantly lower academic competence than their typically developing counterparts at both time 1 and time 2. However at time 2 the magnitude of the difference had reduced.	Students were from Perth metropolitan area and major city centres across WA,

The impact of personal background and school contextual factors on academic competence and mental health functioning across the primary-secondary school transition	competence and mental health functioning of students with and without disability, six months before and six months after transition to secondary school.	students and 69 students with a disability	Quantitative	<p>time 1 (term 3 and 4 of Year 6) and time 2 (6 months after admission to secondary school) .</p> <p>Items from the scholastic competence domain of the Self Perception Profile for Adolescents were used to measure academic competence</p> <p>The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire was used to measure mental health functioning</p> <p>Family demographics and school contextual characteristics</p>	<p>At time 1, boys and students with disabilities had lower scores for mental health functioning than girls and students without disabilities.</p> <p>At time 2, there was no difference in the mental health functioning of girls and boys. The students with disabilities had significantly lower mental health functioning scores.</p> <p>Importance of primary and secondary schools being equally sensitive and responsive to the academic competence and mental health functioning needs of boys and girls.</p>	<p>did not involve students from other areas in Australia.</p> <p>Conducted in Australia</p> <p>Due to the criteria, some students with disabilities may have been excluded.</p> <p>Did not account for the confounding effect of disability severity and comorbidity status on academic competence and mental health functioning.</p> <p>Academic competence was only evaluated by students – could have led to social desirability.</p>
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				<p>were also collected.</p> <p>Hierarchical linear regression modelling.</p>		<p>Parents reported children's mental health functioning, but children may have been able to provide a better insight.</p> <p>Students from low SES households were underrepresented.</p> <p>The two-point longitudinal design did not allow for longer term effects of transition to be studied.</p>
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Theme 3: Supporting the primary to secondary school transition for CYP with SEN

Author, date, paper title	Aim	Sample	Design	Measures & Date Analysis	Major findings	Limitations
Bunn et al. (2017) High school transition – an intervention that empowers children with special educational needs and improves school practice.	To discuss the process and results of a junior school initiative, to ensure that vulnerable pupils in the school experienced a successful transition to high school	Focus group of 4 Year 7 pupils Focus group of 6 Year 6 pupils	Mixed methods	2 focus groups focussed on potential issues surrounding transition to secondary school for pupils with SEN, and what could help with these issues. New School booklet and workshop delivery Evaluation – interviews and rating scales	Themes identified: Feelings – feelings about ‘change’ (change in environment, peers and learning demands) and feelings about ‘being different’ (due to internal concerns and external misconceptions) Help with transition – what helped the pupils before Year 7 (having a good support network, having help with the school layout and having active support from their primary school); what helped them during Year 7 (allowing time to experience new environment; discovering benefits of high school); what helped them during both of these time periods (outside support). Pupils found using tablets to research their school and visiting their school to be the most helpful aspects of the workshops.	Small sample size No follow up – to see the effect on the transition process Children may have responded to demand characteristics.

Author, date, paper title	Aim	Sample	Design	Measures & Date Analysis	Major findings	Limitations
Neal et al. (2016) Exploring the longitudinal association between interventions to support the transition to secondary school and child anxiety	To examine the extent to which children's exposure to transition strategies, categorised into cognitive, behavioural and systemic approaches, was associated with self-reported anxiety across the transition period. They also considered whether the effects differed for children with and without SEN and the importance of SEN specific strategies.	532 typically developing children, 80 children with SEN, 9 teachers	Quantitative Longitudinal	Data was collected over 2 phases (May of Year 6 and November of Year 7) Phase 1: Children completed postal questionnaires which included measures of school and generalised anxiety. The children's primary school teachers also completed questionnaires asking them about the strategies employed to support transition.	Students with SEN had higher school and generalised anxiety scores than typically developing children at time 1 and 2. On average children were exposed to three cognitive strategies, four behavioural strategies and three systemic strategies. The most commonly used strategies included: giving children additional responsibility in Year 6 and discussing transition concerns as a whole class. Drama workshops and parent support groups were used least. Systemic strategies, e.g. bridging units were associated with lower school anxiety amongst typically developing children and somewhat higher school anxiety amongst children with SEN. Children with SEN require a personalised approach to support transition tailored to their needs.	Given the timing of the data collection, it is likely that a number of transition strategies had already been implemented prior to the children first completing measures of anxiety. Therefore, children's anxiety may have already been influenced by the intervention in place, so the size of the associations may have been underestimated. Naturalistic design – schools may not have maintained an exclusive focus on anxiety or drawn upon psychological theory regarding therapeutic anxiety intervention.

				<p>Phase 2: Children completed the Primary Intervention Strategy Questionnaire. Postal questionnaires were also sent to parents. Primary school teachers also completed questionnaires about the intervention strategies used; they did this for their whole class and individual pupils in the study. They also completed an additional SEN Transition Strategy Questionnaire to indicate if they</p>		<p>Delivery of approaches may have been inconsistent. Additional factors such as time and effort spent on the strategy implementation may have influenced the findings.</p> <p>Limited data was provided about SEN type – grouped children with SEN as a homogenous group.</p> <p>Did not focus on all aspects of transition – just anxiety.</p>
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				had used any SEN specific strategies		
Author, date, paper title	Aim	Sample	Design	Measures & Data Analysis	Major findings	Limitations
White & Rae (2016) Person-centred reviews and transition: An exploration of the views of students and their parents/carers	To investigate participants' views of the person-centred review process. Focus: Did CYP and their parents feel listened to? Did CYP's knowledge about their learning, feelings of motivation, positivity towards school and locus of control change following the person-centred review?	16 mainstreamed CYP with SEN and their parents/guardians	Mixed methods	Semi-structured interviews to explore CYP and their parent's/carer's experiences of the person-centred review. CYP were interviewed before and after the review, parents were interviewed after. Locus of control scale Scaling questions Thematic analysis	Themes from parent/carer interviews: Person-centred review was an emotional process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - YP and parents felt apprehensive before - Process was reassuring - Meeting was relaxed and informal - Some parts were daunting - Transition is an emotional process. The role of the facilitator: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chaired meeting - Reassuring - Influenced discussions - Neutral position allowed difficult questions to be asked. Organised nature of review was containing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facilitators organised meeting - Points for discussion covered efficiently - Well-structured - Preparation is important Information was shared: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parents found review informative - Information was shared clearly, openly and honestly - Child gained beneficial information 	Researcher did not attend review meetings, so fidelity to espoused person-centred review model was not monitored. Did the data reflect the participants' views of the person-centred review or the skills of the facilitator? Data was collected one week after review. It would be interesting to investigate the longer-term outcomes. Did not include participants with speech and language difficulties or those

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New school were given rich picture of child which was viewed as important. <p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Constructive - Parents felt reassured the outcomes will happen <p>Collaborative process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Different perspectives were useful - Parents felt involved and of equal positioning - Relationships are important - Shared understanding and agreement <p>How child-centredness of review impacted on young person:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Child-friendly aspects support engagement of young person - Meeting was child focussed - Child had the opportunity to share their views - Involvement of child had a positive impact on them. <p>Themes from CYP's interviews:</p> <p>YP liked gaining information through review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Liked hearing about secondary school and support. <p>YP liked having the opportunity to be heard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wanted to share views - YP expect to share views in review - Felt they were heard <p>Child-friendliness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Daunting process for CYP - Lack of preparation 	<p>who speak English as an additional language.</p> <p>Views of girls, fathers and ethnic minority groups were underrepresented.</p> <p>Possible influence of the researcher on findings?</p> <p>Possible influence of demand characteristics?</p> <p>Some participants found the locus of control scale difficult to understand and too long.</p> <p>Scaling questions only explored constructs at a simplistic level.</p>
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					<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Generally, child-friendly <p>Positive experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- YP were generally positive- Reassuring process- Felt important <p>The CYP's locus of control or feeling towards their education did not change following the person-centred review.</p>	
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Theme 4: Wellbeing and relationships for deaf CYP in early secondary school

Author, date, paper title	Aim	Sample	Design	Definition of Deaf Used	Measures & Date Analysis	Major findings	Limitations
Wolters et al. (2012) Impact of peer and teacher relations on deaf and early adolescents' well-being: Comparison s before and after a major school transition	To investigate how deaf children's classroom peer and teacher relationships are associated with wellbeing in school and what the role of school transition is.	Study 1 – 759 grade 6 students (672 hearing, 87 deaf) 840 grade 7 students (736 hearing, 104 deaf) Study 2 – subgroup from study 1 were studied longitudinally (39 hearing students)	Quantitative	Hard of hearing: 25-80 dB hearing loss in the better unaided ear; Deaf: >80dB hearing loss in the better unaided ear Deaf is used to refer to both deaf and hard of hearing.	Peer nomination and rating questionnaires	The predictors of wellbeing in Grade 6 for mainstream deaf children include: acceptance, teacher relationship and popularity. In Grade 7 the main wellbeing predictors were popularity and acceptance. Deaf children in specialist provisions valued their student-teacher relationships and this predicted their wellbeing. In Grade 7 this was still important but so was acceptance. Implications: Hearing children in mainstream schools experienced stable wellbeing during the transition to secondary school; however, this was not the case for deaf children. The wellbeing of deaf girls in mainstream education decreased, although it did increase for deaf boys. This was the opposite for children in specialist provisions. It is important that schools support deaf young people to form friendships during early secondary school.	Did not account for qualitative differences between deaf children, such as differences in oral skills and hearing loss. Small sample in study 2 Peer nomination Conducted in the Netherlands

		and 59 deaf)				Staff must pay attention to the transition experiences of deaf young people and provide support where needed.	
Author, date, paper title	Aim	Sample	Design	Definition of Deaf Used	Measures & Data Analysis	Major findings	Limitations
Wolters et al. (2014) Social adjustment of deaf early adolescents at the start of secondary school	<p>To investigate whether deaf adolescents' peer status and social behaviour differs from their hearing classmates, but also compared peers in special education settings, and considered whether gender plays a role.</p> <p>To identify behaviours that explain these differences and</p>	74 deaf and 271 hearing adolescents from Grade 7 and Grade 8	Quantitative	Hard of hearing: moderate to severe hearing loss, 25 to 80 dB hearing loss in the better unaided ear, pure tone average; deaf > 80 dB hearing loss in the better unaided ear.	Peer nominations and ratings of peer status and behaviour (questionnaire) Background information from parents/teachers	<p>The behaviours of deaf young people at the start of secondary school strongly predicted their peer status the following year.</p> <p>In general, deaf children in mainstream education were less popular than their classmates.</p> <p>Deaf children are less accepted in mainstream schools. Generally, boys are more accepted than girls.</p> <p>Deaf children who attend specialist provisions tend to show more antisocial and withdrawn behaviours than their deaf peers in mainstream schools.</p> <p>The behaviours of deaf children at the start of secondary school are strongly associated with their long-term peer status.</p>	<p>The characteristics of deaf participants in specialist provisions differed somewhat from the mainstream group</p> <p>Conducted in the Netherlands</p> <p>Only considered peer relationships within the classroom</p>

	whether educational setting and gender are additional explaining factors.			Deaf is used to refer to both deaf and hard of hearing.			
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Appendix D

Standard Quality Assessment Criteria for Evaluating Primary Research from a Variety of Fields (Kmet et al., 2004)

Checklist for assessing the quality of quantitative studies:

Criteria	YES (2)	PARTIAL (1)	NO (0)	N/A
1 Question / objective sufficiently described?				
2 Study design evident and appropriate?				
3 Method of subject/comparison group selection or source of information/input variables described and appropriate?				
4 Subject (and comparison group, if applicable) characteristics sufficiently described?				
5 If interventional and random allocation was possible, was it described?				
6 If interventional and blinding of investigators was possible, was it reported?				
7 If interventional and blinding of subjects was possible, was it reported?				
8 Outcome and (if applicable) exposure measure(s) well defined and robust to measurement / misclassification bias? Means of assessment reported?				
9 Sample size appropriate?				
10 Analytic methods described/justified and appropriate?				
11 Some estimate of variance is reported for the main results?				
12 Controlled for confounding?				
13 Results reported in sufficient detail?				
14 Conclusions supported by the results?				

Checklist for assessing the quality of qualitative studies:

Criteria	YES (2)	PARTIAL (1)	NO (0)
1 Question / objective sufficiently described?			
2 Study design evident and appropriate?			
3 Context for the study clear?			
4 Connection to a theoretical framework / wider body of knowledge?			
5 Sampling strategy described, relevant and justified?			
6 Data collection methods clearly described and systematic?			
7 Data analysis clearly described and systematic?			
8 Use of verification procedure(s) to establish credibility?			
9 Conclusions supported by the results?			
10 Reflexivity of the account?			

Appendix E

Standard Quality Assessment Ratings for the 11 Studies Relevant to Literature Review Question.

Key:

2 = Yes

1 = Partial

0 = No

Mixed methods studies were assessed on both the quantitative and qualitative criteria and these studies are highlighted in red.

Quantitative Criteria:

	Criteria Number													
Study Author	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Scanlon et al. (2016)	2	2	1	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	1	1	0	N/A	2	2
Dockrell & Lindsay (2007)	1	2	2	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	1	2	2	2	2	2

Foley et al. (2016)	2	2	1	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	1	1	0	N/A	1	2
McCoy et al. (2020)	2	2	2	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	2	1	2	2	2	2
Vaz et al. (2014)	2	2	2	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	2	2	2	0	2	2
Bunn et al. (2017)	1	2	2	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	1	1	1	N/A	2	2
Neal et al. (2016)	2	2	1	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	1	2	2	N/A	2	2
White & Rae (2016)	2	2	2	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	1	2	0	0	1	2
Wolters et al. (2012)	2	2	1	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	2	2	2	N/A	2	2
Wolters et al. (2014)	2	2	1	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	2	2	2	1	2	2

Qualitative Criteria:

	Criteria Number									
Study Author	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Scanlon et al. (2016)	2	2	2	1	2	1	2	0	2	0
Maras & Aveling (2006)	2	2	2	2	0	2	0	0	1	0
Foley et al. (2016)	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	0	1	0
Bunn et al. (2017)	1	2	2	1	2	1	2	0	2	0
White & Rae (2016)	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0

Appendix F

Table of WoE Judgements for the Studies Identified for the Literature Review Question

Study (author and date)	A: Quality of Execution ('transparency', 'accuracy', 'accessibility' and 'specificity')	B: Methodological Relevance ('purposivity')	C: Relevance of Topic ('utility' and 'propriety')	Overall weight of evidence
Scanlon et al. (2016)	Medium	Medium-High	Medium	Medium
Mara & Aveling (2006)	Low-Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
Dockrell & Lindsay (2007)	Medium-High	Medium	Medium	Medium
Foley et al. (2016)	Low-Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
McCoy et al. (2020)	High	Low-Medium	Medium	Medium
Vaz et al. (2014)	Medium	Low-Medium	Medium	Medium
Bunn et al. (2017)	Low-Medium	Low-Medium	Low-Medium	Low-Medium
Neal et al. (2016)	Medium	Low-Medium	Medium	Medium
White & Rae (2016)	Medium	Low-Medium	Low-Medium	Low-Medium
Wolters et al. (2012)	Medium-High	Medium	High	Medium-High
Wolters et al. (2014)	Medium-High	Medium	High	Medium-High

Appendix G

Detailed WoE Judgements for the Studies Identified for the Literature Review Question

Theme 1: The experience of transition for CYP with SEN

Study	Weight of Evidence A: Generic on quality of execution of study	Weight of Evidence B: Review specific on appropriateness of method	Weight of Evidence C: Review specific on focus/approach of study to review question
Scanlon et al. (2016)	<p>Transparency:</p> <p>Clear aim to investigate the experiences of pupils with SEN and their parents at pre-transition from primary to post-primary school.</p> <p>Clearly describes the sampling method and participants included in the research.</p> <p>Does not state how many questionnaires were returned, just says the majority.</p> <p>Outlines the guiding themes for each of the focus groups.</p> <p>The data analysis process is clearly described for qualitative data, but less clear for the quantitative data.</p> <p>Includes quotes to support each theme.</p>	<p>Purposivity:</p> <p>The qualitative part of the study allowed for rich data to be generated which was well supported by quotes.</p> <p>Sought the views of young people.</p> <p>The research design met the aims of the study.</p>	<p>Utility:</p> <p>This study grouped young people with SEN as a homogenous group; however, it did include the views of individuals with hearing impairments and therefore does consider the experiences of transition to secondary school for deaf young people.</p>
	Accuracy:		

	<p>Thorough analysis of qualitative data, including the use of quotes to support the themes identified. The findings are also in line with conclusions from previous studies.</p> <p>Copies of the questionnaires were not included.</p> <p>Triangulation of data from different sources.</p>		
	<p>Accessibility:</p> <p>The paper was accessible.</p>		<p>Propriety:</p> <p>This study follows ethics protocol.</p>
	<p>Specificity:</p> <p>The sample included young people with SEN. Although it originally broke down the type of SEN each young person had, it then grouped their responses treating young people with SEN as a homogenous group.</p> <p>Possibly some evidence of the use of reflexivity within the qualitative data analysis, although this is only alluded to and not explicitly described.</p> <p>The study was conducted in Ireland and thus the findings may not be representative of the students with SEN in England.</p> <p>The research only focussed on pupils with SEN and their parents' experiences pre-transition, it does not look at how their perceptions compared with the reality after transition.</p>		

	Some triangulation – data was collected from both parents and young people.		
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Study	Weight of Evidence A: Generic on quality of execution of study	Weight of Evidence B: Review specific on appropriateness of method	Weight of Evidence C: Review specific on focus/approach of study to review question
Maras & Aveling (2006)	<p>Transparency:</p> <p>The rationale for the study is clearly stated and the objectives of the study outlined.</p> <p>Information is provided about the participants; however, it is not clear how these individuals were recruited.</p> <p>The interview schedule is provided, and the methodology is clear.</p> <p>The data analysis method is not clearly stated.</p> <p>Accuracy:</p> <p>The participant's parent(s) or teacher was present during the interview, which may have impacted on the participant's responses.</p>	<p>Purposivity:</p> <p>The qualitative design helps to generate rich data and allows the young people to explore their experiences of transition.</p> <p>This study sought the views of young people.</p> <p>The design does meet the aims of the research; however, the sample size is very small limiting generalisability of the findings.</p>	<p>Utility:</p> <p>This study explores the experiences of secondary school transition for young people with SEN and therefore is relevant to the current research.</p> <p>However, it groups young people with SEN as a homogenous group and therefore is not specifically focussed on deaf young people.</p>

	<p>The themes identified are not evidenced with direct quotations from the participants; however, the write up does make reference to the suggestions of individual participants (anonymised).</p> <p>There is some triangulation, although this is limited. At the end of the interviews, the teacher/parent/guardian was given the opportunity to add comments they felt were relevant.</p> <p>The participants responses may have been impacted on by demand characteristics.</p> <p>Only 6 young people were involved in this study, limiting the generalisability of the finding.</p>		
	<p>Accessibility:</p> <p>This paper is accessible and easy to read and understand.</p>		<p>Propriety:</p>
	<p>Specificity:</p> <p>Clear justification for a qualitative design.</p> <p>Young people's views were gathered using semi-structured interviews.</p> <p>Only one of the participants was interviewed both before and after the transition process.</p>		<p>This study appears to follow ethical protocols. It refers to the fact that informed consent was gained from both participants and their parents/guardians. The participant's anonymity is protected.</p>

	<p>This paper grouped students with SEN as a homogenous group, yet there are interindividual differences.</p> <p>The sample size is small and thus not representative.</p> <p>There is no evidence of reflexivity.</p>		
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Study	Weight of Evidence A: Generic on quality of execution of study	Weight of Evidence B: Review specific on appropriateness of method	Weight of Evidence C: Review specific on focus/approach of study to review question
Dockrell & Lindsay (2007)	<p>Transparency:</p> <p>The rationale for the study is clearly stated and the aims alluded to, although these are not made explicit.</p> <p>The paper explains how the participants were recruited and provides information about the sample size and participant characteristics, ensuring participants' identities are kept anonymous.</p> <p>The method is described adequately, providing clear information about the measures used.</p> <p>Analytic methods are described and appear to be appropriate to the research.</p> <p>Accuracy:</p>	<p>Purposivity:</p> <p>The research design was appropriate to the aims of the study.</p> <p>A coding scale for the open-ended questions was used which may have limited the richness and depth of the data collected during the interviews.</p> <p>Triangulation of data from parents/guardians, young people and educational professionals</p>	<p>Utility:</p> <p>Although this paper is not focussed on the transition of deaf young people to secondary school, it does include both a cohort of children with specific speech and language difficulties and children with special educational needs (no history of specific language problems). Given that having a hearing loss can lead to communication difficulties, this paper is fit for</p>

	<p>The measures used are predominantly standardised assessment tools which have gone through stringent development processes, for example British Ability Scales II (one of the measures used) has been found to demonstrate construct validity as a measure of cognitive ability and high test-retest reliability (Elliott et al., 1997).</p> <p>Copies of the questionnaires and interview proforma are available from the authors upon request.</p> <p>The analytic methods appear to be appropriate to the method and estimates of variance are reported. It is however possible that participants may have responded to demand characteristics whilst completing the questionnaires/interviews.</p> <p>Two comparison children from the same class were identified to disaggregate factors relating to change of school, special educational needs generally and specific language difficulties. This thus increases the validity of the findings.</p>	<p>helps to provide a holistic picture.</p>	<p>use within the current literature review.</p>
	<p>Accessibility:</p> <p>The paper is accessible, although the volume of data in the results section did take some time to decipher.</p>		<p>Propriety:</p> <p>Ethical considerations are not explicitly discussed; however, all data is anonymised.</p>
	<p>Specificity:</p> <p>This was a longitudinal study; however. some of the young people in the cohort for children with specific speech and language difficulties</p>		

	<p>transitioned to a specialist provision and therefore were not included in all the analysis.</p> <p>Data was collected pre- and post-transition.</p> <p>Participants were matched to a typically developing peer and another peer with special educational needs but no history of specific language problems to allow for comparison of experiences.</p> <p>There were significantly less girls within the sample in comparison to boys, which may limit the generalisability of the results.</p> <p>Data was triangulated: CYP, parents/guardians, educational professionals.</p> <p>The content of the questionnaires was determined by previous problems identified in the literature and strengths identified by parents in Year 3.</p>		
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Study	Weight of Evidence A: Generic on quality of execution of study	Weight of Evidence B: Review specific on appropriateness of method	Weight of Evidence C: Review specific on focus/approach of study to review question
Foley et al. (2016)	<p>Transparency:</p> <p>Clear aim of the research.</p>	<p>Purposivity:</p> <p>Both qualitative and quantitative data was included. The</p>	<p>Utility:</p> <p>This study does not specifically focus on students with a hearing</p>

	<p>Provides information about the sampling method (convenience sampling for questionnaires and purposive sampling for focus groups) and some information about the demographics of the participants.</p> <p>Questionnaire is not provided, although the topics included are outlined.</p> <p>The topics discussed in the focus groups are included.</p> <p>Briefly outlines the analysis procedures – thematic analysis.</p> <p>Some quotes were included from the focus groups.</p> <p>Does not discuss the methods used for quantitative analysis.</p>	<p>qualitative methodology enabled the researcher to examine the perceptions of students and key stakeholders, rather than just the outcomes.</p> <p>Triangulation of the data provides a more holistic picture.</p> <p>The sample size was relatively small and the students with SEN were grouped as a homogenous group.</p>	<p>loss but does investigate the primary to post-primary transition with particular reference to students with SEN and how their perceptions differ from students in the regular cohort. Therefore, it is relevant to this review question.</p>
	<p>Accuracy:</p> <p>Does not use the same group of participants, both pre- transition and post-transition.</p> <p>The sample size is relatively small and only included a small cohort of schools in Ireland, limiting the generalisability of the findings.</p> <p>Includes some quotes for the thematic analysis.</p> <p>Some triangulation occurred: views were sought from students and key stakeholders involved in the transition process.</p>		

	Thorough analysis of the qualitative data occurred, allowing the researchers to identify factors that influence the transition process from primary to post-primary school.		
	<p>Accessibility:</p> <p>The paper was understandable.</p>		<p>Propriety:</p>
	<p>Specificity:</p> <p>The research was not longitudinal and instead 2 different groups of participants were used at the pre transition and post transition phases.</p> <p>Some triangulation occurred: views were sought from students and key stakeholders involved in the transition process.</p> <p>The research literature on transition was drawn upon to decide the questions to be included in the questionnaires. Focus group questions were also derived from the literature.</p> <p>The sample size is relatively small and only included a small cohort of schools in Ireland, limiting the generalisability of the findings.</p> <p>There was no evidence of reflexivity.</p>		<p>Anonymity was guaranteed for all respondents; consent was gained from participants and the research conformed to the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures. Some schools required ethical applications to school-based ethics boards and in these cases, ethical approval was granted before the research began.</p>

Theme 2: Influencing factors on transition outcomes for CYP with SEN

Study	Weight of Evidence: Generic on quality of execution of study	Weight of Evidence B: Review specific on appropriateness of method	Weight of Evidence C: Review specific on focus/approach of study to review question
McCoy et al. (2020)	<p>Transparency:</p> <p>Research questions are clearly set out and derived from the literature.</p> <p>The sampling strategy is clearly described.</p> <p>Clearly describes the measures chosen providing justifications for these choices.</p> <p>Openly discussed limitations of the study/measures used etc.</p> <p>Outlines conceptual approach.</p> <p>Data analytic methods are explained.</p>	<p>Purposivity:</p> <p>Large, representative sample.</p> <p>The design of this study was appropriate to the aims.</p> <p>Qualitative data would have added to the richness of the findings but given the large sample size this would have been very challenging!</p>	<p>Utility:</p> <p>This study looked specifically at the impact of type of disability on transition experiences. Children with a hearing impairment were included in the study, although they were grouped with children who had physical disabilities.</p> <p>The study provides a detailed analysis of the factors that impact on secondary school transition for children.</p> <p>Despite being a quantitative study, it is relevant to the review question as it provided information about the impact of disability on transition.</p>
	<p>Accuracy:</p> <p>The Transition Difficulties Scale is used, which the authors acknowledge is of lower reliability than they would have liked; however, enabled them to capture multiple dimensions of the transition process for the large cohort.</p> <p>Use of Piers-Harris Self-Concept Scale which has previously been used in a wide range of setting.</p>		

	<p>Large sample size</p> <p>Thorough analysis of data.</p> <p>Some triangulation was used, for example disability was reported by teachers, parents and the use of the Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire.</p>		
	<p>Accessibility:</p> <p>The paper is accessible. The findings section is vast, but clearly laid out.</p>		<p>Propriety:</p>
	<p>Specificity:</p> <p>Longitudinal study.</p> <p>Large sample size.</p> <p>The young people's SEN status was divided into 5 categories: general learning; specific learning; emotional/behavioural/ physical disability (including visual, hearing or speech impairment); other. Thus, young people with SEN were not seen as a homogenous group.</p> <p>Included information from both pre- and post-transition.</p> <p>The sample was drawn from 910 schools across Ireland, so was not specific to 1 school. Although given that the research occurred in</p>		<p>Does not explicitly discuss ethical approval; however, it does appear to comply to ethical standards.</p>

	<p>Ireland, it may not be representative of the experiences of young people in the English education system.</p> <p>Of the original sample, 87.7% of young people were involved in the post transition data collection. To account for the attrition, the data was reweighted to ensure that they were representative of the population of young people who were residents in Ireland at 9 years of age and still living there at 13 years of age.</p>		

Study	Weight of Evidence A: Generic on quality of execution of study	Weight of Evidence B: Review specific on appropriateness of method	Weight of Evidence C: Review specific on focus/approach of study to review question
Vaz et al. (2014)	<p>Transparency:</p> <p>Clear aims and objectives are outlined.</p> <p>Transparent about method, power calculation, data collection instruments, data management and data analysis.</p> <p>Detailed information is provided about the participant's demographics.</p> <p>Additional information about the schooling system where the study was conducted was included as an Appendix.</p> <p>Accuracy:</p>	<p>Purposivity:</p> <p>The design meets the aims of the study, although it would have been beneficial for the data to have been further analysed based on type of disability as well</p> <p>70% of the schools declined to take part, which may have affected the validity of the findings.</p>	<p>Utility:</p> <p>Most of the students in the disability group had asthma, auditory disability, or a learning disability. Thus, the findings are relevant to children with a hearing impairment and the review question.</p> <p>The design was quantitative, limiting the utility of the study to the current qualitative research.</p>

	<p>Self-Perception Profile for Adolescents – Comparable internal consistency in populations of students with learning disabilities ($\alpha=0.89$) and behavioural disorders ($\alpha=0.85$). Construct validity has also been proven.</p> <p>Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (parent version) – Moderate to high internal consistency values have been reported and empirical studies have supported the tool’s discriminate and predictive validity.</p> <p>70% of the schools declined to participate in the study which may have introduced possible bias.</p> <p>Academic competence was only evaluated by students which may have led to social desirability and self-report bias.</p> <p>Parents rated children’s mental health functioning, but it is likely that the children may have had a better insight into their own mental health functioning than their parents.</p> <p>Students from lower SES were underrepresented, limiting the generalisability of the results.</p>	<p>It included both pre- and post-transition data.</p>	
	<p>Accessibility:</p> <p>The paper was accessible.</p>		<p>Propriety:</p>
	<p>Specificity:</p>		

	<p>Student attrition rate of 32.7% at time 2 of the data collection.</p> <p>Longitudinal study which provided data from both pre- and post-transition.</p> <p>The study was completed in one area of Australia limiting the generalisability of the findings. The findings may not be representative of the experiences of young people in the English education system.</p> <p>Holistic – a range of factors were considered, including gender, SES etc.</p> <p>A comparison group of typically developing students was included.</p> <p>The sample may not have been representative as young people from a lower SES were underrepresented.</p> <p>No evidence of reflexivity.</p>		<p>Ethical approval was obtained. Provides reference number for this.</p> <p>Followed ethic protocols, e.g. informed written consent was obtained, participants were made aware that they were not obliged to participate and were free to withdraw etc.</p>
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Theme 3: Supporting the primary to secondary school transition for CYP with SEN

Study	Weight of Evidence A: Generic on quality of execution of study	Weight of Evidence B: Review specific on appropriateness of method	Weight of Evidence C: Review specific on focus/approach of study to review question
Bunn et al. (2017)	Transparency:	Purposivity:	Utility:

	<p>The aim is described but objectives and research questions are not explicit.</p> <p>Information is provided about the participants, methodology and findings; although further information would have been useful.</p> <p>Quotes are not included to support the identified themes.</p>	<p>The design met the studies aims, although the small sample size reduced the generalisability of the results.</p> <p>Pupil led and children's views were central to the research.</p>	<p>This study focussed on a specific intervention, thus reducing the amount of information relevant to the review question. The first stage of the study in which potential issues surrounding transition to secondary school for pupils with SEN was explored is most relevant to the review question.</p>
	<p>Accuracy:</p> <p>Small sample size, 6 children in the Year 6 focus group and 4 children in the year 7 focus group, limiting the generalisability of the findings.</p> <p>The themes identified are in line with the findings of other research.</p> <p>Participants may have responded to demand characteristics and quieter individuals may have been less willing to share their ideas within the focus groups.</p>		
	<p>Accessibility:</p> <p>The paper was accessible.</p>		
	<p>Specificity:</p> <p>The sample size is very small. Participants are from only one junior school or secondary school in the East of England. Therefore, their views may not be representative of other children. The fact they are</p>		<p>Propriety:</p> <p>Ethical guidelines were followed throughout.</p>

	from one of two schools, does limit the impact of different school contexts.		
	No evidence of reflexivity.		

Study	Weight of Evidence A: Generic on quality of execution of study	Weight of Evidence B: Review specific on appropriateness of method	Weight of Evidence C: Review specific on focus/approach of study to review question
Neal et al. (2016)	<p>Transparency:</p> <p>The measures used are available to view and download.</p> <p>The aim of the study is explicitly stated.</p> <p>The methodology and data analysis procedures are described. Information is provided about the participants, although it isn't stated how recruitment originally occurred (part of a larger longitudinal study).</p> <p>There is some description of data analytic methods.</p> <p>Accuracy:</p> <p>One of the measures (primary intervention strategy questionnaire) was designed for this study, so it is difficult to know its reliability and validity.</p>	<p>Purposivity:</p> <p>The methods and approaches used in this study are appropriate to the research questions and the approach meets the aims of the study to a degree. This would have been increased with a larger sample of children with SEN.</p>	<p>Utility:</p> <p>As with much of the research, this study does not explicitly investigate the transition experiences for deaf young people as it groups children with SEN as a homogenous group. However, it does consider the differences in the effectiveness of intervention for typically developing children and children with SEN which is relevant to the literature question.</p>

	<p>The sample size for SEN pupils is limited and this group of pupils are treated as a homogenous group. Therefore, type of SEN may lead to different findings and should be investigated.</p> <p>The findings of this study were consistent with the findings by Maras and Aveling (2006).</p> <p>To some degree, the results of the questionnaires used in this study were reliant on participant's memory which is subject to bias. However, the data was triangulated between teacher, parents and students increasing the reliability and validity.</p>		
	<p>Accessibility:</p> <p>The study was accessible.</p>		
	<p>Specificity:</p> <p>This study has medium topic relevance; however, the method specific relevance is fairly low as it is a quantitative study. However, it does provide some evidence for the efficacy of interventions for children with SEN.</p>		<p>Propriety:</p> <p>Ethical approval was gained. Parents were given the opportunity to opt their child out of the research at each point of data collection and pupil informed consent was gained etc.</p>

Study	Weight of Evidence A: Generic on quality of execution of study	Weight of Evidence B: Review specific on appropriateness of method	Weight of Evidence C: Review specific on focus/approach of study to review question
White & Rae (2016)	<p>Transparency: The context and aims of the study are clearly described.</p> <p>Information is provided about the participants; however, broad SEN categories are used.</p> <p>Data collection methods are described.</p> <p>Data analysis process is outlined.</p> <p>Critical realist ontology was reported.</p> <p>Variety of limitations are considered</p> <p>The researcher did not attend the person-centred review meeting, so it is assumed that these were completed following the person-centred practice.</p>	<p>Purposivity: The methods used were appropriate, although some of the participants found the locus of control scale difficult to access. Some CYP also found it challenging to engage in the interviews, perhaps the use of visual methods may have enhanced this.</p>	<p>Utility: This study does consider an aspect of transition to secondary school for CYP with SEN. It focuses on the use of person-centred reviews for supporting the transition process. This approach is not used universally. The participants had a variety of different SEN and it is unclear if any had a hearing loss.</p>
	<p>Accuracy: Reasonable sample size given the qualitative element of the study (16 CYP and 16 parents/carer).</p> <p>Girls, fathers, and individuals from ethnic minority groups are underrepresented.</p>		

	Study was conducted within one LA.		
	Quotes from participants are provided to support the themes identified.		
	<p>Accessibility: This paper was clearly presented and accessible.</p> <p>Specificity: It would have been useful to have investigated the long-term outcomes following the person-centred review meeting.</p> <p>Some reflexivity.</p> <p>Use of semi-structured interviews enabling the researcher to follow the participant's lead where appropriate to gather richer data.</p> <p>The data collection and analysis methods were appropriate to the topic.</p>		
			<p>Propriety: Ethical approval was gained for the study and permission was gained from the LA the research was completed in.</p> <p>Informed consent was gained from each participant.</p>

Theme 4: Wellbeing and relationships for deaf CYP in early secondary school

Study	Weight of Evidence A: Generic on quality of execution of study	Weight of Evidence B: Review specific on appropriateness of method	Weight of Evidence C: Review specific on focus/approach of study to review question
Wolters et al. (2012)	<p>Transparency:</p> <p>The research questions are transparent.</p>	<p>Purposivity:</p> <p>Longitudinal</p>	<p>Utility:</p>

	<p>Clear information is provided about the methodology, participants and data analysis.</p> <p>Thorough analysis is completed including reporting of some estimates of variance.</p> <p>Limitations are acknowledged.</p>	<p>Large, representative sample in Study 1. This was reduced in Study 2 as a subsample was used.</p> <p>The research design was appropriate to the study's aims enabling predictors of wellbeing to be identified, as well as examining the effects of peer and teacher relationships on wellbeing; and the moderating effects of hearing status, gender and education setting. The second study furthered this by comparing wellbeing in school and its predictors across the transition period.</p>	<p>This study specifically focusses on deaf young people and transition; therefore it is highly relevant to the current study.</p>
	<p>Accuracy:</p> <p>The measures had an acceptable to very good score for reliability using Cronbach's alpha.</p> <p>Study was completed in The Netherlands, so may not be representative to the English education system.</p> <p>Thorough analysis.</p>		<p>Propriety:</p> <p>Ethical standards met.</p>
	<p>Accessibility:</p> <p>The paper was accessible, although the findings section is vast and took a little while to decipher.</p>		
	<p>Specificity:</p> <p>Large representative sample in Study 1.</p>		

	<p>This was a longitudinal study, although it would have been beneficial if the students had been followed into the second year of secondary schools as well.</p> <p>Thoughtful data collection procedures and thorough analyses.</p>		
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Study	Weight of Evidence A: Generic on quality of execution of study	Weight of Evidence B: Review specific on appropriateness of method	Weight of Evidence C: Review specific on focus/approach of study to review question
Wolters et al. (2014)	<p>Transparency:</p> <p>Transparency around aims research questions and procedures.</p> <p>Thorough analyses and transparency around these.</p> <p>Highlighted limitations of the research</p>	<p>Purposivity:</p> <p>The research design enabled the researchers to examine their research questions.</p> <p>There may have been a possible confounding variable in that the characteristics of deaf participants in special educational settings differed somewhat from the mainstream group. Therefore, it may have been this (additional impairments) that affected the</p>	<p>Utility:</p> <p>This study focuses on the peer relationships and social relationships of deaf adolescents in the first 2 years of secondary school, directly after transition from primary school. Therefore, it is very relevant to the review question.</p>
	<p>Accuracy:</p> <p>Social behavioural ratings had very good reliability ratings using Cronbach's alpha.</p> <p>Study was completed in The Netherlands, so may not be representative to the English education system.</p>		

	Thorough analysis.	findings rather than hearing status.	
	Accessibility: Paper was accessible. The use of tables to illustrate the findings aided understanding.	Information was provided in context.	Propriety: Received ethical approval.
	Specificity: Longitudinal study. Due to the education system in the Netherlands there was some participant attrition. Only students who participated in both school years (grade 7 and 8) were included in the study. Thoughtful data collection procedures and thorough analysis. Large and representative sample.		

Appendix H

Co-Researcher Information Sheet and Consent Form



CO-RESEARCHER INFORMATION

The Experiences of Transition to Secondary School for Deaf Children in Mainstream Education: A Participatory Research Approach

You are being invited to be a co-researcher in a study. Before you agree it is important that you understand what this would involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

Who am I?

My name is Emma and I am a Psychology student at the University of East London (UEL). I am training to become an Educational and Child Psychologist (somebody who works with children, young people, parents, carers, teachers and other adults to support the education and development of children and young people). As part of my studies, I am doing a project and I am writing to you to see if you would like to take part.

Here is my photo:

What is the research?

I am investigating the secondary school transition experiences of young people who have a hearing loss and have moved from a mainstream primary school to a mainstream secondary school. I would like to find out about the experiences of deaf young people who have moved from primary to secondary school and how it could be made better.

My research has been approved by the School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee at UEL. This means that my research follows the standard of research ethics set by the British Psychological Society.

Why have you been asked to take part?

After hearing about this project from one of the Advisory Teachers for Hearing Impairment, you have shown an interest in being involved as a co-researcher.

I would like you to know that I am not looking for ‘experts’ on the topic I am studying. You will not be judged or personally analysed in any way and you will be treated with respect. You will be provided with training in all the different parts of the study and you will be supported with all the stages you wish to be involved in. This could include planning the study, designing the research materials, analysing the information we find and telling people about the findings.

You are free to decide whether or not to take part and should not feel that you have been forced to participate.

What will being a co-researcher involve?

If you agree to be a co-researcher in this study, your involvement could last from now until Summer 2021. The first step will involve you being given training on how to plan a research study. This will involve some teaching sessions with myself and another co-researcher, depending on what you would like to be involved with. Given the Covid-19 pandemic this is likely to take place online. We will agree the dates in advance and our sessions will last no longer than 60 minutes each.

Once you have the information you need, we will plan the study together. It is difficult to say what this will look like as we will make the decisions as a team. Once we have a plan, I will collect the data from other young people. We will then think together about what all this information means and share what we have found with other people.

I will not be able to pay you for participating in my research, but your help will be very valuable in helping to plan and deliver the project. I also hope that you would gain lots of new learning and skills to help you in the future. I will provide you with a certificate for participating and be happy to provide evidence of your participation and/or a reference to support your studies. I would advise that you will need to be very interested in the topic we are studying (the secondary school transition for deaf young people) to see the project through to the end.

What if you want to withdraw?

You are free to stop taking part in the research study at any time. Throughout the project I will check in with you at certain times to make sure that you still want to be involved. If you would like to stop being a co-researcher, you can tell me or your Advisory Teacher for Hearing Impairment. We will not make you give a reason for no longer being involved. You will not be punished for no longer taking part. You can also change your mind about what stages you would like to be involved in; for example, you can choose later if you don't want to take part in the data analysis or sharing of the results.

Contact Details

If you would like further information about my research or have any questions or concerns, please do contact me. My e-mail address is:

u1836093@uel.ac.uk

Or you can reach me through your school or college.

If you have any questions or concerns about how the research has been conducted, please contact the research supervisor Dr Mary Robinson. School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ,

Email: M.Robinson@uel.ac.uk

or

Chair of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Sub-committee: Dr Tim Lomas, School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ.

(Email: t.lomas@uel.ac.uk)





UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON

Consent to be a co-researcher

The Experiences of Transition to Secondary School for Deaf Children in Mainstream Education: A Participatory Research Approach

If you would like to be involved in this project as a co-researcher, please read the statements below and tick yes or no. Underneath the table, there is a space for you to sign your name.

		
I have read the information sheet about this research study and I have been given a copy to keep.		
Emma has explained the research project to me, and I have had the opportunity to ask any questions I want to.		
I understand what I am being asked to do and I can choose how much of the project I would like to be involved in.		
I understand that I can choose whether or not I would like to be a co-researcher in this project. I understand that I have the right to stop taking part		

in this study at any time and I do not have to give a reason for this. I know that I can change my level of involvement at any time.		
I understand that should I stop taking part in the research as a co-researcher; Emma can continue to use my contribution towards the planning and delivery of the study.		

I have read and understood the information sheet about this research study. I freely and fully consent to taking part in this study as a co-researcher.

Participant’s Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

.....

Participant’s Signature

.....

Researcher’s Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

.....

Researcher’s Signature

.....

Date:

Appendix I

Parent/Guardian Information Sheet and Consent Form



PARTICIPATION INVITATION LETTER

The Experiences of Transition to Secondary School for Deaf Children in Mainstream Education: A Participatory Research Approach

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you agree, it is important that you understand what this would involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

Who am I?

My name is Emma and I am a Psychology student at the University of East London (UEL). I am training to become an Educational and Child Psychologist (somebody who works with children, young people parents, carers, teachers and other adults to support the education and development of children and young people). As part of my studies, I am doing a project and I am writing to you to see if you would like to take part.

Here is my photo:

What is the research?

I am investigating the secondary school transition experiences of young people who have a hearing loss and have moved from a mainstream primary school to a mainstream secondary school. I would like to find out about the experiences of deaf young people who have moved from primary to secondary school and how it could be made better. I hope that this project will help people who are in charge of schools to know what the transition from primary to secondary school is like for deaf young people. I hope that we will be able to make suggestions for how the transition process could be made better.

My research has been approved by the School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee at UEL. This means that my research follows the standard of research ethics set by the British Psychological Society.

Why have you been asked to take part?

You have been invited to take part in my research as you are a young person in key stage 3 who has a hearing loss and has transitioned from a mainstream primary school to a mainstream secondary school within X.

I want you to know that I am not looking for ‘experts’ on the topic I am studying. You will not be judged in any way and you will be treated with respect.

You are free to decide whether or not to take part and you should not feel forced.

What will you be asked to do?

If you agree to take part, you will be asked meet with me on 2 occasions for approximately 50 minutes. Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, face-to-face contact is not permitted and therefore we will meet using Microsoft Teams. This is a piece of software which allows video conversations to occur. During our meetings, you will be asked to complete the following activities:

- Have a chat with me so that I can find out more about your experience of moving from primary to secondary school. This chat will be recorded using the record option on Microsoft Teams so that I can remember what you say. I will delete the recording as soon as I can write down what we talked about.
- Do some drawings to illustrate what your ideal and non-ideal school would look like. I would be grateful if you or your parent/guardian could take a photograph of your drawings and e-mail a copy to me.

The information that you share with me (in the chat or through your artwork) will be shared with the co-researchers in this study. However, they will not be told any of your personal information (e.g. your name or the school you go for) and so will not know who you are.

The information will not be shared with anyone else including your parents, teachers and friends. The only time I might have to speak to another adult is if you tell me something that means either you or someone else is in danger. All the information collected will be stored securely in line with data protection laws. It will be retained for the duration of the study and up to 5 years afterwards.

I will not be able to pay you for taking part, but I will really value your input for helping to develop my knowledge of how young people with a hearing loss experience the transition from primary to secondary school within X.

Taking part in this project will be safe and private.

Your privacy and safety will be respected at all times. I will not write your name anywhere on the information and I will not tell your school what you said. You do not need to answer any of the questions if you don't want to. You will be free to leave at any time, even part way through the activities. You will not need to give me a reason if you want to leave and you will not be punished for no longer wanting to take part.

What will happen afterwards?

I will save all the things that you say on my laptop, but it won't have your name or any of your personal details on it. The laptop is password protected and nobody else will be able to get into it but me. Sometimes I will show the information to other people, like my supervisor and the co-researchers, but I won't tell them your name or any details about you.

The co-researchers and I will look at the information that you and the other young people who have chosen to take part in the study have shared with us. We will have a look and see if you have said the same things or different things about your transition experiences. I will then write about what we have found. When I am writing I will not use your real name and I will make sure that nobody can work out what you said. The co-researchers and I may share suggestions for how to improve the transition experience based on the findings with schools in X.

If you would like I will send you a letter to tell you what I have found.

What if you want to stop being in the research?

You are free to stop being in the research study at any time without explanation. No one will tell you off for leaving. However, you should know that if you stop being in the research, I

will still use the things you told me before deciding to no longer be part of the research (not using your name).

Contact Details

If you would like further information about my research or have any questions or concerns, please do contact me. My e-mail address is:

u1836093@uel.ac.uk

Or you can reach me through your school or college.

If you have any questions or concerns about how the research has been conducted please contact the research supervisor Mary Robinson. School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ,
Email: M.Robinson@uel.ac.uk

or

Chair of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Sub-committee: Dr Tim Lomas, School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ.
(Email: t.lomas@uel.ac.uk)



Parental Consent Form

The Experiences of Transition to Secondary School for Deaf Children in Mainstream Education: A Participatory Research Approach

Secondary schools in X are currently taking part in a research project in collaboration with Emma Taylor-Baptie, Trainee Educational Psychologist. This study is investigating the secondary school transition experiences of young people who have a hearing loss and have transitioned from a mainstream primary school to a mainstream secondary school. It hopes to identify possible improvements to the transition experience for future young people by asking students who have already transitioned to describe their experiences and views. This project is being supported by the Advisory Teachers of the Deaf in X. The information gathered will also be used by Emma Taylor-Baptie to write a thesis for a Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology at the University of East London.

I would like to invite your child to take part in this research project. This will involve your child talking about their experiences of transition with me. This conversation will be recorded to ensure that I remember exactly what is said. This recording will be deleted as soon I have transcribed the conversation. Your child will also be asked to complete a drawing activity which will involve them drawing pictures to illustrate their non-ideal and ideal school. Your child will meet with me twice and these meetings will not last for more than 50 minutes each. Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 Pandemic face to face contact is currently not permitted and therefore these meetings will take place using Microsoft Teams. Microsoft Teams can be accessed on most devices that have access to the internet, such as computers, tablets and mobile telephones. The meeting in which your child talks about their experiences of transition with me will be recorded using the recording option in Microsoft Teams to allow me to transcribe the conversation. As stated previously, the recording will be deleted as soon as transcription has occurred. The two meetings will take place at a time that is convenient for both you and your child. Your child's permission will also be sought, and they will be free to withdraw from this research project at any time should they choose to do so. All the data will be anonymous and protected as encrypted files. It will be stored securely in line with data protection laws. It will be retained for the duration of the study and up to 5 years afterwards.

If you have any further questions about the research, please do get in touch with me using the e-mail address below.

My contact details are:

Emma Taylor-Baptie
u1836093@uel.ac.uk

If you are happy for your child to take part in the research, I will arrange with you a convenient time for the first meeting with your child to occur and send you an invite to the Microsoft Teams meeting via e-mail. Since one of the activities is a drawing task, I would be grateful if you could assist me by taking a photograph of your child's drawing and e-mailing it to me after we have completed the task. I know that working remotely in this way can be subject to unexpected disruptions, or technological problems and glitches, should this happen we can always reschedule the meeting.

Please return the slip below to me via e-mail: u1836093@uel.ac.uk to confirm that you are/are not happy for your child to take part in this project. If you are happy for your child to take part in the project, I will contact you via e-mail or telephone depending on your preference to agree convenient times for the meetings to take place.

Name of child:

.....

☐ I am happy for my child to take part in this research project. I understand what this involves, and I am aware that I am free to withdraw my child at any time if I wish to do so.

Please select how you wish to be contacted for us to schedule the meetings with your child. Please provide the relevant contact information depending on your preference:

☐ Telephone (if selected, please provide your telephone number)

Telephone Number: _____

☐ E-mail (if selected, please provide your e-mail address)

E-mail Address: _____

☐

I am not happy for my child to be involved in the research project.

Parent/Carer Signature (this can be typed electronically):

Appendix J

Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form



PARTICIPATION INVITATION LETTER

The Experiences of Transition to Secondary School for Deaf Children in Mainstream Education: A Participatory Research Approach

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you agree, it is important that you understand what this would involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

Who am I?

My name is Emma and I am a Psychology student at the University of East London (UEL). I am training to become an Educational and Child Psychologist (somebody who works with children, young people parents, carers, teachers and other adults to support the education and development of children and young people). As part of my studies, I am doing a project and I am writing to you to see if you would like to take part.

Here is my photo:

What is the research?

I am investigating the secondary school transition experiences of young people who have a hearing loss and have moved from a mainstream primary school to a mainstream secondary school. I would like to find out about the experiences of deaf young people who have moved from primary to secondary school and how it could be made better. I hope that this project will help people who are in charge of schools to know what the transition from primary to secondary school is like for deaf young people. I hope that we will be able to make suggestions for how the transition process could be made better.

My research has been approved by the School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee at UEL. This means that my research follows the standard of research ethics set by the British Psychological Society.

Why have you been asked to take part?

You have been invited to take part in my research as you are a young person in key stage 3 who has a hearing loss and has transitioned from a mainstream primary school to a mainstream secondary school within X.

I want you to know that I am not looking for ‘experts’ on the topic I am studying. You will not be judged in any way and you will be treated with respect.

You are free to decide whether or not to take part and you should not feel forced.

What will you be asked to do?

If you agree to take part, you will be asked meet with me on 2 occasions for approximately 50 minutes. Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, face-to-face contact is not permitted and therefore we will meet using Microsoft Teams. This is a piece of software which allows video conversations to occur. During our meetings, you will be asked to complete the following activities:

- Have a chat with me so that I can find out more about your experience of moving from primary to secondary school. This chat will be recorded using the record option on Microsoft Teams so that I can remember what you say. I will delete the recording as soon as I can write down what we talked about.
- Do some drawings to illustrate what your ideal and non-ideal school would look like. I would be grateful if you or your parent/guardian could take a photograph of your drawings and e-mail a copy to me.

The information that you share with me (in the chat or through your artwork) will be shared with the co-researchers in this study. However, they will not be told any of your personal information (e.g. your name or the school you go for) and so will not know who you are.

The information will not be shared with anyone else including your parents, teachers and friends. The only time I might have to speak to another adult is if you tell me something that means either you or someone else is in danger. All the information collected will be stored securely in line with data protection laws. It will be retained for the duration of the study and up to 5 years afterwards.

I will not be able to pay you for taking part, but I will really value your input for helping to develop my knowledge of how young people with a hearing loss experience the transition from primary to secondary school within X.

Taking part in this project will be safe and private.

Your privacy and safety will be respected at all times. I will not write your name anywhere on the information and I will not tell your school what you said. You do not need to answer any of the questions if you don't want to. You will be free to leave at any time, even part way through the activities. You will not need to give me a reason if you want to leave and you will not be punished for no longer wanting to take part.

What will happen afterwards?

I will save all the things that you say on my laptop, but it won't have your name or any of your personal details on it. The laptop is password protected and nobody else will be able to get into it but me. Sometimes I will show the information to other people, like my supervisor and the co-researchers, but I won't tell them your name or any details about you.

The co-researchers and I will look at the information that you and the other young people who have chosen to take part in the study have shared with us. We will have a look and see if you have said the same things or different things about your transition experiences. I will then write about what we have found. When I am writing I will not use your real name and I will make sure that nobody can work out what you said. The co-researchers and I may share suggestions for how to improve the transition experience based on the findings with schools in X.

If you would like I will send you a letter to tell you what I have found.

What if you want to stop being in the research?

You are free to stop being in the research study at any time without explanation. No one will tell you off for leaving. However, you should know that if you stop being in the research, I will still use the things you told me before deciding to no longer be part of the research (not using your name).

Contact Details

If you would like further information about my research or have any questions or concerns, please do contact me. My e-mail address is:

u1836093@uel.ac.uk

Or you can reach me through your school or college.

If you have any questions or concerns about how the research has been conducted please contact the research supervisor Mary Robinson. School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ,
Email: M.Robinson@uel.ac.uk

or

Chair of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Sub-committee: Dr Tim Lomas, School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ.
(Email: t.lomas@uel.ac.uk)





UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON

Consent to participate in the research study

The Experiences of Transition to Secondary School for Deaf Children in Mainstream Education: A Participatory Research Approach

If you would like to take part in this research study, please read the statements below and tick yes or no. Underneath the table, there is a space for you to sign your name.

		
I have read the information sheet about this research study and I have been given a copy to keep.		
Emma has explained the research project to me, and I have had the opportunity to ask any questions I want to.		
I understand what is involved and what I am being asked to do.		
I understand that my involvement will remain strictly confidential (no one apart from Emma will know what I have personally said).		

Emma has explained to me what will happen once the research study has been completed		
I understand that I can choose whether or not I would like to take part in this project. I understand that I have the right to stop taking part in this study at any time and I do not have to give a reason for this.		
I understand that I can ask for my data to be removed from the research project up until 16/9/2020. After this date, I understand that I will no longer be able to remove my data as the data will no longer be identifiable.		

I have read and understood the information sheet about this research study. I freely and fully consent to taking part in this study.

Participant's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

.....

Participant's Signature

.....

Researcher's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

.....EMMA TAYLOR-BAPTIE.....

Researcher's Signature

.....EJTaylor-Baptie.....

Date:

Appendix K

Ideal School Task Instructions

Ideal School (Williams & Hanke, 2007)

Equipment: Pen/pencil and 2 sheets of plain A4 paper

For this task, I am going to ask you to do some drawings. These drawings do not have to be perfect and it is fine if you make an error. I am not judging you on your artistic talents!

Remember nobody apart from me and my co-researchers are going to see your drawings and answers. I will not use your name in my study or when working with the co-researchers, so the information you tell me will be anonymous. This means that nobody will know that it is you who has told me the information. As well as drawing some pictures, you will also be asked to provide some additional information to go with your drawing which I will write down. There are no right or wrong answers, I am just interested in finding out your views and ideas. Remember we can stop the activity at any time, and you will not be punished for wanting to stop. If you do not want to answer something that is okay, you do not have to, just let me know.

Do you have any questions about the activity? Have you got 2 pieces of A4 paper and a pen/pencil?

Part 1: Drawing the kind of school you would not like:

The school:

Think about the kind of school you would not like to go to. This is not a real school. Make a quick drawing of this school in the middle of the piece of paper.

Tell me three things about this school. What kind of school is this?

The classroom:

Think about the sort of classroom you would not like to be in. Make a quick drawing of this classroom in the school.

Draw some of the things in this classroom.

The children:

Think about some of the children at the school you would not like to go to. Make a quick drawing of some of these children. What are the children doing? Tell me three things about these children.

The adults:

Think about some of the adults at the school you would not like to go to. Make a quick drawing of some of these adults. What are the adults doing? Tell me three things about these adults.

Me:

Think about the kind of school you would not like to go to. Make a quick drawing of what you would be doing at this school. Tell me three things about the way you feel at this school.

Part 1: Drawing the kind of school you would like:

The school:

Think about the kind of school you would like to go to. This is not a real school. Make a quick drawing of this school in the middle of the piece of paper.

Tell me three things about this school. What kind of school is this?

The classroom:

Think about the sort of classroom you would like to be in. Make a quick drawing of this classroom in the school.

Draw some of the things in this classroom.

The children:

Think about some of the children at the school you would like to go to. Make a quick drawing of some of these children. What are the children doing? Tell me three things about these children.

The adults:

Think about some of the adults at the school you would like to go to. Make a quick drawing of some of these adults. What are the adults doing? Tell me three things about these adults.

Me:

Think about the kind of school you would like to go to. Make a quick drawing of what you would be doing at this school. Tell me three things about the way you feel at this school.

Part 3: Ratings and Comparisons (adapted from Drawing the Ideal Self, Moran, 2001)

Please could you place the 2 drawings in front of you. Put the non-ideal school on your left and the ideal school on your right. I would like you to imagine that there is a horizontal line with a scale going from the non-ideal school to the ideal school. The non-ideal school is at 0 on the scale and the ideal school is at 10 on the scale. Like this (share screen to show):

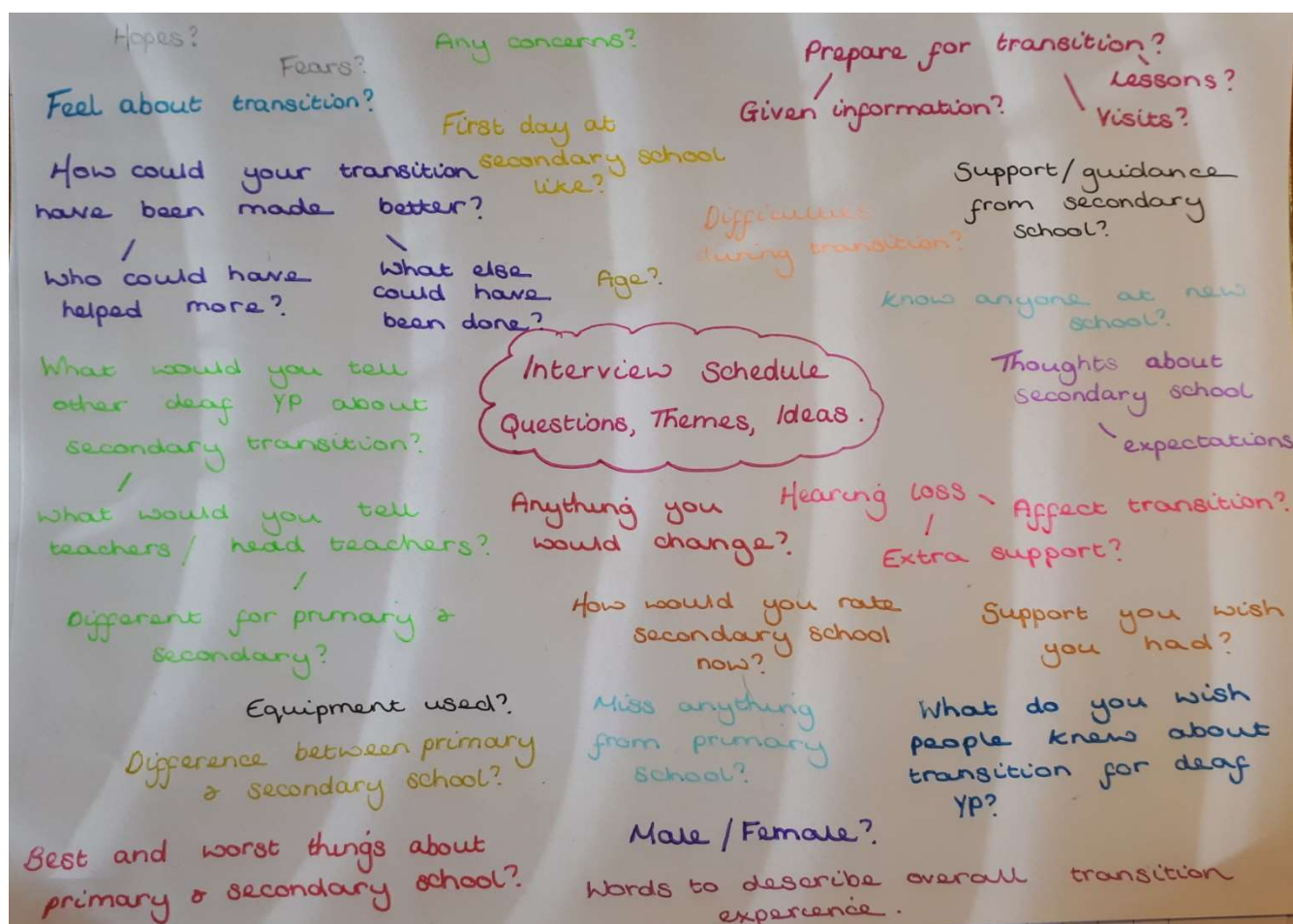
- 1) Where would you place your current school on the scale? (Is it closer to your non-ideal school or your ideal school? What number on the scale would it be at?).
- 2) How about your primary school, where would you place that on the scale?
- 3) What is it about _____ school (whichever is closer to ideal school) that means it is closer to your ideal school?
- 4) What is it about _____ school (the other school) that means it is further away from your ideal school?
- 5) Think about your current school. Tell me three things that others could do to help your school be more like your ideal school?
- 6) Tell me three things that you could do which would help your current school be more like your ideal school?

That's it for today! Thank you very much for your time and completing the activity! I hope you enjoyed it. Would you be able to take a photo of both of your drawings (ideal and non-ideal school) and e-mail them to me?

We are going to meet again on _____. During this meeting, I am going to ask you some more questions about your primary school and secondary school.

Appendix L

Initial Themes, Ideas and Questions Generated with the Co-Researchers



Appendix M

Final Interview Schedule

Investigating the Experiences of Secondary School Transition for Deaf Children in Mainstream Education: A Participatory Research Approach

Introduction:

Thank you for meeting with me today. As you know, my name is Emma and I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist. This means that I work with children, young people, parents, carers, teachers and other adults to support the education and development of children and young people. As part of my studies I am doing a project and I am hoping that you might like to take part.

Before we start, I'm just going to go through the participant information sheet with you, which you may have already seen (share screen and read information sheet with child).

Do you have any questions?

Would you like to take part in the research? (If so, please can you complete the consent form and e-mail it to me, you can complete it all on the computer, just type your name for your signature etc).

If it is okay with you, we are going to meet twice to talk about your experience of leaving your primary school and moving to secondary school.

Today we are going to do a drawing activity (follow ideal school instructions).

Ideal School Activity

(Ideal School Instructions)

Interview Schedule

Second Meeting:

Thank you for meeting with me again. Today, we are going to have a chat about your experiences of moving from primary school to secondary school. It might feel like a bit of a strange conversation, as you will probably do most of the talking, but that is okay. If it is okay with you, I am going to record what you say, so that I can listen to our conversation again and write down what you have said, so that I can use it in my study. As soon as I have written the information down, I will delete the recording. Remember, I won't be using your

name in the study, so all the information you tell me will be anonymous. This means nobody will know what you have said to me. It is also important to remember that there are no right or wrong answers, I just want to know what you think. If you don't want to answer a question, that is fine, just let me know and we can move on. If at any point you want to stop, that is fine too. You do not have to give me a reason for wanting to stop and you will not be punished for no longer wanting to take part in the study.

Do you have any questions that you would like to ask me before we start?

Expectations of primary to secondary transition prior to it occurring:

- 1) Thinking back to Year 6, how did you feel about moving to secondary school?

Prompts:

- Was there anything you were looking forwards to?
 - Was there anything you were worried/concerned about?
 - What did you think secondary school would be like?
- 2) Do you think that you felt more, less or the same amount of worry as your peers who were also moving to secondary school? Why do you think this was?
 - 3) How did your primary school help to prepare you for moving to secondary school?
 - a. What did you find was most useful?
 - b. Did you receive any additional support to your peers to help you to transition from primary to secondary school? If so, please explain.
 - c. Did anyone else offer you transition support? If so, please describe this?
 - d. What did you do if you had a concern about moving to secondary school?
 - e. Is there anything that you believe your primary school could have done which would have helped you more?
 - 4) What were the three best things and three worst things about primary school?

Experiences of transition once attending secondary school:

- 5) How did you feel when you first started secondary school?

Prompts:

- What went well for you?
- What did you find was more challenging?
- Was there anything that surprised you?
- Was there anything that you missed about primary school?

- 6) Do you think it took you more, less or the same amount of time to settle into secondary school as your peers who had also just started in year 7? Why do you think this was?
- 7) How did your secondary school help to support you during the first few, days, weeks and year?
 - a. What did you find was most useful?
 - b. Did you have any difficulties or problems? Can you tell me a bit more about them?
 - c. What did you do if you had a concern or were experiencing a difficulty?
 - d. Did you receive any additional support to your peers to help you with starting secondary school? Please explain
 - e. Did anyone else outside of your secondary school offer you support at this time? If so, please describe this? (e.g. Advisory Teacher for the Deaf etc)
 - f. Is there anything that you believe your secondary school could have done which would have helped you more?
- 8) What did you find to be the biggest difference between primary and secondary school?
 - a. Have you noticed any differences between your primary and secondary school teachers? How are they different/the same?
- 9) What are the three best and three worst things about secondary school?

Overarching reflections on experiences of transition to secondary school:

- 10) Do you think your hearing loss has affected your experience of moving to secondary school? If so, how?
- 11) Is there any support that you received in primary school, that you wish you still had in secondary school?
- 12) Is there any support that you have now in secondary school, that you wish you had had in primary school?
- 13) If you had a magic wand and could change anything about your schooling experiences so far, what would you change?
- 14) How would you sum up your experience of the move to secondary school?
- 15) If you were supporting a young person with a hearing loss to transition from primary to secondary school, what would you do?

- a. What advice would you give to deaf children who are about to moved from primary to secondary school?
 - b. Is there anything that you think it would be important for year six pupils who have a hearing loss to know about moving to secondary school?
- 16) If you could speak to teachers and headteachers from primary schools, what advice would you give them to help support deaf young people with the transition to secondary school?
- 17) If you could speak to teachers and headteachers from secondary schools, what advice would you give them to help support deaf young people with the transition to secondary school?
- 18) Is there anything that I have missed about moving to secondary school for deaf young people, or anything that you think is important for me to know?

Additional Information:

- 19) Male/female?
- 20) School?
- 21) What year group are you in?
- 22) What is the degree of your hearing loss? (Mild, moderate, moderately severe, severe, profound)
- 23) What support do you need for your hearing loss in and/or outside of the classroom?

Prompts:

One-to-one support (Signer or Learning Support Assistant)

Hearing Aids

Cochlear Implant

Aids (Roger, Roger Pen, Mini Mic, Radio Aids)

Written notes for lessons (note taker)

Teacher facing towards you when speaking to enable lipreading

Prior notice for fire alarms

Particular seat within the classroom

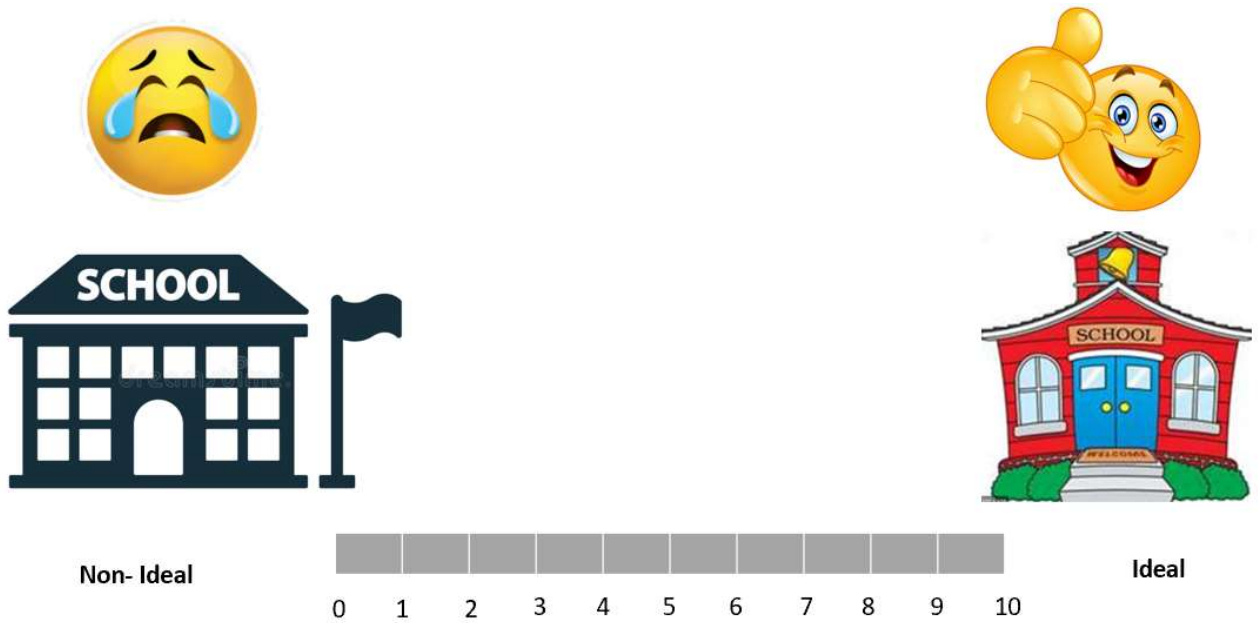
Good lighting in the classroom

Subtitles

Support for exams, e.g. extra time etc

Appendix N

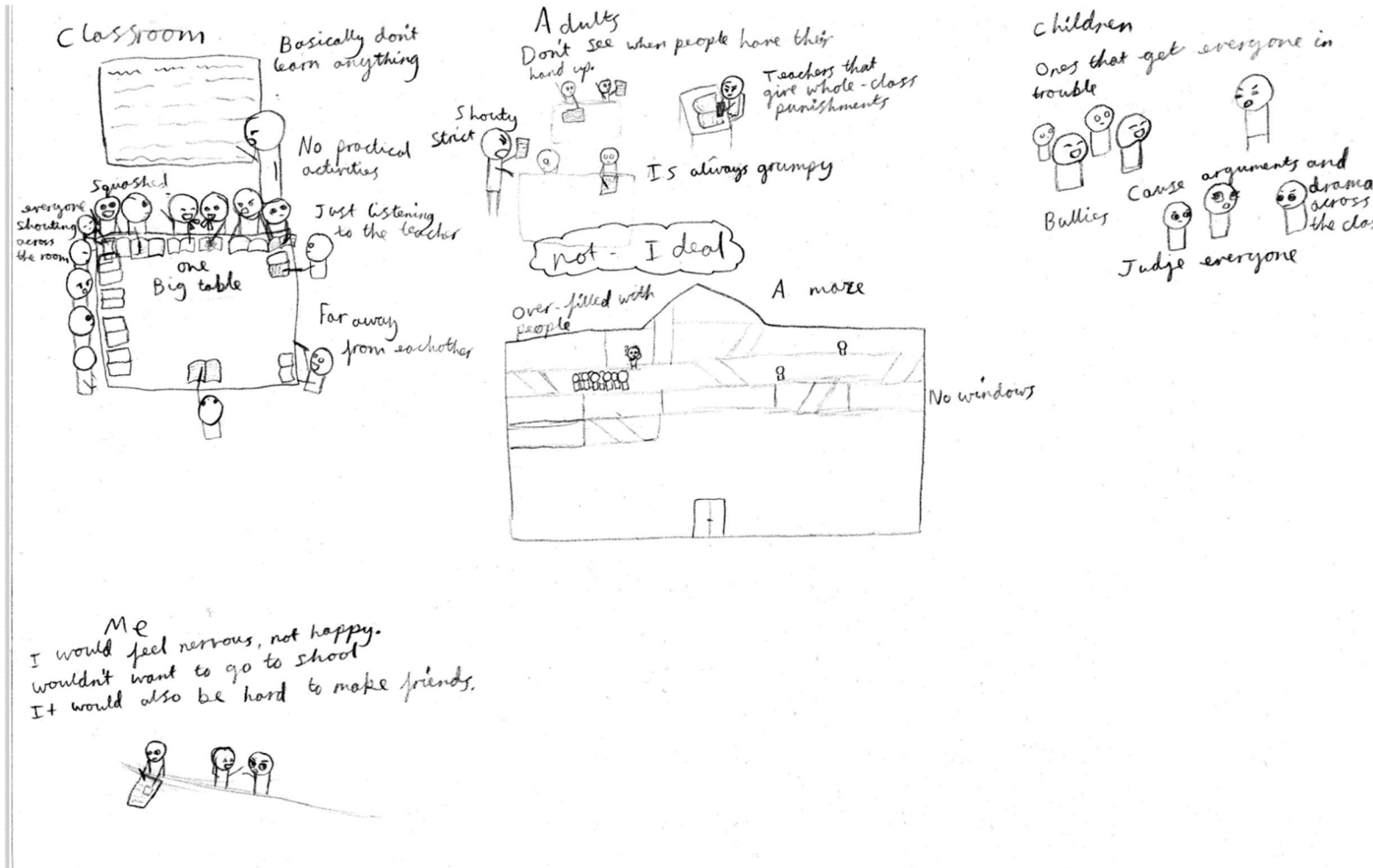
Visual Image to Support Ideal School Task

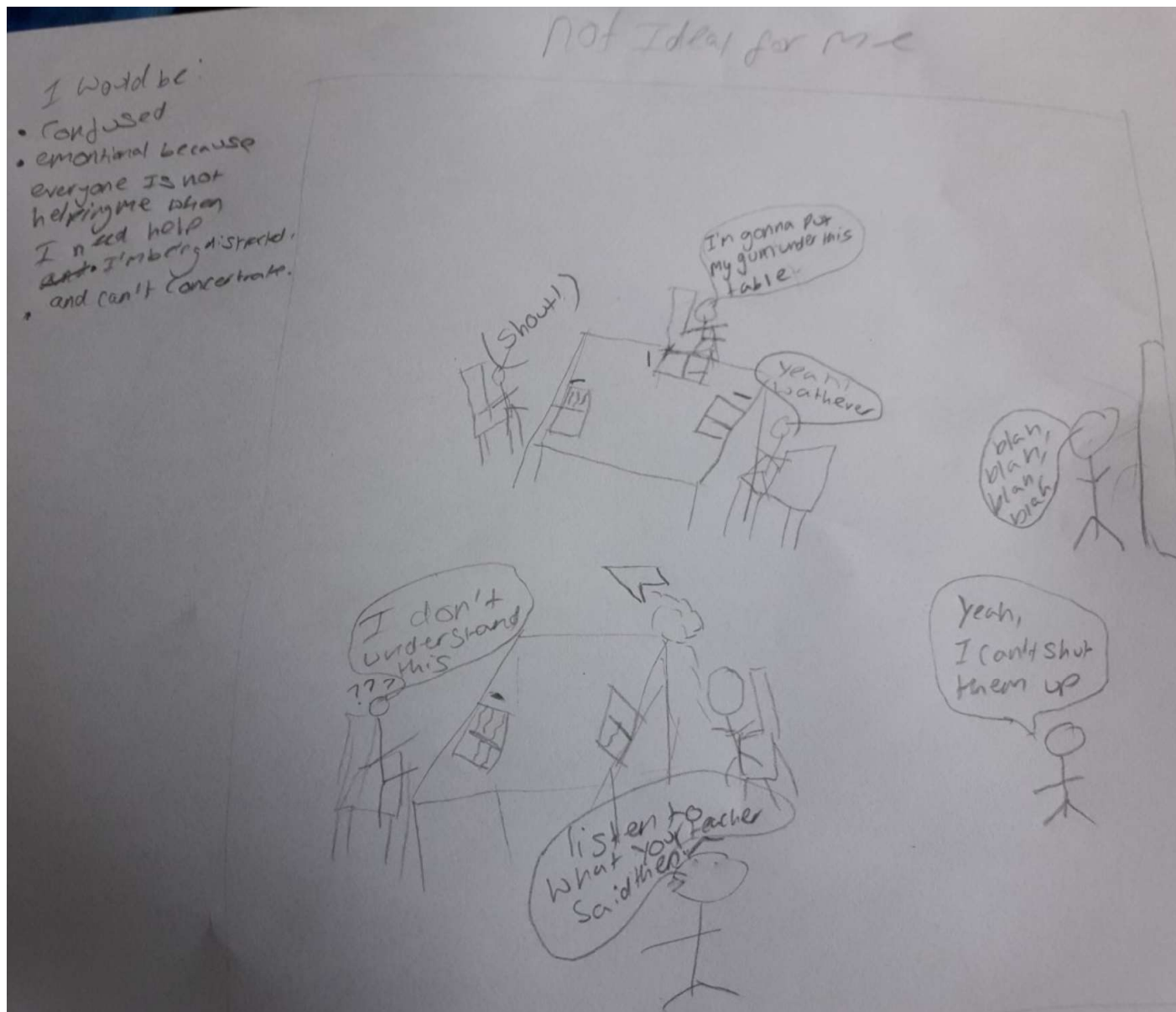


Appendix O

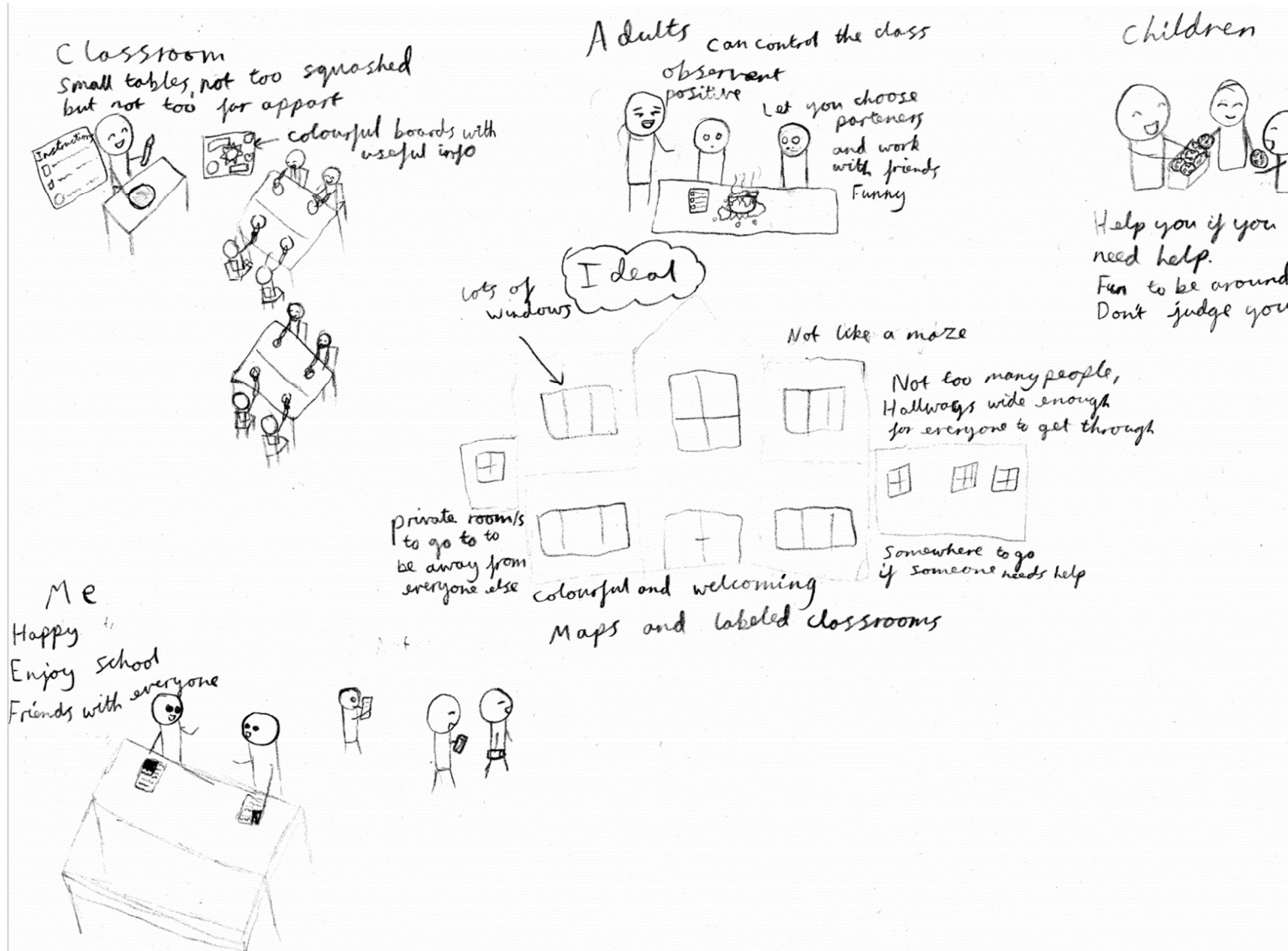
Examples of Ideal and Non-Ideal School Drawings

Non-Ideal School Examples





Ideal School Example



I will be:

- not Confused
- I can concentrate and not get distracted
- I can get help whenever I need it.

I deal for me



Appendix P

Examples of Worked Transcripts

Ruth:

39 Emma: Oh, that was good. And was there anything in particular you think
40 you were really looking forward to, about going to secondary school?
41 school?

42 Participant 1: Mostly the food, because the food in the canteen was much nicer
43 and they had Pizza and stuff

44 Emma: (laughs) Yeah that's much nicer isn't it, and I guess you got a bit
45 more choice?

46 Participant 1: (nods head) Yeah

47 Emma: Definitely, and was there anything that you were kind of really kind
48 of nervous about or worried about do you think?

49 Participant 1: Ehm, probably nervous about it you couldn't like make ... if I
50 couldn't make any friends or something.

51 Emma: Yeah, no definitely. And do you think you felt kind of more or sort
52 of less or the same amount of kind of worry as kind of other young
53 people of your age that were moving to secondary school?

54 Participant 1: Err, probably (nods head)

55 Emma: So, the ... what to you think, do you think it was more or less or
56 ...?

3

Handwritten notes:
- New & increased opportunities
- Belonging amongst peers
- Different to primary school → decide at the time not in register.
- Options and choice
- Increased autonomy
- Preparation for adulthood
- Social occasions, bit like a cage?
- Grown up?
- Hesitant
- Friendship concerns
- Being Fitting Belonging liked in
- Friendship is important → link to identity?
- Fear of being alone / lonely / unliked
- Uncertain
- Worrying - convincing self?
- Doubt

57 Participant 1: Well ... I think it might have been in the middle because some
58 people went there with no one they know (yeah) no one they knew,
59 so that might have been scary.

60 Emma: Yeah definitely, I think you did ... go on ...

61 Participant 1: ... but then a lot of people went with ehm, their like best friends
62 and everything

63 Emma: OK, so yeah, I guess with you just kind of knew a few people, but
64 they weren't necessarily your closest friends that's quite (yeah -
65 nods head) that's quite scary isn't it, definitely. And did your
66 primary school kind of help you to kind of prepare for going to
67 secondary? Did they do any kind of transition support or anything
68 like that?

69 Participant 1: Ehm ... I can't even

70 Emma: (laughs)

71 Participant 1: Err ... (OK) ... (pauses) I don't think so really.

72 Emma: No, that's OK. Ehm, and so did you get any kind of help from sort
73 of like 'L' or anyone like that, was she involved at all? Did she
74 help you with moving to secondary school?

4

Handwritten notes:
- Familiarity as a protective factor.
- Belonging amongst peers & importance of friendship
- Insignificance of preparation.
- knew some people - familiarity
- Scary → vulnerable alone
- Anxiety
- Familiar people linked to safety & containment.
- Disappointed not to have best friends
- vs relief of knowing some people
- Easier with best friends?
- Lack of support from close friends
- Unsure - difficulty remembering.
- Support not obvious to pp?
- Insignificant
- school didn't do much / little impact on pp?
- Not reflected on this previously

Familiarity
↳ value of consistency & continuity.

"Big jump"
between primary school & secondary school.

Continuity & consistency
Link between primary & secondary
↳ not such separate entities.

Familiarity
"kind of helped" - small impact?

"I think" - difficulty remembering → not significant?

No big impact / lots of people spoke about it.

Time to "Big jump" / adjust significant change lots of differences challenging?

Liked more support
change is hard

change primary school rather than secondary school
Enjoyed new experiences freedoms of secondary; preferred gradual change

75 Participant 1: Well she was like someone I knew from primary school and
76 secondary school, so that kind of helped.
77 Emma: OK, so she was kind of like a continuous person
78 Participant 1: Yeah (nods head)
79 Emma: That's really nice. And did she talk to you much about kind of
80 moving to secondary school?
81 Participant 1: Ehm, I think she did
82 Emma: (laughs) it's a long time ago isn't it? It's hard to remember
83 Participant 1: Yeah
84 Emma: And is there anything that you think might have been helpful for
85 your primary school to have done?
86 Participant 1: (speaks slowly at start of answer and thinking whilst answering)
87 well maybe they could have ... ehm ... I don't know may... make
88 it, make primary school a little bit more like secondary school so it
89 doesn't feel s... as such a big of a jump
90 Emma: Mmm, did it feel like a really ... kind of big change?
91 Participant 1: Yeah

Daniel:

Familiarisation

Support from others

Freedom
Map
Familiarise with school settings
Tours by older pupils.

Friends
Relying on others.

Difficulty meeting organisational demands?

273 did anything else happen in secondary school? I guess for the
274 whole of year 7, did they do anything in terms of maybe like
275 helping you find your way around or some activities?
276 Participant 3: The first ... on the transitions they gave us a map and we could
277 just go and look around the school (mmm) and we had some tours
278 by some new year 7's and I was in year 6 (yeah) I did the tour
279 when I was in year 7 with some year 6's. Ehm ... and we just kind
280 of went around the school and showed them around. And it was
281 pretty easy for us to know our way around. For the first few days
282 there gave us ... gave us a map and I ended up losing it so
283 (laughs) I had to use a friend.
284 Emma: Yeah, and did they throw you kind of straight into lessons or did
285 you have some like 'getting to know you' activities or anything like
286 that?

Setting in period	<p>287 Participant 3: Err ... the first two days we just stayed in with our person tutor and</p> <p>288 then like the third day we started like proper lessons ... from ...</p> <p>289 yeah ...</p>	<p>At the beginning stayed with tutor and same group</p>
	<p>290 Emma: Yeah, that's good. And did you do kind of ... did you kind of get</p> <p>291 to know, I suppose, your form group and things like that in those</p> <p>292 first few days?</p>	<p>Got to know people & surrounding before starting lessons.</p>
	<p>293 Participant 3: Yeah</p>	
	<p>294 Emma: Yeah, and was that helpful?</p>	
Familiarisation	<p>295 Participant 3: <u>I recognised from the transitions</u></p>	<p>Importance of transition sessions Recognising people Familiarity</p>
	<p>296 Emma: That's good. And did you kind of have any problems would you</p> <p>297 say, at the beginning of secondary school?</p>	
	<p>298 Participant 3: Err ... not really.</p>	
	<p>299 Emma: No, nothing that was kind of difficult or anything</p>	
Difference between expectations & reality	<p>300 Participant 3: <u>(shakes head) It wasn't really that difficult.</u></p>	<p>Transition was easy - better than expected? Element of surprise?</p>

Appendix Q

Data Analysis Process as Suggested by Smith et al. (2009)

Stage 1	Reading and re-reading	The researcher must become totally immersed in the data (Smith et al., 2009). The researcher repeatedly listened to the recordings and read the transcripts simultaneously. The researcher sought to suspend her assumptions by 'bracketing' (Husserl, 1982) any initial impressions. These were recorded within the research diary.
Stage 2	Initial noting	Smith et al. (2009) highlight that this stage often occurs simultaneously with the first stage of IPA. The researcher recorded any initial thoughts in the right-hand margin on the transcript and alongside participants' drawings. These notes were exploratory and were either descriptive (describing the content or subject), linguistic (focussing on use of language) or conceptual (interpretive comments guided by psychological knowledge and theory) (see Appendix W for an example of the initial noting).
Stage 3	Developing emergent themes	The researcher revisited her initial notes from stage 2 and looked for emergent themes. This process involves the hermeneutic circle (described above) as the focus moves away from the whole transcript to small sections which interrupts the narrative flow.
Stage 4	Searching for connections across emergent themes	This stage involves the mapping of themes. The researcher typed the emergent themes and corresponding line numbers from the transcripts. These typed emergent themes were printed and cut up. They were spread out on a table and the researcher looked for superordinate categories. This process is known as abstraction. The emergent themes were grouped under each superordinate theme and became known as subordinate themes.

		<p>During this stage, any emergent themes which did not fit with the RQs or were encapsulated by another theme were removed (Appendix X).</p> <p>A graphic representation of the superordinate and subordinate themes identified was produced.</p>
Stage 5	Moving to the next case	<p>Each participant's transcript and drawings were analysed individually and therefore the stages outlined above were repeated for each participant. Upon analysing each new transcript and drawings, the researcher sought to 'bracket' her ideas from previous cases making notes in her research diary. Despite bracketing attempts, the researcher acknowledges that inevitably she will have been influenced by her previous ideas and findings. To reduce this, the researcher took breaks and completed other aspects of her thesis between data analysis of each individual transcript and drawings.</p>
Stage 6	Looking for patterns across cases	<p>Once individual participant's transcript and drawings had been analysed, the researcher searched for patterns across cases. The researcher printed all superordinate and subordinate themes that had been identified in different colours for each participant and cut them out. She then completed a similar process to that outlined in step 4 (Appendix V). The themes were moved around to form a new set of superordinate and subordinate themes. Some of the superordinate and subordinate themes identified previously remained intact and some were separated to form different groups.</p>

Appendix R

University Ethical Approval and Updated Approval Due to Covid-19 Pandemic

School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee

NOTICE OF ETHICS REVIEW DECISION

For research involving human participants

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

REVIEWER: Janet Rowley

SUPERVISOR: Mary Robinson

STUDENT: Emma Taylor-Baptie

Course: Professional Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology

Title of proposed study: The Experiences of Transition to Secondary School for Deaf Children in Mainstream Education: A Participatory Research Approach

DECISION OPTIONS:

1. **APPROVED:** Ethics approval for the above named research study has been granted from the date of approval (see end of this notice) to the date it is submitted for assessment/examination.
2. **APPROVED, BUT MINOR AMENDMENTS ARE REQUIRED BEFORE THE RESEARCH COMMENCES** (see Minor Amendments box below): In this circumstance, re-submission of an ethics application is not required but the student must confirm with their supervisor that all minor amendments have been made before the research commences. Students are to do this by filling in the confirmation box below when all amendments have been attended to and emailing a copy of this decision notice to her/his supervisor for their records. The supervisor will then forward the student's confirmation to the School for its records.
3. **NOT APPROVED, MAJOR AMENDMENTS AND RE-SUBMISSION REQUIRED** (see Major Amendments box below): In this circumstance, a revised ethics application must be submitted and approved before any research takes place. The revised application will be reviewed by the same reviewer. If in doubt, students should ask their supervisor for support in revising their ethics application.

DECISION ON THE ABOVE-NAMED PROPOSED RESEARCH STUDY

(Please indicate the decision according to one of the 3 options above)

APPROVED

Minor amendments required (for reviewer):

Major amendments required (for reviewer):

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

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

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

Student number:

Date:

(Please submit a copy of this decision letter to your supervisor with this box completed, if minor amendments to your ethics application are required)

ASSESSMENT OF RISK TO RESEACHER (for reviewer)

Has an adequate risk assessment been offered in the application form?

YES

Please request resubmission with an adequate risk assessment

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

☐

HIGH

Please do not approve a high risk application and refer to the Chair of Ethics. Travel to countries/provinces/areas deemed to be high risk should not be permitted and an application not approved on this basis. If unsure please refer to the Chair of Ethics.

☐

MEDIUM (Please approve but with appropriate recommendations)

☐

*

LOW

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

Reviewer Dr Janet Rowley

Date: 6.2.20

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

RESEARCHER PLEASE NOTE:

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

For a copy of UELs Personal Accident & Travel Insurance Policy, please see the Ethics Folder in the Psychology Noticeboard

UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON
School of Psychology

REQUEST FOR AMENDMENT TO AN ETHICS APPLICATION

FOR BSc, MSc/MA & TAUGHT PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE STUDENTS

Please complete this form if you are requesting approval for proposed amendment(s) to an ethics application that has been approved by the School of Psychology.

Note that approval must be given for significant change to research procedure that impacts on ethical protocol. If you are not sure about whether your proposed amendment warrants approval consult your supervisor or contact Dr Tim Lomas (Chair of the School Research Ethics Committee).

HOW TO COMPLETE & SUBMIT THE REQUEST

Complete the request form electronically and accurately.

Type your name in the 'student's signature' section (page 2).

When submitting this request form, ensure that all necessary documents are attached (see below).

Using your UEL email address, email the completed request form along with associated documents to: Dr Mark Finn at m.finn@uel.ac.uk

Your request form will be returned to you via your UEL email address with reviewer's response box completed. This will normally be within five days. Keep a copy of the approval to submit with your project/dissertation/thesis.

Recruitment and data collection are not to commence until your proposed amendment has been approved.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

A copy of your previously approved ethics application with proposed amendments(s) added as tracked changes.

Copies of updated documents that may relate to your proposed amendment(s). For example an updated recruitment notice, updated participant information letter, updated consent form etc.

A copy of the approval of your initial ethics application.

Name of applicant: Emma Taylor-Baptie

Programme of study: Professional Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology

Title of research: The Experiences of Transition to Secondary School for Deaf Children in Mainstream Education: A Participatory Approach

Name of supervisor: Dr Mary Robinson

Briefly outline the nature of your proposed amendment(s) and associated rationale(s) in the boxes below

Proposed amendment	Rationale
<p>Recruitment of participants and co-researchers:</p> <p>Participants: Instead of the teacher of the deaf signposting me to schools to contact to recruit deaf young people, they will contact the parents/carer of children on their caseload who meet the recruitment criteria. They will then e-mail parents/carers the research information and parental consent form. If parent/carers consent to their child partaking in the research they will e-mail me the completed consent form. I will only receive the participants' names and information upon receipt of parental consent.</p> <p>Co-researchers: Same process as above. Teachers of the deaf will contact young people on their caseload who may be interested in being co-researchers in this study. They will share the study information and consent form with the young people. If they are interested, the young people will e-mail me their completed consent form.</p>	<p>Covid-19 – Lockdown. Schools and colleges have closed for the majority of children and so most children are at home.</p>
<p>Location for data collection:</p> <p>Instead of taking place in a quiet room in the participant's school. The data collection will be completed using Microsoft Teams. The young people will meet with me twice using Microsoft Teams to complete the data collection. If the young person prefers, the data collection could be completed in one meeting using Microsoft Teams. The recording of the interview will be completed using Microsoft Teams and a Dictaphone.</p>	<p>Covid-19 – unable to meet participants in person.</p>

Please tick	YES	NO
Is your supervisor aware of your proposed amendment(s) and agree to them?	YES	

Student's signature (please type your name): Emma Taylor-Baptie

Date: 13/09/2020

TO BE COMPLETED BY REVIEWER		
Amendment(s) approved	YES	
<p>Comments</p> <p>These arrangements ensure that information gathering takes place in a secure and effective way</p>		

Reviewer: Mary Robinson

Date: 14th September, 2020

Appendix S

Ethical Approval from Placement LA

Hello

Research Application

Thank you for sending through your research proposal on **‘The Experiences of Transition to Secondary School for Deaf Children in Mainstream Education: A Participatory Research Approach’**

I have carefully read through your very interesting research proposal. I understand that you have already gained the approval from the school of Psychology Research Ethics Committee and have the support from Educational Psychology team here at X Council.

With this in mind, I agreed that the project can go ahead. However, I must point out that it will be down each school / college whether or not they agree to take part.

I would like to wish you every success with this project and look forward to seeing any outcomes or reports that you produce from this work.

Yours Sincerely

Appendix T

Debrief Forms



PARTICIPANT DEBRIEF LETTER

The Experiences of Transition to Secondary School for Deaf Children in Mainstream Education: A Participatory Research Approach

Thank you for participating in my research study investigating the secondary school transition experiences of deaf children in mainstream education. I hope that you enjoyed taking part. This letter offers information that may be relevant to you now you have taken part.

With the information you provided, we hope to provide advice to schools detailing ways to improve the experience of transition to secondary school for deaf young people. We will analyse the information that you and the other participants have given to us.

Please be assured that the details and the information you have given will remain anonymous (nobody will know your name). I have recorded what you said, but this will be deleted as soon as I have written it down. The information will be kept secure on my computer. I will not tell your school, family or friends about what you have told me about your transition experience.

You have the right to withdraw from this study. I will keep this option available to you for the next 3 weeks, at which point I reserve the right to use the information you have provided.

If you have been upset by anything that has come up in the course of this project, please be aware that support is available from school staff. If you would like external support, this is available from Childline. You are also welcome to contact me or my supervisor if you would like further information about my research or have a specific question or concern.

For Childline call 0800 1111 or get in touch online at www.childline.org

Contact Details

My contact details are:

Emma Taylor-Baptie
u1836093@uel.ac.uk

If you have any questions or concerns about how the research has been conducted please contact the research supervisor Mary Robinson. School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ,
Email: M.Robinson@uel.ac.uk

or

Chair of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Sub-committee: Dr Tim Lomas, School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ.
(Email: t.lomas@uel.ac.uk)



PARENT/GUARDIAN DEBRIEF LETTER

The Experiences of Transition to Secondary School for Deaf Children in Mainstream Education: A Participatory Research Approach

Thank you for allowing your child to participate in my research study investigating the secondary school transition experiences of deaf children in mainstream education. I hope that they enjoyed taking part. This letter offers information that may be relevant to you now that your child has taken part.

With the information the young people involved in this study have provided, we hope to give advice to schools detailing ways to improve the experience of transition to secondary school for deaf young people. We will analyse the information that your child and the other participants have given us.

Please be assured that the details and the information that your child has given will remain anonymous and will be kept confidentially. I have recorded what your child said, but this will

be deleted as soon as I have written it down. The information will be kept secure on my computer in line with data protection laws.

You and your child have the right to withdraw their data from this study. I will keep this option available to you for the next 3 weeks, at which point I reserve the right to use the information you have provided.

In the unlikely event that your child has been upset by anything that came up in the course of this project, please be aware that support is available from school staff. If your child would like external support, this is available from Childline. You or your child are also welcome to contact me or my supervisor if you would like further information about my research or have a specific question or concern.

For Childline call 0800 1111 or get in touch online at www.childline.org

Contact Details

My contact details are:

Emma Taylor-Baptie
u1836093@uel.ac.uk

If you have any questions or concerns about how the research has been conducted please contact the research supervisor Mary Robinson. School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ,
Email: M.Robinson@uel.ac.uk

or

Chair of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Sub-committee: Dr Tim Lomas, School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ.
(Email: t.lomas@uel.ac.uk)

Appendix U

Superordinate and Subordinate Themes Generated for Each Participant

Superordinate and Subordinate Themes Identified in Ruth's Data:

Superordinate and subordinate themes	Transcript line numbers	Key words
1. Relationships		
Friendship	61, 62 , 130, 131, 132, 155, 156, 217, 218, 348, 349. 350, 354, 410, 411, Ideal school task	Lots of people with their best friend; got along with everyone; everyone was really nice; I made lots of really nice friends; I miss a couple of my primary school friends, although we still keep in touch; I walk to school with an old primary school friend who went to my school; I miss my best friend from primary school because we went to different schools; I still meet up with best friend from primary school every week and talk a lot on the phone; getting to know each other so you can make friends easily; in my non-ideal school it would be hard to make friends
Belonging	49, 50, 127, 255, 256, 257, 260, Ideal school task	Nervous in case I couldn't make any friends; just looking for some friends really; taking part in house events; being involved in house arts and sports day; I would be friends with everyone
Value of support from others	134, 169, 170, 171, 173, 174, 175, 180, 187, 188, 210, 211, 338, 339, 340, 359, 409, 410,	My new friends helped me find my way around the school; always someone around to ask for directions; teachers didn't tell you off if you were late because you got lost; lots of group projects at the start of secondary school; helped us make friends in classes; let us be friends with anyone we wanted; did lots of getting to know each other activities; my parents came and helped by getting stuff ready; my parents ferried me to school on the first day; one of my friends reminds everyone about my hearing loss – they will say “one at a time”; there was a lot of support from teachers; I would tell secondary school headteachers and teachers to do what my teachers did to

	411, Ideal school task	support deaf young people: organise getting to know each other activities and group projects to help them make friends easily; in my ideal school there would be someone to go to if you need help; everyone would be happy to help; the teachers would be observant and positive; the children would be friendly
2. Growing up		
Difference between primary school and secondary school	42, 43, 88, 89, 94, 95, 102, 103, 104, 110 111, 112, 195, 231, 233, 234, 243, 248, 249, 250, 273, 274, 275 276, 282, Ideal school task	Canteen was much nicer and they had more options; it would be helpful to make primary school a bit more like secondary school so it doesn't feel such a big jump; at secondary school you have to go between different classes; everything is different at secondary school; at primary school you didn't have to walk all around the school to get places and everything was already there for you; work wasn't very challenging at primary school; didn't do much interesting stuff at primary school; I have to remember all of my equipment and stuff at secondary school; primary school was kind of boring, only did literacy and Maths; at secondary school we do more practical and fun things; secondary school teachers are stricter; secondary school is a lot bigger; we do lots of charity and house events at secondary school to get points which is really fun; you are responsible for being late or forgetting things at secondary school; nice to be treated as though you are a bit more grown up; my secondary school is closer to my ideal school because we get to do lots of events and more practical things, such as science experiments.
Mixed emotions	26,27,28, 358, 359	Felt nervous about transition, but also excited; get to go to a new school and meet new people; moving to a new school was a bit overwhelming at first, but I got used to it quite quickly
3. Deafness does not define me		
Treat me like everyone else	309, 310, 318, 323, 364, 378, 379, 383, 384, Ideal school task	I don't have to remind teachers that I am deaf, they remember; people treat me as if I don't have a hearing loss; my hearing loss didn't really affect me transitioning to secondary school; I would treat another deaf child like any other normal person more or less; everyone treats you like a normal person; no one really notices your hearing loss that much so there is nothing to worry about; I don't really want anyone to treat me differently because I am deaf; In my non-ideal school other children would judge me

Hearing loss rarely noticed	288, 295, 296, 321, 322, 327, 328, 329, 330	No one really notices that I am deaf that much; I don't need many adaptations apart from sitting at the front of the classroom; at the beginning people asked me about my hearing loss because they were interested but now no one really notices that much; most people have got used to me having hearing aids and they don't really see them anymore
4. Challenges		
Practical challenges	95, 141, 142, 143, 273, 274, 275, Ideal school task	Biggest challenge was having to go between different classrooms; hard to find my way around; got lost a few times; lots of things to remember at secondary school—books, equipment and you have got to get to lessons on time; I wouldn't want the school to be like a maze; my non-ideal school would be really big, there would be too many people and it would be hard to find my way around; my ideal school would be clearly laid out, there would be maps available and the classrooms would all be labelled; I would be facing forwards towards the teacher and the board in my ideal classroom
Social situations	336, Ideal school task	People forget and talk at the same time which can be hard for me to hear, in my non-ideal classroom everyone would be shouting across the classroom and sitting a long way from each other, I would not be able to hear and it would be hard to concentrate
5. Supporting factors		
Value of consistency and continuity	301, 302, 303, 304, 390, 391, 399	Support in secondary school is similar to what I received at primary school; At primary school I sat at the front of the class and the specialist teacher for the deaf visited me, it's the same at secondary school more or less in that way; try and keep the specialist teacher for the deaf consistent across primary school and secondary school as I find that quite reassuring.
Familiarity	31, 37, 38, 58, 59, 75, 76, 120, 121, 148	Visited on open evenings and days; peers from primary school transitioned to the same secondary school as me; some people went to secondary school not knowing anyone, that must have been scary; it helped having the same specialist teacher for the deaf who I had at primary school visit me at secondary school because I already knew her; I was nervous about starting secondary school because I had missed the transition day; there weren't any surprised about starting secondary school

Superordinate and Subordinate Themes Identified in Lottie's Data:

Superordinate and subordinate themes	Transcript line numbers	Key words
1. Inclusion		
Equal opportunities	182, 183, 184, 200, 344, 362, 364, 365, 366, 382, 383, <i>Ideal school task</i>	I got it from the TA. She could do sign language from her son and from her friend, she was the only one there that could do sign language and she came into my class and supported; I am teaching people to sign but I would like it (more people to be able to sign); I would help them to do anything I could do; Help them with the ability to speak if they can, or give as much as help as they can for what people normally learn in secondary school, like Algebra, give them early preparation so they could do Algebra and learn a bit more; give them early preparation and stuff; <i>I would like to have more assistance so that I can fully understand.</i>
Feeling different	376, 377, 378	Take the kids out alone and help them more and teach them stuff differently from the normal regular hearing kids.
2. Challenges		
Social situations	114, 282, 284, 285, 289, 290, 292, 297, 298, <i>Ideal school task</i>	Didn't talk to anyone for like a week; Hearing loss affected my ability to hear everything; I could not communicate with anyone very well 'cos I couldn't hear them or anything; I made friends after everyone else; I have 2 friends that's it; only one other student at the school with a hearing loss; <i>my non-ideal school would be very noisy with lots of background noise and shouting out. It would be very distracting.</i>
'Settling in' Period	120, 121, 162, 163, 164, 168	They started off easy and it was similar to the ones in primary school but quite different; they took lessons really easy and didn't do much on the first day because there was lots to get used to; getting to know each other

Practical challenges	110, 213, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 224, 225, 226, 266, 270, 271, 273	I felt upset because I kept getting lost and everything; everything is different at secondary school; it was quite big and you have to wander around to find your classes and nobody was talking to each other because they didn't actually know each other and the lessons were different and everything; the fact it was massive; and the times for everything was different so normally we would be all in a class and we all go at different times, but there's loads of classes; at primary school there was one class in each year; primary school wasn't really that big
Loss of safety of primary school	91, 92, 93	At primary school it was easy for me to communicate with people, it was easy and less anxious to be there and it was a much quieter environment.
Expectations	39, 40, 134, 135	I thought the lessons were going to be a lot harder; I thought it was very big and was going to be very noisy and also quite challenging;
3. Fresh start		
New opportunities	31, 32, 239, 241, 242, 252	Looking forwards to being able to become independent and take my learning to the next level; different lessons; we're able to do loads of activities after school or during school; this year I am going to do Piano
Negative experiences at primary school	97, 98, 99, 106, 316, 317	The lack of learning and stuff they teach us; a problem they try to deal with but don't actually do anything; friendship difficulties and some learning difficulties; in primary school they just stick to one method.
4. Supporting factors		
Adult Support	76, 117, 118, 158, 159, 161, 172, 173, 233, 234 240, 241, 314, 315, 316, Ideal school task	My parents; they was able to help us get prepared and everything; they mainly kept us in groups so we could find our way around buildings; they helped us get to new classes; the fact they could put a TA in the class to help us when we got stuck on an activity; they were able to answer most questions and make sense of them; they helped us get to new classes; teachers can help us if we're stuck or need help; if you don't understand something the teacher was able to give methods of how to understand it; non-ideal school – teachers wouldn't help and they would explain things badly; in my ideal school there would be lots of help and support in different ways: clear

The environment	Ideal school task	<p>explanations; helpful teachers, children and displays; the teachers at secondary school make sense and try and help.</p> <p>In my non-ideal school, the environment wouldn't be very welcoming, there would be lots of broken furniture and the teachers wouldn't make sure the environment was quiet; in my ideal school the environment would be welcoming; there would be a respectful environment; the teachers at my secondary school are able to quieten the environment.</p>
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Superordinate and Subordinate Themes Identified in Daniel's Data:

Superordinate and subordinate themes	Transcript line numbers	Key words
1. Deafness does not define me Deaf young people are no different to anyone else Treat me like everyone else	106, 384, 500, 501, 502 384, 395, 396, 397	It was exactly the same, I think (transition support); I'm just like everyone else; tell them they are not the only one that probably thinks they are struggling, so they can feel like everyone else; everyone gets nervous I'm just like everyone else; sometimes they fully sit next to me and help me with every question which I don't want.
2. Supporting factors Processes	89, 90, 91, 218-223.	We'd done everything, so we were just messing around really, we had less to do, we'd done our SATs and 11 plus; there is a bit I was angry about because we were supposed to have a leavers assembly where we all had an

Familiarity	38, 39, 40, 43-47, 87, 88, 124, 125, 126, 173, 174, 175, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 246, 247, 248, 277, 280, 287-289, 295, 336–339, 347, 475, Ideal school task	<p>assembly and then said goodbye to the school and everything, but I was on holiday in Florida. It was better, but I was quite angry at the same time.</p> <p>I felt nervous, but I was OK, because I'd had a few taster days there, so they eased the transition; I knew some of the kids so I was nervous but OK at the same time; transition days in the Easter holidays, I went in and was the only one from my primary school. I met some friends in the transition and then I went back and saw some and then I went for real and I met some friends to hang around with; just missed a few days of schools for tours and transitions; I did see one person that came over because she was the person who was going to take care of me there; if I didn't go to the transitions, I probably would have been really nervous; we went to the school for a science day with Cubs and then that's when we found the school, so I knew part of the school already and then I kind of just went back, then the transition I saw another bit and I just got there and knew it; I think it took less time for me to settle in because some people never went to the transitions, I'd already kind of settle in on that second transition already; on the transitions they gave us a map and we could just go and look around the school and we had some tours by some new Year 7s; we just kind of went around the school and showed them around; the first two days we just stayed in with our personal tutor and then on the third day we started proper lessons; I recognised (some people) from the transitions; air conditioning, in Year 6 my class was known as a sweat box; there's air con all around the school; I'd show them around; a classroom in my ideal school would have air conditioning, soft carpets a smartboard and the tables would be positioned together; my ideal school would have clean corridors and classrooms, there would be wide corridors, smartboards and help centres around; in my non-ideal school there would be lots of rubbish, there wouldn't be any carpets, the rooms would be small, it would be crowded and there wouldn't be any whiteboards. In my non-ideal classroom the tables would all be separated; my secondary school building is great.</p>
Access to teaching materials	429-432	Sometimes they send the PowerPoint, there is also an app where teachers can share things with us and we can look at that while we're in lessons
Talking to other deaf young people	516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 523, 524	I think link up with students, because the head teacher could be lying to make you feel good; talk with deaf students and then link up things that you're both experiencing; they already have experience of what you are going through so can reassure you that it's not that bad

3. Contrast between primary school and secondary school		
Support	98, 99, 100, 101 133, 157, 217, 327-329, 353, 354, 358, 359, 391, 392, 417, Ideal school task	Secondary school was all prepared, they already had all the people that look after me, they were more set up than my primary; the teachers were fun, it was mainly the assistants that were the strict ones (primary); strict teaching assistants (primary); X school is so much better than primary school; some teachers at secondary school kept forgetting my name, because they have tons of classes, they were quite nice; the teachers at secondary school are nice and supportive, they know what to do if I'm in and have problems; there's not really anything bad about secondary school at the moment; I have loads of support in secondary that I wish I had in primary; there wasn't a lot (of support at primary school); my secondary school is more supportive; at secondary school we have different teachers for different subjects, at primary school we only had one teacher each year.
Differences	161, 162, 52, 53, 59, 60, 158, 159, 160, 320-322, Ideal school task	It was a tight school, most of the corridors were really really tight (primary school); I was looking forward to the science experiments, we didn't do them in primary school; you use Bunsen burners and you can change the fire; they've a massive P.E area; music classes were well boring in my mind, because all you use is symbols, in secondary school you can use guitars, drums, everything; bigger school, longer work, in primary school we had like 2 or 3 breaks and now we have 0 breaks and we have 1 lunch break and that's it; the lessons at secondary school are better.
4. Challenges		
Self-Advocacy	395, 403, 405, 406	Secondary school do over support me; I don't know how to say it; so they just go "oh so you're telling me to go away?" And I'm like year, but I wouldn't say that
Practical challenges	192, 193, 196, 197, 281, 282, 332, 333, Ideal school task	Find my way around, because it's so big; my primary school was big and then I look at that... it's all those floors to it; for the first few days they gave us a map and I ended up losing it; sometimes I'd forget to bring it and then forget to give it to them (microphone); sometimes my current school can be very loud.

Own expectations	69, 70, 177, 181, 300, 465, 482	I thought it would be really strict and hard work; I hated the school at that point; heard bad things; it wasn't really that different; it's not as nerve wracking as you think it is
5. Safety and belonging		
Value of friendship	75-79, 83, 84, 187, 188, 283, 466, 467, 468	I was more worried because all my friends had friends they knew because they were all from primary schools down the road; I didn't see anyone from my primary school even in my year; hanging out with friends; I got friends really quickly because I met up with them on transitions, so it was pretty easy to make friends; I had to use a friend; it's better if you have friends that you know, because then you can hang around with them and do what they do; if you don't have friends you can just try and make one.
Consistent support	255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 268, 309, 310, 311, 476, 503, <i>Ideal school task</i>	J she came in every week just to come and see me, see how I'm doing and sometimes it was nice; the person who supports me at school (SENCo) they used to come and see me and have a talk, so they were very supportive; I had J then it changed to L and then it's back to J, so I knew her; but I always have an assistant in the class that's supposed to be looking after me and also there's an assistant that is around, so I talk to her as well; check on them and make sure they are doing okay; there is always one person at least that wants to help you; <i>the teachers in my ideal school would be fun, supportive, patient, slow and be able to take a joke.</i>

Superordinate and Subordinate Themes Identified in Michael's Data:

Superordinate and subordinate themes	Transcript line numbers	Key words
1. Anxiety		

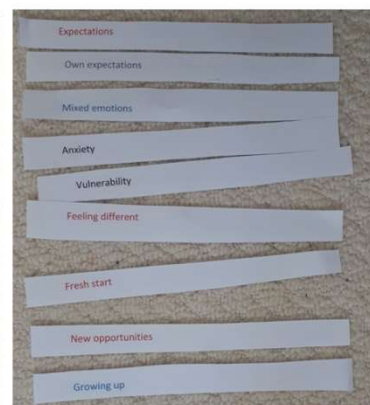
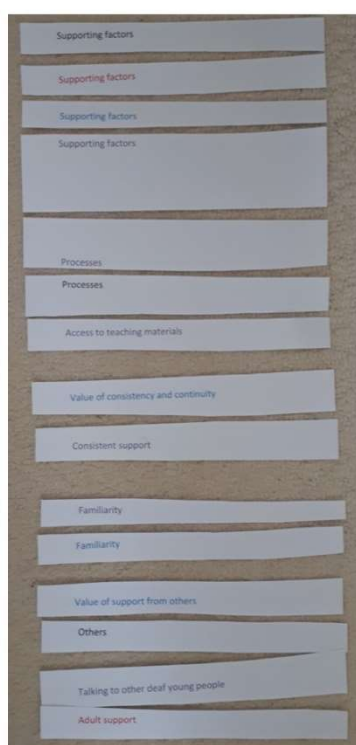
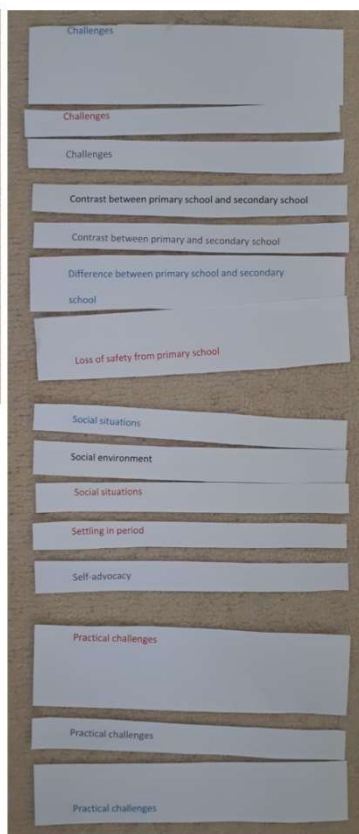
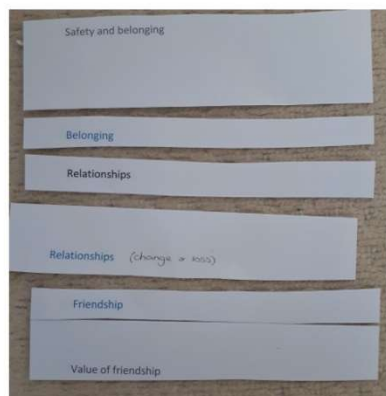
Vulnerability	29, 34-36, 59-64, 97, 98, 216, 217, 277, 278, 430, 431	Moving up I was kind of nervous; when I saw how crowded everything was I got a bit nervous thinking that I might do something wrong; coming from Year 6, being the oldest in the school, the oldest year, we were the powerful ones and then moving to secondary school we would become the smallest, I was quite nervous of how people might act upon us, because we are the new ones, the younger ones; coming from the oldest to the youngest can be quite nervous; I felt like I was the smallest and I would be picked on a lot or bullied a lot; when everyone was back it was a bit crowded which could be a bit scary at points; on the first couple of days I felt that I was quite vulnerable and going to be bullied and picked on for being the youngest year.
Others	84, 85, 86, 113-115, 119-122	The only bit I was a bit nervous about was making a first impression on all my teacher, if I would make a good first impression or a bad one; we would have talks about how we need to act properly and do the right and wrong stuff in secondary school; so if ever in Year 6 someone in the class misbehaved we would be told that our secondary school teachers would be much stricter than they would, and that kind of got them to start behaving.
School environment	233-235, Ideal school task	Hallways would be jam-packed and no one would be able to get anywhere for about five minutes; my ideal school would be very organised, there would be one classroom in each section and it would be easy to access each classroom and find your way around; it would also be easy to get help if needed; my non ideal school would be disorganised, nothing would have a set place and everything would keep moving, it would be confusing to move around the school and the area to get help and support would not be clearly indicated; in my non-ideal school there would be lots of background noise and I would be too far away from other people to be able to hear them.
2. Change and Loss		
Relationships	67, 68, 77, 78, 80, 81, 129, 130, 256, 257, 283-287, Ideal school task	I was looking forwards to meeting all the people in the Hearing Impairment Unit; we didn't have any hearing impaired people other than me at primary school; it was quite reassuring to know there were other people that were deaf; probably the hardest bit was leaving, because most of the kids that I knew, most of my friends were going to different secondary schools; I missed some of the teachers because the teachers were really quite nice; so in the middle of the summer holidays all the hearing impaired kids would be in for a day and we did loads of fun activities with the hearing impairment teachers and they were very kind, it was very reassuring for everyone to get to know everyone else who had similar hearing impairments to you; the hearing impairment unit at my secondary school offers quite good support

Contrast between primary school and secondary school	246-251, 305-308, 314, 315 348-353	The scale of the school, like how bit the school was, in my primary school I was used to having one teacher for the whole day and not moving to different classroom and stuff like that, but you go from that staying in your classroom for the whole day to having to move around every hour; with the amount of homework it could be quite nerve wracking to complete that all the time, so my parents helped me figure out a schedules of what we can do at certain times; waking up early in the morning, that was quite hard, so I had my parents there to get me up and ready; in my primary school the teacher would have to know every subject, while in secondary school we would have one teacher for example Maths and they can focus on Maths more so that they don't have to struggle with keeping up with all the other subjects.
3. Supporting Factors		
Others	145-148, 160-164, 187-190, 218-220, 299, 300, 332-334, 356, 357, 433, 434, 462-464, 471-473, Ideal school task	The last time I saw her in primary school we talked about moving up to secondary school and how I might have different teachers, but I was reassured that they were all really nice and that they would be able to help me, like she does, and she was correct, they are very very nice; our teachers in primary school were very open and supportive, they let use know that if we had any troubles, concerns or questions we could ask them and they could tell us individually or they could talk to use a whole class about it, depending on what the question was; students and teachers were all involved and liked what they were doing and how they were doing it, so very involved; Everyone – staff and students – were very friendly and it was quite nice and reassuring to know; my parents were very supportive, they helped support me a lot; my form tutor was the kind of teacher that I could go to if I struggled with anything; the amount of teachers that I can go to for help is very nice; I have been able to make load of new friends within secondary school that I wouldn't have known before; I've got a lot of reassurance of how the teachers and older students have helped me and helped Year 7 in general; the teachers should tell people that there are people who can help them when they get to secondary school; making sure they feel welcomed and that they want them there, help them with their hearing impairment; in my non-ideal school I would be talking to other students, but they would be facing away from me; the adults in my non-ideal school would be quite quiet, they wouldn't explaining things enough and they wouldn't repeat information; in my non-ideal school I would feel disliked by both adults and children; I would feel sad and alone; in my ideal school I would be talking to my friends and having a good time, I would feel confident to ask for help and brave.
Processes	30-33, 69-72, 101-105, 109, 132-	They let all the Year 7s have two days, so Thursday and Friday of the previous week before everyone else was going to start to meet our new teachers and get to know the school, which was nice; I met them a couple of weeks before, in the middle of the summer holidays, we had a day where we went into school and met them all and they

	134, 273-276, Ideal school task	were all very friendly and very nice and I was excited to meet them again; at primary school we had the tables in groups and for the last week all the year rearranged their tables into rows like it would be at secondary school, so we could get used to that; it was very helpful; the best thing our teachers did (at primary school) was we were able to come together in one assembly and talking about what it's like learning your friends to go to a different school; at the end of the school holidays, we all the Year 7s went in Thursday and Friday to get to know where everything was and who our teachers were going to be and stuff like that; my ideal classroom would be organised, the desks would be in rows and the teacher would be at the front of the class, I would sit in the front row in the middle so that I could clearly see and hear; in my non-ideal school I would not be able to face forwards, so I would have to turn around to see and hear.
4. Reflections		
Resilience	454-456, 465, 466, Ideal school task	The longer that you're there the easier it gets, so it does get easier to ask for help when you are there; it can and will be easier for them when they get there; I would like to be more confident and tell people that I have a hearing loss and may need help.
Advice	169-170, 177-181, 226-229, 416-418, 441-444, Ideal school task	I heard that other schools did this thing where they went into one big assembly and separated the students by what school they were going to; they brought everyone together and separated them by what school they were going to and they were taught with maybe a different teacher, but with all them people so they would get to know them people more... I think that could have helped us a lot; getting to know everyone – it was quite easy to do and how interactive everyone was with each other, that went quite well; having teachers in primary school who knew what they were doing and who could properly sign and check my hearing aids and stuff, things like that; I would make sure that they know there are people that can help them and that they can get to know these people, so it is easier for them to know them and talk to them; the children at my ideal school would talk to me on my left side as I can't hear in my right ear, they would be aware of my hearing loss and how to help me; the adults in my ideal school would be able to sign, they would make sure they clearly face me and be willing to repeat information; my primary school were aware of my hearing loss, but when I had trouble with my hearing aid no one was able to help, they would have to call my parents, but this would take time; currently only the teachers who teach me are aware of my hearing loss, I would like everyone to be aware.

Appendix V

Photographs to Illustrate Stage Six of the IPA Process



Appendix W

Examples of Initial Noting on Ruth's Transcript and Non-Ideal School Drawings

39 Emma: Oh, that was good. And was there anything in particular you think
 40 you were really looking forward to, about going to secondary school?
 41 school?
 42 Participant 1: Mostly the food, because the food in the canteen was much nicer
 43 and they had Pizza and stuff
 44 Emma: (laughs) Yeah that's much nicer isn't it, and I guess you got a bit
 45 more choice?
 46 Participant 1: (nods head) Yeah
 47 Emma: Definitely, and was there anything that you were kind of really kind
 48 of nervous about or worried about do you think?
 49 Participant 1: Ehm, probably nervous about it you couldn't like make ... if I
 50 couldn't make any friends or something.
 51 Emma: Yeah, no definitely. And do you think you felt kind of more or sort
 52 of less or the same amount of kind of worry as kind of other young
 53 people of your age that were moving to secondary school?
 54 Participant 1: Err, probably (nods head)
 55 Emma: So, the ... what to you think, do you think it was more or less or
 56 ...?

Handwritten notes on page 3:

- Different to primary school → decide at the time not in register.
- Options and choice
- Increased autonomy
- Preparation for adulthood
- Social occasion, bit like a cage?
- Grown up?
- Hesitant
- Friendship concerns
- Being liked
- Fitting in
- Belonging
- Friendship is important → link to identity?
- Uncertain
- Fear of being alone / lonely / unliked
- Worrying - convincing self?
- Doubt

3

57 Participant 1: Well ... I think it might have been in the middle because some
 58 people went there with no one they know (yeah) no one they knew,
 59 so that might have been scary.
 60 Emma: Yeah definitely, I think you did ... go on ...
 61 Participant 1: ... but then a lot of people went with ehm, their like best friends
 62 and everything
 63 Emma: OK, so yeah, I guess with you just kind of knew a few people, but
 64 they weren't necessarily your closest friends that's quite (yeah -
 65 nods head) that's quite scary isn't it, definitely. And did your
 66 primary school kind of help you to kind of prepare for going to
 67 secondary? Did they do any kind of transition support or anything
 68 like that?
 69 Participant 1: Ehm ... I can't even
 70 Emma: (laughs)
 71 Participant 1: Err ... (OK) ... (pauses) I don't think so really.
 72 Emma: No, that's OK. Ehm, and so did you get any kind of help from sort
 73 of like 'L' or anyone like that, was she involved at all? Did she
 74 help you with moving to secondary school?

Handwritten notes on page 4:

- Knew some people - familiarity
- Scary → vulnerable alone
- Anxiety
- Familiar people linked to safety & containment.
- Loss of best friends
- Disappointed not to have best friends vs relief of knowing some people
- Easier with best friends?
- Lack of support from close friends
- Unsure - difficulty remembering.
- Support not obvious to PP?
- Insignificant
- school didn't do much / little impact on pp?
- not reflected on this previously

4

Continuity & consistency
link between primary & secondary
↳ not such separate entities.

75 Participant 1: Well she was like someone I knew from primary school and secondary school, so that kind of helped.

76 Emma: OK, so she was kind of like a continuous person

77 Participant 1: Yeah (nods head)

78 Emma: That's really nice. And did she talk to you much about kind of moving to secondary school?

79 Participant 1: Ehm, I think she did

80 Emma: (laughs) it's a long time ago isn't it? It's hard to remember

81 Participant 1: Yeah

82 Emma: And is there anything that you think might have been helpful for your primary school to have done?

83 Participant 1: (speaks slowly at start of answer and thinking whilst answering)

84 well maybe they could have ... ehm ... I don't know may... make it, make primary school a little bit more like secondary school so it doesn't feel s... as such a big of a jump

85 Emma: Mmm, did it feel like a really ... kind of big change?

86 Participant 1: Yeah

87

88

89

90

91

Familiarity
"kind of helped" - small impact?

"I think" - difficulty remembering → not significant?

No big impact / lots of people spoke about it.

time to adjust
"Big jump" - significant change
lots of differences
challenging?

change primary school rather than secondary school

enjoyed new experiences & freedoms of secondary; preferred gradual change.

Liked more support
change is s hard

Classroom

Basically don't learn anything

No practical activities

Just listening to the teacher

Far away from each other

Over-filled with people

A maze

No windows

Teachers that give whole-class punishments

Is always grumpy

not - I deal

Children
Ones that get everyone in trouble

Bullies

Cause arguments and drag everyone into it

Judge everyone

Me
could feel nervous, not happy.
didn't want to go to school
would also be hard to make friends.

Practicalities -
Maze, too many people
Being judged
Bullies

Passive teaching approach - not practical
Impact of teacher on views
Shouting, squashed, far away

Appendix X

Photographs to Illustrate Stage Four of the IPA Process

<p>Emergent themes from Ruth's data</p>	<p>Emergent themes from Ruth's data</p>
<p>Ruth's emergent themes in groups</p>	<p>Ruth's emergent themes in groups</p>